

ANALYSIS OF 4 BOND PROPOSALS FOR ABILENE-TAYLOR COUNTY, TEXAS
NOVEMBER 7, 2023 ELECTIONS

Proposition Number	Purpose	Why The Government is Asking	Sources
ABILENE-TAYLOR COUNTY A	To increase the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) by 2% and allow the Abilene-Taylor County Events Venue District spend this tax money on assigned projects	To prevent the dissolution of the 20-year Venue District and to bring state allowed, visitor-paid HOT tax funds into Taylor County	https://abilenetx.portal.civicclerk.com/event/2287/files

POSITION RATIONALE:

THOSE “FOR” BELIEVE: This ensures that Abilene-Taylor County will not lose an available portion of the state HOT Tax funds.

THOSE “AGAINST” BELIEVE: Because the state requires a “shovel-ready” project to renew this venue district, a non-essential project was created to meet the criteria of this state program, not necessarily one that is the highest priority of our community.

Proposition Number	Purpose	Why The Government is Asking	Sources
CITY OF ABILENE A	To increase taxes to make payments on \$15,000,000 borrowed to fund ½ of Phase 1 of the Abilene Zoo Improvement Project	To improve the Zoo and increase tourism & tourism spending in Abilene	https://abilenetx.portal.civicclerk.com/event/2281/files

POSITION RATIONALE:

THOSE “FOR” BELIEVE: That the Abilene Zoo is one of the “Jewels of our city” and that its increased enjoyment it is worth paying increased taxes.

THOSE “AGAINST” BELIEVE: That the Abilene Zoo is a great asset to our city, but that if investment in the Abilene Zoo is a priority for our city that the funds, most favorably would come from private funding sources, or if necessary, public funds from budgeted cash on hand (not from debt paid for by increased taxes). Regardless, we believe that the City of Abilene government overall is overly-dependent on borrowing money to fund the needs of the city, and is not fiscally responsible in preparing to fund the needs of the city with available cash on hand. There might be a time when a bond would be permissible to fund Abilene Zoo Improvement, but in the current economic climate, that time is not now, and we need to focus on lowering taxes.

Proposition Number	Purpose	Why The Government is Asking	Sources
CITY OF ABILENE B	To increase taxes to make payments on \$28,000,000 borrowed to Fund Improvements to Abilene Recreation Centers	The government believes that our citizens desire to have better recreation centers (based on a survey of 239 respondents)	https://abilenetx.portal.civicclerk.com/event/2281/files

POSITION RATIONALE:

THOSE “FOR” BELIEVE: That Abilene Recreation Centers are in dire need of renovation and that the citizens want this.

THOSE “AGAINST” BELIEVE: That while Abilene Recreation Centers do need renovation, the survey used to make this decision was flawed (sample size was inadequate & the population surveyed was biased), and therefore the survey does not reflect the priorities of Abilenians. In 2018 the City staff acknowledged that the citizens do not want to fund recreation center renovation with a bond, so this seems to actually go against the will of Abilenians. Regardless, we believe that the City of Abilene government overall is overly-dependent on borrowing money to fund the needs of the city, and is not fiscally responsible in preparing to fund the needs of the city with available cash on hand. There might be a time when a bond would be permissible to fund recreation center renovations, but in the current economic climate, that time is not now, and we need to focus on lowering taxes.

Proposition Number	Purpose	Why The Government is Asking	Sources
CITY OF ABILENE C	To increase taxes to make payments on \$9,000,000 borrowed to build hike & bike trails around Kirby Lake	The government believes that our citizens desire to have hike & bike trails around Kirby Lake (based on a survey of 743 respondents)	https://abilenetx.portal.civicclerk.com/event/2281/files

POSITION RATIONALE:

THOSE “FOR” BELIEVE: That hike & bike trails are a great asset to add to our city and that the citizens want this.

THOSE “AGAINST” BELIEVE: That while hike & bike trails are a great asset, the survey used to make this decision was flawed (sample size was inadequate), and therefore the survey does not reflect the priorities of the majority of Abilenians. This seems to be much more a “want” than a “need” at this time. Regardless, we believe that the City of Abilene government overall is overly-dependent on borrowing money to fund the needs of the city, and is not fiscally responsible in preparing to fund the needs of the city with available cash on hand. There might be a time when a bond would be permissible to fund hike & bike trail construction, but in the current economic climate, that time is not now, and we need to focus on lowering taxes.