

### Citizen Bond Committee

03/11/2025


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Meeting Date

05/13/2025

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Date Minutes Were Approved

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Natosha Edmonds (May 13, 2025 19:38 PDT)

Chair

### CERTIFICATION AND ATTESTATION

I hereby certify that the accompanying document is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the aforementioned meeting. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.

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Nayeli Carranza (May 13, 2025 18:38 PDT)

Staff Liaison



**MINUTES OF THE AVONDALE CITIZEN BOND COMMITTEE**  
CITY OF AVONDALE, ARIZONA  
SONORAN CONFERENCE ROOM  
March 11, 2025

A **Regular Meeting** of the Citizen Bond Committee of the City of Avondale, Arizona was convened at 11465 West Civic Center Drive in open and public session at 6:00 p.m.

**Voting Members Present:** Chair Edmonds; Vice Chair Schuh; and Committee Members List, Arellano, Lopez-Davey, Ruoti, and De La Riva.

**Non-Voting Members Present:** Committee Member Duncan-Billiman and Committee Member Sapata.

**Other Municipal Officials Present:** Katie Gregory, Assistant City Manager; Renee Weatherless, Finance and Budget Director; Robert Baer, Budget Manager; Stephen Kemp, Attorney; Nayeli Carranza, Finance Specialist; and Marcella Sarmiento, City Clerk.

**Audience:** Approximately ten staff members were present.

**1. ROLL CALL**

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Vice Chair Schuh moved to approve the February 11, 2025, Citizen Bond Committee meeting minutes; Committee Member List seconded the motion.

Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously 7 to 0.

Chair Edmonds	Aye
Vice Chair Schuh	Aye
Committee Member Ruoti	Aye
Committee Member De La Riva	Aye
Committee Member Lopez-Davey	Aye
Committee Member Arellano	Aye
Committee Member List	Aye
Committee Member Duncan-Billiman	Non-Voting Member
Committee Member Sapata	Non-Voting Member

**3. PUBLIC ROLL RESULTS**

Katie Gregory, Assistant City Manager, provided an introduction and reviewed the meeting agenda noting the plan is for the Committee to have a recommendation to move forward to the City Council at the end of the meeting. A review of the Committee's role included the Charter that reads, "*The Bond Committee is formed to recommend a financing plan to be presented to Council which includes recommendations on projects, priorities, property tax impact, and ballot questions for City Council to consider for November 2025 ballot.*"

Paul Bentz, Senior Vice President of Strategy and Research at HighGround Inc. provided background information on HighGround Inc. They have a commitment and

goal of accurate and impartial survey results that provide an understanding of what the electorate is thinking.

Only seventy percent of the adult population in the State of Arizona are registered voters. Many electorates that do not show up to the elections. With midterm elections approximately only thirty percent of the electorate shows up to vote. The younger population do not vote unless there is a big issue on the ticket. This is the portion being polled to acquire an understanding of who will be voting, what they are thinking, and how they will be voting.

A 400-person survey was conducted in February 2025 with live calls. This is the industry standard of municipalities and has a 4.9 percent margin of error. Participants are balanced by gender, party, age, and region to ensure a reliable sample that reflects the City and who will show up at the off-cycle election. There was a thirteen-point democrat advantage and sixty percent of the electorate were fifty plus years old.

An overview of the results was presented and discussed, noting seventy percent of the residents think the City is headed in the right direction. When the Committee takes on their ambassador role, they can talk about the great things happening in the City with the eighteen percent that don't know. The Likert scale was used to rank survey responses. People are generally happy with their municipal services. The three most popular projects are shade structures at park amenities across Avondale, building a joint police and fire station in Southern Avondale, and developing and renovating neighborhood parks. A ballot test was conducted to gain a starting point on where people will vote. The park proposals had fifty-six percent yes vote and public safety proposals had fifty percent yes votes. Both are at or above fifty percent threshold and are viable. It is important to note that polling is a snapshot in time.

In response to questions, an explanation was provided noting that once the election is called further polling is not allowed by the City. Someone else could do further polling but it could not be used by City resources. City law does not allow the use of resources, people, facilities, money, or literally anything to promote a special or any kind of election. The City can do informational things, such as telling people the needs and financing methods but cannot advocate because it is a violation of State law. Political Action Committees have been developed by a group of people to campaign in favor of or in opposition to a bond issue.

#### **4. BOND PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES**

Katie Gregory, Assistant City Manager, reviewed and discussed an update on the previously presented bond projects including the survey results. Constraints related to the proposed projects were also reviewed that includes the Council's limitation on the amount of acceptable authorization.

The proposed park bond projects totaling \$68 million were shown in order according to the polling results. The committee was asked to provide feedback on what information should be shared and which project makes sense to lead with to solidify voters' thoughts and feelings.

Committee members took the opportunity to discuss the prioritization of the park projects presented. Ms. Gregory noted they will use project identifiers to help explain in general terms the improvements sought.

Ms. Gregory summarized the discussion.

1. Park Shade Expansion
2. Park Improvements - examples are Fred Campbell, Donatella, and Las Ligas
3. Trails – trying to connect seven miles of trails north to south along the Aqua Fria River.
4. Library Improvements

Committee members took the opportunity to discuss the prioritization of the \$55 million in public safety projects presented. The titles of a few projects were changed, but the Committee opted to leave the projects in the same order as the poll results.

## **5. PROPOSED BOND QUESTIONS**

Katie Gregory, Assistant City Manager, presented the submission to the voters pertaining to Bond Question #1 for Parks, Recreation, and Library projects and Bond Question #2 for Public Safety projects. When the Committee presents their recommendation to the Council, the ask is to approve the ballot question(s) to be presented to the voters in November 2025.

Committee members discussed the addition of water conservation under the Parks, Recreation, and Libraries project proposal. Ms. Gregory explained there may be a chance to acquire land to preserve the wetlands along with the chance of additional authorization funds being available. During the polling water conservation was presented as an important topic. The Committee took time to discuss water conservation and if it should be left within the question. The consensus was to leave it in.

In response to the questions, Attorney Kemp explained the questions presented are a general summary of the actual physical questions that are written as required by the Constitution and State Statute. Maricopa County voters see what is called Tag lines that are prepared by the County Recorder. The information ballot provides bullet points on what will happen if the bond passes.

## **6. PROPERTY TAX DISCUSSION**

Robert Baer, Budget Manager, presented and discussed the impact on the property tax rate. An overview of the background on property tax was presented including the limited assessed valuation, assessment ratio, and net assessed valuation. The primary property tax goes into the General Fund for general operations and the secondary property tax is used to pay General Obligation Bond debt. In accordance with the City's policy and the City's adopted financial policies, the Council advised the combined primary and secondary property tax rate cannot exceed \$2 per \$100 of net

assessed valuation. The current property tax rate is \$1.45 per \$100 of net assessed valuation.

Several scenarios were reviewed to show the impact of a \$123 million General Obligation Bond on the net assessed valuation. It is projected the combined property tax rate would be slightly lower than the current rate. Information required to be included in the publicity pamphlets was reviewed which shows the annual tax rate of \$0.57 with various scenarios based on assessed values and type of property.

## 7. RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL

The Committee recommended a Financing Plan to be presented to the Council which included recommendations on projects, priorities, property tax impact and ballot questions.

Ms. Gregory noted there is a City Council meeting scheduled for April 7, 2025, that will include this Committee's recommendation if they choose to go forward. Staff prepared a recommended motion for the Committee to review and discuss.

In response to a question, Mr. Baer discussed the impact of increasing the bond amount and raising the property tax rate. Noting the Council has the discretion of when the bonds are sold and there are other considerations to think about as well.

Committee Member Lopez-Davey moved to recommend the following financing plan to be presented to City Council; Vice Chair Schuh seconded the motion.

- Bond Election in November 2025 to fund the following:
  - \$68 million dedicated to projects related to Parks, Recreation, and Library
  - \$55 million dedicated to projects related to Public Safety and Court

Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously 7 to 0.

Chair Edmonds	Aye
Vice Chair Schuh	Aye
Committee Member Ruoti	Aye
Committee Member De La Riva	Aye
Committee Member Lopez-Davey	Aye
Committee Member Arellano	Aye
Committee Member List	Aye
Committee Member Duncan-Billiman	Non-Voting Member
Committee Member Sapata	Non-Voting Member

## 8. NEXT STEPS

Katie Gregory, Assistant City Manager, presented the following next steps.

- April 7, 2025 – Present recommendation to City Council
- May 13, 2025 – Bond Committee Meeting

- June 2 or 16, 2025 – Bond Committee to attend the City Council meeting for recognition.

Chair Edmonds thanked City staff for their presentation, detail, and time and Committee members for working together.

## 9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Committee Member Arellano, moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting; Committee Member List seconded the motion.

Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously 7 to 0.

Chair Edmonds	Aye
Vice Chair Schuh	Aye
Committee Member Ruoti	Aye
Committee Member De La Riva	Aye
Committee Member Lopez-Davey	Aye
Committee Member Arellano	Aye
Committee Member List	Aye
Committee Member Duncan-Billiman	Non-Voting Member
Committee Member Sapata	Non-Voting Member

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

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Chair Edmonds

## CERTIFICATION AND ATTESTATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Citizen Bond Committee of the City of Avondale held on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of March 2025. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.

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Marcella Sarmiento, City Clerk

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Date Approved by Citizen Bond Committee