

Legislation Text

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Overview of August 2019 No Tax Increase Bond Initiatives

Issue/Request:

Overview of August 2019 No Tax Increase Bond Initiatives

Key Issues:

City staff has prepared three proposed ordinances and ballot questions for the various "No Tax Increase" bond initiatives as identified by the Mayor and City Council for the August 6, 2019 special election. Initiatives included within the prepared ordinances include the following totaling \$19,925,000:

Public Safety initiative ordinance(\$18,500,000 total):

- * New Fire Station #4 (land, building and fire apparatus) - \$7,000,000
- * New Fire Station #5 (land and building) - \$5,000,000
- * Police in-car video replacement system and body worn cameras - \$1,000,000
- * Renovations and improvements to the Police & Courts facility - \$5,500,000

Note: These initiatives may be broken out into two or more ballot questions

Network Infrastructure initiative ordinance:

- * Wireless and fiber optic communication network systems - \$975,000

Curb Replacement initiative ordinance:

- * Street curb replacement and improvement - \$450,000

NOTE: *City staff has also prepared two substitute ordinances for the Public Safety Initiatives which are also attached to the respective ordinance packet if the Mayor and Council desire to separate the initiatives into separate questions that relate to the respective Fire Department initiatives and Police Department initiatives. Staff consulted with bond counsel on whether or not all initiatives could be placed into a single ballot question and given the nature of the various initiatives, the ability to place all initiatives under one ballot question is not possible. The least amount of ballot questions recommended by bond counsel is the three (public safety, network infrastructure, and curbs) as prepared by staff for consideration.*

Staff will be seeking the Mayor and City Council direction in proceeding with the adoption of the necessary ordinance(s) to place the initiatives on the August 6, 2019 special election ballot. The August 6, 2019 special election will require 4/7ths approval for passage of the ballot initiatives.

Proposed City Council Motion:

No motion necessary - for presentation and discussion purposes

Background:

On January 15, 2019 City staff provided the Mayor and City Council with a presentation regarding the City's debt issuance capacity. The Mayor and City Council directed City staff prepare a listing of potential No Tax Increase (NTI) bond projects that could be considered for an August 2019 NTI bond election to maintain the City's current tax levy. The Mayor and City Council directed staff to work with the Community and Economic Development Committee (CEDC) to develop a recommendation(s) to present to the Mayor and City Council for an August NTI election. City staff presented proposed projects & initiatives to the CEDC on March 13th and to the Mayor and Council at the April 9, 2019 Work Session.

The Mayor and City Council identified initiatives for staff to prepare ordinance(s) and ballot question(s) which are being presented for consideration.

The City has strived to maintain a consistent tax levy for debt service since the late 1990s. The City's tax levy is currently \$0.4697 per \$100.00 assessed valuation. The residents and the City benefit from the level maintenance of the tax levy through the avoidance of expensive tax elections, stability of tax revenues for support of infrastructure improvements, and stable tax bills for residents. The City plans to continue coordinating its funding needs and debt issuance to correspond with that tax levy cap.

In order to maintain a level tax levy for debt service for Calendar Year 2020 and after, it is necessary to place a ballot issue before the voters in 2019. We need to increase debt service requirements by at least approximately \$1.3 million based on a 3% annual increase in assessed valuation for Calendar Year 2020 alone to maintain the current debt service levy. The amount of debt service obligation required to maintain our current debt service levy is, in large part, based on changes in our assessed valuation. The examples below show the significant impact that changes in assessed valuation have on our debt service. As you can see, the decision on the size of debt obligation to issue is a moving target. It is also impacted by changes in interest rates. Further, we do not typically receive our final assessed valuation from Jackson and Cass Counties until late September so we have a narrow window of time from October 1 to December 31 to respond and issue bonds in the event of a large unexpected increase.

3% increase in assessed valuation for 2019, 2020, 2021=\$1.3 million for 2020, \$10.3 million cumulative spend through 2022

5% increase in assessed valuation for 2019, 2020, 2021=\$1.7 million for 2020, \$12.1 million cumulative spend through 2022

7% increase in assessed valuation for 2019, 2020, 2021=\$2.1 million for 2020, \$14 million cumulative spend through 2022

To make our debt levy target manageable, the ballot issue should include authorization for bond issuance large enough to provide accommodation for unpredictable changes in assessed valuation and interest rates. Once we have authorization from the voters, we can manage our financing needs and the structure of each bond issue to match up our debt service requirements to the levy thereby avoiding large swings in our debt service levy.

Staff has prepared informational project sheets and estimates for some of the recently discussed projects which are attached to this packet form as well as a spreadsheet summarizing the potential projects.

Voter approval of an amount in the range of \$23 to \$30 million should meet the financing needs and allow the flexibility needed to maintain the debt levy. The Mayor and City Council chose not to pursue the full estimated bonding capacity at this time as the Citizen Strategic Plan is underway, therefore leaving some capacity for future community needs which may be considered through a future No Tax Increase bond initiative. The deadline for entities to certify elections to the Election Authority for an August 6, 2019 Special Election is May 28, 2019.

Timeline:

Proposed schedule for NTI bond issue moving forward:

May 7, 2019 - Mayor and City Council consider 1st reading of ordinance for August 6, 2019 NTI bond issue election

May 21, 2019 - Mayor and City Council consider 2nd reading/adoption of ordinance calling for August 6, 2019 NTI bond issue election.

Prior to May 28, 2019 - City Clerk certification to Election Authority

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