



BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

CITY OF HANNIBAL

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ELECTRIC, WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENTS

3 INDUSTRIAL LOOP DRIVE • PO BOX 1589 • HANNIBAL, MISSOURI 63401-1589

July 15, 2013

HBPW Schedules Public Meetings to Discuss Bonds

For weeks I have been explaining Hannibal's predicament to comply with the many unfunded mandates put upon us by the EPA.

I explained our choices around the very first question. Should we comply with the Clean Water Act, or not? There are no good answers except that we must. We don't need federal lawsuits and lawyer's fees piled on top of what we will have to do anyway. Neither am I hopeful we can get the law eased by Congress. Lots of people support ever cleaner water, even voters in Hannibal.

The HBPW has engineering reports and studies aplenty that outline for us the technical options we might use to achieve compliance to the law. We have presented some of those in previous columns. There are more, but time and space limits prevent me from describing more of them in detail. I'm pretty sure most would find those discussions very boring.

It is almost time to decide. The bond referendums are on the ballot August 6th. There are two separate ballots, one each for Water improvements and Sewer improvements. Every taxpayer in Hannibal has a stake in the outcome. Voting "Yes" to both paves the way for the HBPW to implement lower cost financing alternatives to comply with the EPA mandates. Voting "No" does not stop the improvements we need, but only makes them more expensive. The ballot question is not whether we should spend the money to comply but only involves how we should raise the money.

So far, most of the discussion has been kind of one sided. Those who have not gotten their letters to the editor may have missed a chance to be heard. If that is your case, we will offer two public meetings where we will be available with our staff to discuss details and answer any questions that you the voters may have. The first is July 31, 2013, at 7:00 PM in the City Council Chamber at City Hall. The second is August 1, 2013 at the HBPW Conference Room at 3 Industrial Loop Dr. at 10:00 AM. This would be a great time to stop by and speak to our staff about specific projects that would be funded by the bond sale and review once again why we need to borrow the money in the first place.

The Board of Public Works has been working hard to educate voters on these issues related to clean water. The feedback I have received personally has all been positive. People have expressed to me that they were previously unaware of the problems the HBPW has to contend with and they have been supportive of our proposed solutions. Nobody has suggested to me that we do anything but comply with the mandates. To be balanced, I should mention there have been two or three anonymous contributors to our Facebook page suggesting we don't know what we are doing and should get out of the utility business altogether. I don't think that is an option, but they are welcome to their opinion.

Think about this as Election Day nears: Propositions W and S are the only issues on the ballot on August 6th. Public Utility issues generally do not raise much passion among voters one way or the other, so we



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expect voter turnout to be pretty low. (This is hard on my ego, but I will get over it.) What it really means is that the few naysayers who spoke up on Facebook could have a disproportionate influence in the voting outcome. We need many thoughtful voters to take a few minutes to show up at the polls and cast their votes. Remember a 'yes' vote will pave the way for the HBPW to keep rates as low as possible and a 'no' vote will force the HBPW into higher financing costs and corresponding higher rates for years to come. Please remember a 'yes' vote does not count unless you show up at the poll and cast it.

Tell us what you think. For more information and to see copies of previous guest columns please go to our website www.hannibalbpw.org or follow us on Facebook. Post your comments or send a letter to the editor of this paper. Finally, watch your mailbox for a brochure from the HBPW detailing many of the projects we plan to accomplish if the bond sale is approved.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Stevenson, P.E.
General Manager

"The mission of the Hannibal Board of Public Works is to provide safe, reliable utility products with excellent customer service at reasonable prices."