

ARGUMENT FOR THE BOND

The citizens of Pleasant Grove overwhelmingly recognize the need for new public safety facilities. A citizen committee has spent the last year and half studying the issue and vetting options. The committee has proposed solutions to the problem including a recommendation to bond for a specific amount to pay a portion of the costs of the new public safety facilities.

Through this process it has become evident that the current buildings have reached a point that additions or repairs can no longer be justified as fiscally responsible. City Council unanimously approved a resolution asking voters to authorize issuance of General Obligation Bonds to finance the construction of new public safety facilities which will house fire, police, dispatch, and a justice court.

Our fire station was built in 1949 as an addition to the old public high school. It was converted to a fire station in 1989 when the population of the City was 11,000 and we had a volunteer fire department. We now have a fulltime fire and EMS department servicing over 38,500 people. There are serious concerns with the current building as it does not meet seismic safety standards. This 75 year old structure is inadequate for day to day operations and could be destroyed in a seismic event, leaving the citizens without emergency services.

Our police station has outlived its usefulness and functionality as a police facility. It is not in compliance with current regulations for police departments that require heightened security and separation from public access. Prisoner processing and transport facilities are not secure; there is inadequate evidence storage space – evidence is being stored under stairways, in hallways and in an elevator shaft; interrogation rooms are undersized, lack ventilation and windows; the booking area is open to dispatch and puts the safety of civilian employees at risk.

Our justice court facility is drastically undersized and functionally inadequate. It seats approximately 30 people but 50 -70 defendants are scheduled to be seen on any given day. People are forced to stand in the lobby until it's their turn. The public's safety is compromised since there is no secure way to transport prisoners, they must be walked through the foyer among the general public. There are no conference rooms. Attorneys confer with their clients and private information must be discussed in the middle of the lobby. There is insufficient storage space for court records. There is no jury deliberation room.

The need is clear. The citizens have been heard. The amount of actual debt has been reduced through extensive cost cutting review and substantial donation commitments from private citizens and local business intended to ease the burden on taxpayers. The bond will not exceed \$9.5 million dollars and will increase the average property owner's tax \$5.02 per month. The project fulfills needs in four areas that are currently in operational failure and assures functionality both for our present needs and future growth.

Mayor Michael W. Daniels

Councilmember Dianna Andersen

Councilmember Eric Jensen

Councilmember Cyd LeMone

Councilmember Lynn Walker

REBUTTAL

The city's advocacy piece addresses the need for new public safety facilities. However, it lacks building specifics and, just as an investor requests plan specifics before writing a check, we are requesting plan specifics from the Council before voting in November. Citizens would like answers and assurances before being asked for yet another tax increase and entrusting \$9,500,000 to the Council.

- Lindon is currently building at \$175/sq ft, our City proposes building at \$245/sq ft
- Why won't we consider a new \$3,000,000 fire station and a \$2,000,000 remodel of police/courts?
- What percentage property tax increase is this bond proposal? 40%?
- Why can other cities trim budgets and meet their needs at average construction prices?
- Why will the council not commit to work hard to reduce the cost of this proposal per committee recommendation?
- What is the location?
- Over triple the space for our police and courts?

With these and other unanswered questions, the lack of trust created by prior bond proposals, and a looming new tax to raise roads money, citizens are not ready to move ahead without necessary information. Pleasant Grove is highly indebted and already has one of the highest tax burdens in the county.

We are a modest city with modest needs. It is our right and duty to ask questions about the plan for spending our money. Why overspend? Vote no on this bond and let's work together for a modest solution to our modest needs.

Blaine Thatcher/Citizens Against Overspending

ARGUMENT AGAINST THE BOND

As a city, we have been wrestling for years to meet argued public safety needs. It has been a difficult yet vindicating struggle as we watched the bond amounts, projected to only increase, diminish from \$19 million to \$16.9, \$14.9, \$12.67, and now \$9.5 million. We know the vast majority of citizens in Pleasant Grove want to see a solution to the needs of our public safety employees, but one that also respects the demands on family finances.

In an effort to bridge the emotional divide, a Public Safety Building Committee was created of citizens with drastically different views. One primary goal, as stated by its chosen spokesman, was that a solution be reached “in a responsible way that would restrain to the greatest extent possible the financial burden on the citizens of our city.” We are grateful for the Committee’s recognition of the taxpayer and acknowledge their monumental work, resulting in the current bond number, reflecting our shared desires for public safety solutions.

While the majority of the committee strongly felt the budget could be less, they recommended to the Council a bond number and a total budget for construction costs. The success or failure of the bond now rests with the Council. As citizens of Pleasant Grove we support fiscal conservatism, reasonable solutions, full accountability, and transparent government; therefore, citizens need assurances and specifics from the Council about the money they’re requesting . . . your money. The amount represents new money the city is asking for from residents at a time when major infrastructural issues remain to be addressed, including roads and water. The Council chooses to fund such needs through the citizenry; steadily raising our secondary and other water fees; proposing a new tax, called a road fee on each household and business’s utility bill to raise \$1 million annually for roads. With so many expensive projects to be funded by the citizenry in the near future, will the City Council rebuild trust with the citizens and:

1. Commit to “a budget set at \$11 million or less for construction costs”, as unanimously recommended on 8/23/16?
2. Commit to work hard to reduce the costs of construction as discussed by the Committee?
3. Use private donations to actually lower the amount borrowed?
4. Specify a location for the buildings?
5. Preserve our beloved and historic Old Rec Center with its cultural and revenue generating functions?
6. Practice open and transparent finances across the city?
7. Be inclusive, giving citizens regular updates on the progress of the buildings and budgets?
8. Allow meaningful ongoing citizen input?

To date, the Council has not addressed these concerns in writing, so we cannot recommend voting for the bond. We encourage citizens to ask these and other questions, seek hard evidence from elected officials and be confident in the answers received BEFORE you vote. Look for results, not rhetoric. It is our money they seek; it is your right to be secure in your vote.

Blaine Thatcher/Citizens Against Overspending

REBUTTAL

The opposition argument focuses on emotion not facts. It seeks to instill fear and mistrust rather than address the actual bond proposal. The tone is threatening rather than an objective evaluation of the merits of the bond proposal. IF the city council will meet all of the opposition's demands THEN they would support the bond. Some demands are not even related to the project. The elected body of Pleasant Grove does not make decisions based on threats and our community should not vote based on fear and the desire to create contention.

The facts are that this proposal is based upon professional studies requested by the citizen driven Public Safety Building Committee (PSB Committee) evaluating:

- Remodeling options
- Architectural and engineering costs
- Pricing related to various locations
- A thorough review of the space and functional needs of the project.

The citizens Committee unanimously recommended the \$9.5 million dollar bond amount as being adequate to meet the public need in a fiscally responsible manner.

This proposal is the result of an open, transparent, citizen initiated recommendation from the PSB committee that took over 16 months to study the issue and propose solutions. It is the result of a spirit of cooperation, transparency, and ingenuity by the PSB committee, the Mayor and city council, and staff to meet a dire need in our community with fiscally responsible solutions.

This bond proposal has been developed through thorough research, and factual information. This proposal is principled, consistent, and affordable for the people of Pleasant Grove.

