



PLEASE SILENCE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES. THANK YOU.

NOTICE OF POSSIBLE QUORUM OF THE CITY OF BUCKEYE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION OR OTHER COUNCIL APPOINTED BOARD: PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE MAY BE A QUORUM PRESENT BUT THERE WILL BE NO VOTING TAKING PLACE BY THE CITY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION OR OTHER COUNCIL APPOINTED BOARD AT THIS MEETING.

**CITY OF BUCKEYE
GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE
APRIL 11, 2024
AGENDA**

**Buckeye City Hall
530 E Monroe Ave.
Buckeye, AZ 85326
Executive Conference Room 1st Floor
6:00 PM**

The doors will be open to the public at least 15 minutes prior to the start time of the meeting.

Accessibility for all persons with disabilities will be provided upon request. Please telephone your accommodation request (623) 349-6911, 72 hours in advance if you need a sign language interpreter or alternate materials for a visual or hearing impairment.

Voting Members will either attend in person or by telephone conference call or video presentation. Items listed may be considered in any order.

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) the Committee may, by majority vote, recess or adjourn to executive session at one or more times during the meeting, as needed to confer with the City Attorney for legal advice regarding any item listed on this agenda.

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call

2. Approval of Minutes

2.A Committee Action: Motion to approve minutes from March 21, 2024 General Obligation Bond Exploratory Committee meeting.

3. Presentations

3.A Committee Facilitator Deanna Jonovich, in collaboration with City Staff, will lead committee discussions focusing on the previously established consensus on Bond Amount. The discussions will further the project prioritization process by considering funding implications, tax rates, and potential bond parameters. The objective is to develop a recommendation concerning bond question(s), amounts, and guidelines. The session will end with an opportunity for public

comments.

4. Action Items

4.A

Committee to take action to approve recommendations concerning bond question(s), amounts, and guidelines to the City Council regarding a November 2024 General Bond election.

5. Discussion

5.A

Committee facilitator, Deanna Jonovich, will conclude the meeting and offer insights on the expectations for the subsequent session scheduled for April 18, 2024, if necessary.

6. Adjournment

CITY OF BUCKEYE
Regular Library Advisory Board
COUNCIL ACTION REPORT

MEETING DATE: 04/11/24	AGENDA ITEM: 2.A. <i>Committee Action: Motion to approve minutes from March 21, 2024 General Obligation Bond Exploratory Committee meeting.</i>
DATE PREPARED: 04/08/24	DISTRICT NO.:
STAFF LIAISON:	
DEPARTMENT: Financial Services	AGENDA ITEM TYPE: Consent Agenda Items / New Business

ACTION/MOTION: (This language identifies the formal motion to be made by the Council)
Committee Action: Motion to approve minutes from March 21, 2024 General Obligation Bond Exploratory Committee meeting.

SUMMARY

Items related to a project or facility location must include an attached vicinity map for Council Review.

ATTACHMENTS:

[2024 GO BOND Committee Meeting Minutes March 21.2024.pdf](#)

City of Buckeye
2024 General Obligation Bond Committee
March 21, 2024
Minutes

Buckeye City Hall
530 E Monroe Ave,
Buckeye, AZ 85326
1st floor - Executive Conference Room
6:00 PM

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) the Committee may, by majority vote, recess or adjourn to executive session at one or more times during the meeting, as needed to confer with the City Attorney for legal advice regarding any item listed on this agenda.

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/ Roll Call

Members Present: Jackie Meck (Chair), Jack Eaton (Vice Chair), Committee Member Michael Melton, Committee Member Kitt Roney, Committee Member DeAngela Kittrell, Committee Member Starr Marsett, Committee Member Jim Subjack, Committee Member Jeff Caler, Committee Member Cynthia Zbiegien, Committee Member Norman Lund, Committee Member Brent McFall, Committee Member Rico West and Committee Member Gary Bridget, Facilitator Deanna Jonovich

Members Absent:

Departments Present: Vice Mayor Clay Goodman, Deputy City Manager, Doug Sandstrom, Chief Financial Officer William Kauppi, City Attorney Scott McCoy, Management Assistant Amber Beaman, Communications and Governmental Relations Director Annie DeChance, HighGround Representative Paul Bentz, General Obligations Bond Committee Secretary Tanya McKinley and Audio-Visual Technician Kevin Drury.

2. Brief Announcements

2A. Chairman Meck extended his congratulations as former Alternate Rico West transitions to an official Committee Member status, granting him voting privileges and requiring adherence to all bylaws applicable to regular Committee Members..

2B. Committee Facilitator Deanna Jonovich reviewed the questions that were submitted, providing their associated answers. The first two inquiries pertained to the Watson Road Project. The first question asked whether the estimate included going over the railroad, to which it was confirmed that the cost for the bridge is indeed included. The second question raised whether the city would be required to relinquish crossings if a rail crossing is added. In response, it was clarified that because the bridge will span over the railroad tracks, no crossings need to be surrendered.

The third question concerned SR-30 and whether the city has engaged with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) or the Arizona State Transportation Board regarding the acquisition of the right of way. The response indicated that with the approval of Prop 479, ADOT/MAG will proceed with the study portion of SR-30 to identify a location for the right of way acquisitions.

The last three items received by the GO BOND Website through the "Contact Us" feature encompass various feedback. The initial correspondence conveyed concerns regarding tax rates, while the second expressed support for the expansion of Turner Road in Festival. The final submission articulated general growth concerns voiced by a resident in Festival.

3. Presentations

3A. Communications and Governmental Relations Director Annie DeChance presented the outcomes of the City's efforts to promote online tools for assessing proposed Bond projects. Mayor and Committee Members were briefed by Annie DeChance, who highlighted the dissemination methods, including news releases, social media, and electronic newsletters. The study, acknowledged as non-scientific, provided two distinct tools: a prioritization tool for ranking projects and a simulator tool akin to budgeting exercises. The data analysis encompassed various aspects of the bond initiative, with findings compiled up to noon on Monday, March 18th.

In the prioritized tool analysis, there were 606 page views and 255 submissions, yielding a commendable 42% submission rate, which surpassed typical response rates. The majority of traffic originated from social media links. The tool, characterized by its simplicity and interactive nature, allowed users to drag and rearrange items easily, contributing to its popularity. The age range of participants varied, and while nearly half were from Buckeye, there were also submissions from other areas, though their residency status couldn't be definitively determined. The project rankings were determined by the number of submissions ranking each project as their top choice, with ties indicating equal preference between projects.

In the simulation tool analysis, which required more time and thought, there were only 11 total submissions, indicating lower engagement than desired. Demographics of participants differed compared to the prioritized tool. Regarding project budget allocations, despite discrepancies in the breakdowns, the approximate total budget indicated by participants was \$206 million. This comprised an average of \$60 million for Transportation projects, \$60 million for Public Safety, and over \$24 million for Community Services projects. The breakdowns may seem unconventional, but they represent participants' perceived appropriate budget allocations for each category. Notably, one question in the simulation tool asked participants about their support for a potential increase in the secondary property tax as part of the bond initiative. Of the 11 respondents, just over a third favored a \$0.15 or \$0.35 increase, while slightly less than a third supported a \$0.60 increase. It's essential to note that this data is not scientifically rigorous and reflects varied participant preferences, despite consistent promotion methods.

3B. HighGround Representative Paul Bentz initiated the discussion by highlighting the sentiment of the electorate regarding the direction of Buckeye. Notably, 67% of respondents expressed optimism about the city's trajectory, surpassing national or state outlooks. This positive outlook was consistent across age groups, with individuals aged 29 and under exhibiting particularly high levels of optimism, reaching 89.5%.

Acknowledging Mrs. DeChance efforts in collecting online feedback, Paul emphasized the significance of both scientific surveys and non-scientific data provided by citizens in understanding community interests. He underscored the value of such data in gauging citizen sentiment and informing decision-making processes, especially in engaging younger demographics.

In assessing voter data for a November 2024 election, Paul presented insights from the survey conducted from February 26 to March 3, sampling 400 individuals with a margin

of error of 4.9%. Despite a relatively even distribution of party affiliations, Paul noted a slight Republican advantage in anticipated voter turnout, particularly in Buckeye. He explained the distinction between voters registered as "Party Not Declared" (PND) and independents, highlighting potential ideological differences between the two groups. Additionally, Paul mentioned efforts to balance data representation across city council districts, ensuring proportional reflection of participation levels.

Regarding the top issues facing the city, water emerged as the primary concern for 25.5% of respondents, closely followed by growth (22.5%) and streets/transportation (22%). Approximately 66% of respondents identified growth-related issues as significant, reflecting Buckeye's status as a rapidly expanding community.

Age-related variations in priorities were highlighted, with younger voters prioritizing growth, individuals aged 30 to 49 focusing on streets and transportation, and those aged 50 and older showing greater concern for water issues. These insights underscored the diverse perspectives within the electorate based on age demographics.

In assessing the overall job performance of the mayor and city council, over a third of respondents rated it as excellent or very good (39%), while 39% rated it as okay. Only 11% gave a poor or failing rating, with 12% remaining undecided and 3% refusing to respond. Utilizing a Likert scale ranging from one to five, with one representing failing and five representing excellent, the mean score for the mayor and council was 3.26, indicating a sentiment between okay and very good.

Age demographics revealed slightly more optimism among the 39 and under crowd, with approximately 33% rating the performance as excellent or very good, compared to about 23% among those aged 65 and older. This positive sentiment creates an environment conducive to discussing bond issues, as residents are likely to evaluate proposals based on their merits rather than unrelated grievances.

A survey of municipal services, presented in a randomized and rotated manner to eliminate bias, revealed generally positive perceptions. Fire and medical services received the highest rating of four, with 75% rating them as excellent or very good. However, streets and transportation scored lower, with only 23% rating them as excellent or very good, indicating a notable area of concern within the community.

This disparity underscores the significance of addressing streets and transportation issues, as evidenced by residents' inclination to support bonds aimed at improving these services. Despite this challenge, other city services, including police, parks and trails, libraries, and recreation programs, were well-regarded, with ratings above three on the Likert scale.

To ensure an unbiased assessment, three questions related to parks, public safety, and streets were presented to respondents in rotation. This approach aimed to evaluate each potential bond question independently and mitigate any ballot fatigue that may arise from question order. The methodology included a pretest, followed by inquiries about specific projects and subsequent reasoning statements.

In the Parks pre-test analysis presented by HighGround Representative Paul Bentz, it was noted that there was a 37% affirmative response compared to approximately 55% negative response. Notable observations included a disparity between the "definitely yes" at 15% and "definitely no" at 35%, with an aim for these figures to be more balanced. Additionally, it was emphasized that the data could potentially fluctuate by up to five points, highlighting the need for cautious interpretation.

A significant challenge highlighted in the Parks pre-test was the majority opposition from individuals aged 50 to 64 and 65 and older, presenting a difficult starting point for the Parks program. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that approximately two-thirds of Republicans began with a stance of opposition, indicating a notable hurdle to overcome in discussions about parks.

District-wise variations were also observed, with certain districts showing more favorable responses compared to others. Districts 4 and 2 exhibited relatively better responses, while Districts 3 and 5 showed slightly lower levels of support. This district-level analysis underscored the importance of considering regional preferences and project significance in proposal development, recognizing that certain projects may hold greater importance for specific areas than others.

In the analysis of the Streets pre-test presented by HighGround Representative Paul Bentz, it was observed that the proposition for streets commenced in a more favorable position, with a 1.3% affirmative response compared to 42.8% negative response. The ratio between "definitely yes" and "definitely no" responses was notably closer, with 23% indicating "definitely yes" compared to 28% indicating "definitely no." Additionally, the "probably yes" responses were at a 2-to-1 ratio, with 28% in favor compared to 14% opposed, aligning more closely with preferred recommendations and strategic considerations.

The analysis highlighted stronger support among individuals aged 65 and older, with 54% expressing support for the streets proposal. Opposition among Republicans, while still a majority at 52%, was notably lower compared to the parks proposal, which saw 66%

opposition. Moreover, support for the streets proposal was evident among unaffiliated voters and individuals in the 40 to 49 age category.

District-wise variations were also noted, with Districts 1, 2, and 5 exhibiting support levels above 51%. This indicated specific areas within the city that demonstrated a keen interest in street improvements as part of a potential bond package.

In the presentation of the Public Safety pre-test by HighGround, it was noted that the proposition for Public Safety began with a slight position of weakness, with 41.8% of respondents indicating support. Similar to the Parks proposal, it garnered a majority of opposition within the 65 and older category and among Republicans. However, it lacked the same level of support observed for streets among unaffiliated voters.

Paul Bentz highlighted the importance of adding specificity to the Public Safety question in the ballot language, as testing specific Public Safety projects yielded notably higher scores. He emphasized that enhancing the clarity of the proposal could lead to improved outcomes, as demonstrated in subsequent post-tests.

District-wise variations were also observed, with Districts 4 and 6 showing more significant Public Safety strength compared to District 2. This initial assessment served as a starting point for understanding voter sentiments and emphasized the significance of analyzing post-test results to gauge voter awareness and alignment.

Furthermore, all Public Safety projects were randomized and rotated to measure intensity of support on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. This approach aimed to identify projects with higher levels of intensity, as most projects scored above 3, indicating overall positive reception on a city-wide basis. Even projects scoring below 3 exhibited notable intensity of support, emphasizing their significance within the community.

In analyzing specific Public Safety projects, Mr. Bentz noted significant support for certain initiatives. For instance, the Victory Fire Station, particularly impactful for District 6, received positive feedback overall, scoring 3.46. Similarly, the permanent facility at West Park Fire Station 706 garnered strong support in District 3. These projects demonstrated increased favorability, scoring above 3.5, when accompanied by detailed descriptions, indicating the importance of clarity in proposal descriptions.

While specificity proved crucial for Public Safety initiatives, broader concepts related to street improvements resonated strongly with respondents. Traffic safety improvements emerged as the top priority, scoring 3.98, with 42% rating it as very important. Following closely, traffic signal coordination received a rating of 3.97, with 43.3% considering it

essential. Additionally, Street Widening to remove pinch points ranked third highest in importance, underlining the significance of addressing street-related safety concerns comprehensively.

This analysis underscores the effectiveness of clear project descriptions in enhancing support for Public Safety initiatives. Moreover, it highlights the broad appeal of street improvement measures in promoting traffic safety and coordination within the community.

When evaluating projects on a likert scale, HighGround Representative Paul Bentz emphasized the significance of identifying top-tier, middle-tier, and lower-tier items based on voter perception. He clarified that this matrix shouldn't solely dictate project decisions but rather highlight the community's broader needs and priorities. Organizing discussions based on attention level rather than budget cost can provide valuable insights and guide decision-making processes effectively.

In the top tier, projects such as traffic safety improvements, traffic signal coordination, street widening to remove pinch points, and the street rehabilitation and reconstruction program all scored above 3.7, indicating robust support and categorizing them as "home run" projects. The closer a project's score is to four, the more it aligns with community preferences and priorities.

Following closely are projects like Watson Road, Indian School, and West Park Fire Station, each scoring 3.54, representing the next tier of strong support above 3.5. These projects are deemed crucial to the overall electorate.

The subsequent tier comprises projects with scores in the 3.4 range, including the Victory Fire Station, the training facility, and the headquarters, among others. Notably, the wording of project descriptions can influence intensity, as seen with the bottleneck/scalloped street improvement program, which, despite being conceptually similar to highly-rated projects, garnered lower support due to its wording.

Overall, all projects scored above 3, except for Sundance Park and trailhead at Lost Creek Drive, underlining the community's general consensus on various initiatives.

During the presentation, HighGround's Paul Bentz noted that some projects fell slightly below the mean score, indicating less intense support on a citywide basis. However, he clarified that this didn't necessarily imply opposition but rather a lack of widespread enthusiasm. Importantly, both projects still garnered support within their respective communities, highlighting localized interest and relevance.

Bentz emphasized the importance of prioritizing issues based on intensity of support, akin to prioritizing one's best foot forward. This approach helps streamline communication and ensures a clearer understanding of key issues among voters.

Regarding reason statements, Bentz explained the rationale behind presenting both pro and con arguments to gauge voter motivations effectively. By synthesizing sentiments from various sources, including community feedback and political discussions, reason statements provide valuable insights into voter perspectives.

The top-ranking reason statement, "adequate transportation is essential to moving people goods and services through a Buckeye," received strong support, with 51% strongly agreeing and earning a mean score of 4.21. This argument resonated widely, aligning with the significant intensity observed for street-related initiatives.

Following closely, "response times," with a mean score of 4.15, garnered strong agreement from 47% of respondents, emphasizing the importance of efficient emergency services. This argument enjoyed broad support across age groups, districts, and partisan affiliations.

Additionally, the statement acknowledging the necessity of accommodating growth received notable endorsement, reflecting voters' understanding of the city's evolving needs. However, Bentz highlighted a nuanced response to the idea of letting others pay for growth-related initiatives, indicating a preference for shared responsibility rather than external funding.

In summary, Bentz underscored the multifaceted nature of voter sentiments and the importance of crafting persuasive arguments that resonate with the community's priorities and values.

In analyzing the sentiment regarding the city's direction, it's notable that optimism persists about Buckeye's trajectory, attributed to the city's economic advancements. However, there's a shift in priorities compared to a decade ago, where job creation and economic opportunities were paramount. Presently, while still a compelling argument, other factors like adequate transportation, low response times, and keeping pace with growth hold slightly more sway.

This evolution reflects the changing demographics and maturing electorate, influenced by the region's economic prosperity and the city's success in attracting jobs. While the right

direction and jobs remain pertinent, they no longer dominate as they once did, indicating a broader spectrum of concerns and priorities among residents.

Paul Bentz of HighGround addressed concerns about the economy and taxation during a recent discussion. He noted that despite inquiries from reporters, the economy is not the primary concern for Arizona residents, as the state has been performing well economically. However, inflation and tax concerns remain, although they are not as prominent as in the past, especially in growing communities where transportation and response times are prioritized.

On the contrary, taxes continue to be a significant issue for many individuals, with concerns about taxation being the most effective reason for opposition, cited by 3.95% of respondents. Mr. Bentz highlighted that people on fixed incomes, particularly those aged 65 and older, are especially sensitive to tax burdens and advocate for living within means. Additionally, anti-growth sentiments are prevalent, with fears that approving bonds will further fuel population density and growth, shifting the burden onto current residents.

While there are concerns about the fair distribution of projects, with some areas feeling they may not benefit equally, this argument is not as compelling as others. Bentz emphasized that three out of four reasons to support initiatives were more powerful than most reasons to oppose, except for taxation. He underscored the importance of providing balanced perspectives in testing arguments to avoid bias and ensure confidence in the data.

In the post-test survey for the parks bond, participants received identical surveys with the same questions presented in different orders. The results showed an improvement in support for the parks bond, with 42% responding "yes" compared to 43% responding "no." The proportion of respondents who answered "definitely yes" approached that of "definitely no," indicating a significant shift from previous results where the gap was smaller.

Although there remains notable opposition among individuals aged 65 and older and Republicans, there was a net improvement in support across the city. Districts 4, 5, and 6 particularly saw gains, with District 5 experiencing a substantial increase of 12%. Despite these improvements, the support level did not reach the 50% threshold, remaining below it. However, there was a considerable reduction in the percentage of respondents opposing the bond, dropping from over 50% to 43%, resulting in a more balanced split between supporters and opponents.

In analyzing the transportation bond, it is noted that support increased to 56% while opposition decreased to 29.3% in the post-test. This rise in support was observed across various partisan segments, particularly among Republicans, where there is now a plurality in favor. Among the 50 to 64 age group, support increased to 57%. Additionally, support surpassed 50% in all city districts, with notable gains in Districts 1 and 6.

Although there was a slight decrease in support among those aged 65 and older, it remained above 50%. Significant gains were observed, including an 8-point increase among Republicans, a 10-point increase among the 50 to 64 age group, and gains of 7-points and 9-points in Districts 1 and 6, respectively. These findings indicate widespread support for the transportation bond, especially following the provision of additional description.

The public safety bond saw the most significant gain, reaching 57.6% support, including a majority of Republicans, a majority of individuals aged 65 and older, and substantial portions of independent and unaffiliated voters. Across all districts, there were notable double-digit gains, with districts four and six showing the highest intensity, along with a substantial increase in support in District Five. The trend indicates that providing detailed descriptions of the public safety proposal positively influenced voter sentiment, leading to a substantial shift in support across demographics. Conservatively estimated, there was an approximate 10-point shift in support within the community following the dissemination of comprehensive information about the public safety bond.

It is expected that the support for park-related initiatives will remain around the 30% range. It's important to note that a significant portion of the electorate may not have children at home, which can influence their support for park projects. Those without children or with access to parks in their own communities may be less inclined to support such initiatives. This dynamic underscores the disparity between public enthusiasm for park projects and the actual support from the electorate, especially among those who are likely to vote. This trend is not unique to Buckeye but is observed across many communities surveyed, where public safety and street-related initiatives typically tie for the top spots, with park projects often trailing as a distant third. Generally, projects like landfills or administrative facilities receive even less support from the electorate. These observations provide context for understanding the prioritization of projects within the community and the broader electoral landscape.

Paul Bentz from HighGround addressed questions posed by the Committee following his presentation. He provided clarifications and elaborated on points discussed, ensuring that the Committee had a comprehensive understanding of the data presented. Bentz's

responses aimed to facilitate informed decision-making by the Committee regarding the topics covered in his presentation.

3C. The Committee Facilitator, Deanna Jonovich, presented the survey results to the Committee. She highlighted that every Committee Member who completed the survey agreed that proposing a bond for the City of Buckeye was important and should be considered. The survey results were structured with the Committee Members' responses in the first column, followed by the different projects proposed and their associated costs. Each member provided their opinion on what percentage of funding should be allocated to each project. The average and median percentages of funding based on all 13 surveys were calculated and presented. Additionally, the number of Committee Members who scored each project at 100% funding was noted.

Jonovich also presented the survey results in a prioritized manner, showing both the ranking of projects based on priority and funding percentages. This dual approach provided a comprehensive view of the Committee's preferences regarding project prioritization and funding allocation. She emphasized the importance of considering voter turnout rates in different areas and the specific districts targeted by certain projects. Jonovich encouraged the Committee to deliberate on whether to fully fund projects or explore partial funding options based on the information provided by Chief Financial Officer Bill Kauppi in the previous meeting regarding different funding rates and options. She welcomed questions or comments from the Committee regarding the survey information.

During the meeting, there was an opportunity for the Committee to suggest additional projects. Several comments were received from Committee Members regarding potential project additions, which were presented for consideration. Moving forward, the focus shifted to planning for subsequent meetings and gathering necessary follow-up information from the Departments. Committee members were encouraged to communicate any specific information requirements to Committee Secretary Tanya McKinley within the next few days to facilitate preparation. The next meeting, scheduled for March 28, would initiate the prioritization process, leveraging the data and insights gathered from the projects proposed and survey responses. Discussions would revolve around prioritizing projects and potentially considering phasing options. Notably, there would be no meeting on April 4th, with subsequent sessions planned for April 11th and April 18th. The goal was to draft the Committee's recommendation to present to Mayor and council, aiming for completion by April 25th. This timeline ensured thorough deliberation and timely submission of the final recommendation.

General discussion was held regarding specifics on the next meeting agenda item for the Committee.

Committee Facilitator Deanna Jonovich confirmed there were no questions that were outstanding and needed further information for our next session.

4. Adjournment

Chairman Meck adjourned the meeting at 7:15 pm

Jackie Meck, Chairman

ATTEST:

Tanya McKinley, Committee Secretary

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the Committee Meeting held on March 21, 2024. I further certify that a quorum was present.

Tanya McKinley, Committee Secretary