



June 3 Special Election

In order to be a successful city, we constantly look to the future and try to “vision” the needs of tomorrow. That’s how Harbor Town happened. That’s also how Kohl’s in Harbor Town happened... and that’s how Festival Foods happened as well.

It’s also how we partnered with Burger Boat to fashion their dramatic evolution from yacht manufacturer to mega yacht manufacture.

And it’s exactly what’s happening with Orion Energies as they migrate from the world of energy efficient lighting to a provider of total conservation and sustainability. As a city, we need to be as entrepreneurial and future thinking as the businesses that exist here and that will exist here in years to come.

A key element of visioning the future is making sure that current and future businesses have the basic building blocks that are necessary for commerce and development, and that’s what a major portion of the special election on June 3rd is all about.

This special election is the result of petitions presented to the City asking for a vote regarding the usual and customary financing to be used for the City’s 2008 Capital Improvement Projects. Four of the five referendum questions on the ballot are “binding” and involve projects that have always been funded by the city through bond issues to keep our property taxes low.

The issuance of General Obligation Bonds is the usual and customary financing method used to fund major “capital” projects in our city and all Wisconsin cities.

There are five questions on the ballot with the first four dealing with infrastructure necessary to keep commerce moving, our streets safe for travel, prevent flooding and our toilets flushing.

These four questions basically ask “Shall the City bond for the cost of improving streets, storm sewer improvements, sanitary sewer improvements and the cost of new community developments?”

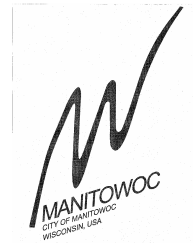
In order for these projects to move forward to support our current needs and the needs of the future, all four must be answered in the affirmative or with a “Yes” vote. If you want to defer or delay these projects, it will require a “NO” vote.

The projects included on the ballot for this special election are needed projects and will have to be built. They can be built this year at this year’s costs, or be deferred to the future. Even a one year’s delay will increase the costs of these very same projects by hundreds of thousands of dollars due to the spiraling costs of gas and diesel fuel, asphalt, concrete and labor.

These are the types of projects that are bid out to various construction companies like Vinton and Seiler; projects like the relaying of blocks of sanitary and storm sewer and then the repaving of the street under which they lay.

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It should be noted again that these four referendum questions regarding bonding are not about unusual or special projects, but for streets and sewers, the things we have historically always bonded for.

It should also be noted that Manitowoc's conservative fiscal practices and usual and customary bonding policies have kept our city's property taxes and general obligation debt the lowest among major cities in our state and the absolute lowest among comparable cities. More information regarding Manitowoc's low taxes and debt can be found on our website at www.manitowoc.org.

Specific examples of projects included on the June 3rd ballot include flood control near 11th and Waldo Boulevard, new sanitary sewer to move septage from the "Rapids" area to the Waste Water Plant and paving the road to Burger Boat, Spring Street.

I would like to encourage everybody to vote in the special election on June 3rd. Our collective decision will definitely have an impact on our future.

Manitowoc Mayor Kevin Crawford may be reached at 920-686-6980.