

MEMO

TO: HAVASU 6000 members and friends
FROM: Robbin Wohl, Exec Director Manager Review, Inc.
SUB: Report on the 1-28-14 Town Hall
DATE: January 30, 2014

The Town Hall Meeting held on Tuesday, January 28, 2014 at the London Bridge Resort opened to a **packed house**, and one very receptive audience. You can see the entire event on Jim Mathews' Havasu Video News.

With some 101 people in attendance, the overflow crowd filled two adjoining meeting rooms. Dr. Bill Ullery heartily welcomed every one and expressed his appreciation for the interest and support shown.

For the benefit of the audience, Dr. Bill graciously introduced Mr. Allen Atwell, an "*uninvited*" member of Mayor Nexsen's re-election campaign committee, but humorously welcomed. None the less, Mr. Atwell may have initially felt a bit uncomfortable but the good spirit and active interest of those gathered conveyed the essentially non-partisan and non-political nature of the endeavor - with a cheerful round of applause. As an aside, Dr. Bill and Allen are business associates as Bill has used Campbell concrete in over 500 DBU new-home projects over the past twenty years. Yes...it's a small town.

Speaking with the strong and confident voice of a life-long leader, Dr. Bill followed the opening comments with a very brief introduction to his background in general, but specifically to his extensive, long-term involvement in community issues as a resident, businessman, educator and political watchdog.

Those who have known Dr. Bill know of his tenacity when it comes to open, honest use of power and money by those who hold governing positions in Mohave County and in particular, Lake Havasu City; he briefly outlined his major contributions and accomplishments in behalf of residents and seasonal visitors.

Most of us are familiar with his passionate writing and love for this town. Current and future endeavors were mentioned which provided clarity of purpose and intent. Support was clearly enthusiastic, and many agreed that those in attendance were "*of one mind and common interest.*"

In his brief address Dr. Bill specifically clarified his position on mutually agreed upon community concerns, energetically emphasizing that his major goal was to put seven key issues on the November 4th ballot, to **give voters the opportunity to accept or reject:**

1. keep or stop sewer fees tied to water usage
2. pay for sewer bond P&I (Principal & Interest) and O&M (Operations & Maintenance) through multiple sources of fees and taxes rather than the present system

3. stop or continue tax rebates to big corporations (\$25 million committed thus far)
4. restore the \$5 million annual city contribution to sewer rate stabilization fund - which could be used to help **decrease the debt**
5. accept or reject the local newspaper's suggestion (editorial of 9-22-13) of a one-cent sales tax to **pay down** the sewer debt (a \$10 million per year impact); Dr. Ullery referenced another writer's suggestion that such a modest sales tax for ten years would yield over \$100 million, which might completely pay off the sewer debt and get our town back to normal finances
6. accept or reject Mayor Nexsen's proposal to refinance the sewer debt with 40-year bonds (with the potential to increase the sewer debt to an estimated \$60 million, with higher interest rates already proposed in restricted discussions)
7. initiate the first step of a **city constitution (charter)** that includes a recommended and desirable **two year cycle for mayor** and essential **term limits for both the mayoral and city council seats**, with the strongest intent to eliminate to the greatest extent possible, filling vacant council seats by arbitrary, political appointment (viz. Nyberg/Borelli) -- essentially bestowing the right to fill vacant council seats **to voters, to the citizens.**

Essentially each key issue was greeted with enthusiastic applause, cheers, and positive verbal feedback. If you have attended similar meetings in other jurisdictions, you would have been inspired by the level of mutual support expressed that day - mostly because these are non-partisan, common sense concerns with an ever expanding base of interest and activism. It was a group of like-minded citizens.

Clearly, we've had enough and even the least active of us can see that there are significant problems that require intervention - and NOW. At this time, year round residents are joined by an increasing number of dissatisfied seasonal residents who are affected by our political and economic climate here and have now been informed about how to establish residency here and vote on matters that affect their property and other financial interests in Lake Havasu City!

At the end of his energetic presentation, an "*open mic forum*" was offered. Without any hesitation, participants asked questions and expressed concern and support. These included:

1. \$5 million sewer rate stabilization fund;
2. city transit system costs per rider and viable alternatives for "*best use of funds*";
3. city priorities in spending versus the needs and desires of residents (priority on paying down the sewer debt);
4. the upcoming city election timelines;
5. Dr. Bill's lawsuits against the city on issues of voter initiatives;

6. Mayor Nexsen's repeated claims that there was never a plan to raise sewer rates vs. City Manager's statement on the 3% fee increase at the 2-19-13 City Council Meeting (nothing gets into the council minutes without Nexsen's approval), the Fitch Ratings Report of 7-19-13 at 6.2% sewer fee increase (from data provided by the city), and a City Manager's email dated 12-17-13, quoting; "*In the absence of viable alternatives, rates would need to rise slightly in order to comply with bond covenants; however, no rate increases are in the works right now because we are confident that our efforts to restructure our loans will successfully offset that necessity.*"

As though there was never a plan to raise sewer rates? Or, restructuring sewer bonds from 20-30 years to 40-years is a fait accompli?

Who can you trust for the facts? The City Manager? Mayor Nexsen? Or, Fitch Ratings?

Please note that this "*gobbledygook*" translates to **refinancing and extending the debt** which led to vigorous discussion about the refinancing scheme and the added debt burden the taxpayers would inherit, as well as a spirited discussion of the likelihood of a gridlocked congress and Democratic White House allowing legislation to give Nexsen anything.

You may well note from the record which topic is the hottest and possibly the most costly for us all - even those few members of the community whose septic systems are not yet connected to the sewer system. Clearly, we are all in this together. We might as well do something affirmative, rather than passive or acquiescent.

As the lively Town Hall Meeting drew to a close Dr. Bill thanked everyone for their interest and their contributions to the success of the event, encouraging those in attendance to consider signing the petitions available, sign up for a number of volunteer opportunities and stay to visit.

By all means, this was a very positive and encouraging experience which reflected so well on life and leisure in Lake Havasu City. Come! Join us next time. Bring a friend! By all means, bring your concerns. It's a safe place.

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