



Mayor's Phone: 307-350-0739

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
Dutch John Conference Hall
Dutch John Town Council
June 5, 2024 7:00 P.M.

MINUTES FOR
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Johns stated that this Public Hearing was called to receive comments on an application to the Community Impact Fund Board (CIB) for road improvements.

Attendance:

Town Council Members: Mayor Butch Johns, Councilmembers Amy McDonald, Sandy Kunkel, Al Pulham, Harriet Dickerson.

Public: Pam Johns, Lorraine McDonald, Julie Rogers.

Mayor Johns started with a history of where we are at. In December of 2023, Council had received a proposal to resurface South and North Blvds. This grant application was for approximately \$2 million, starting at Hwy. 191 and going around North and South Blvds. And including 6th Ave. In the process of reviewing the application after he became Mayor, it was determined that the grant request as written didn't meet the necessary criteria. We could, however, ask for a grant for a lesser amount and do some of the work. The application was modified, submitted and accepted by the Joint Highway Board. The area was smaller but 48 ft. of road will be surfaced. Because there is a batch plant just down the road this year that

we can access, the cost will be significantly lower. Instead of approximately \$2 million it would cost approximately \$1.8 million. Mayor Johns made a presentation to the Joint Highway Board and received a grant – but the grant won't be funded until 2027. The Joint Highway Board didn't want to change the date for receipt of this funding to this year, however. Our matching/share for this grant will be approximately \$68,000. Their Board suggested the Town go to the CIB board and request funding for this year, using their grant as a guarantee for payment of our share of this funding, if granted.

Mayor Johns is working with Civco Engineering, and the decision was made to go back to the original plan for doing all the roads. One of the major questions being asked is why we have such big roads. Of course, the BOR did that. The plan is to narrow our roads to 48' leaving a 20' section for utilities, walking/bike riding use, etc.

The application we have right now is for \$2,131,000. We will save money because of the batch plant being here. They will just extend their current project to include this for the Town. We are asking for a grant from CIB for \$1,103,000 and we will use \$960,000 from the Joint Highway Board as pay back and the State has agreed this is acceptable. Ms. Kunkel inquired about the Town's match and it will be approximately \$68,000.

Mayor Johns said a discussion came up about a Loan. This would change the money from a grant to a loan with 0% interest. We need to seriously look at this. If we had a loan for approximately \$2 million for 30 years, it would mean paying approximately \$65,000/year a year. Mayor Johns told them the Council could look at it, but his opinion is it creates a major burden for the future and where would the money come from. Ms. Kunkel also added that in a 30 year period there will also be substantial costs for maintenance and new roads. Mayor Johns concurred and stated there wouldn't be money to do hardly anything else for the Town. Ms. Kunkel

asked about the possibility of the Special Service Road District and Mayor Johns said he was told they don't have much funding.

If this project is funded, the Blvd. roads will be reduced from 68' down to 48', where there will be 12' on each side for parallel parking and 24' for travel lanes. The remainder 20' will be designated for walking/bike and underground utilities. He noted that the money we receive from the Joint Highway Board cannot be used for surbs but the CIB funding may be used.

A decision has to be made as to how far we will go – if the funding is a grant we are good, if not a decision has to be made by the Council regarding a loan. Mayor Johns doesn't believe we have the resources to carry a heavy burden. Ms. McDonald reviewed if we get the CIB money we can do the whole. Worst case scenario is we already have the money from the Joint Highway Fund in 2027 and we would just do parts. We would do from Sixty Ave up around the Blvds. Ms. Kunkel asked about going to Little Hole, but that will need to be another project entirely.

Mayor Johns said we also need to remember that we have been approved for the Joint Highway Board money but we need to understand there are still several steps we have to go through. And the absolute final approval from the federal government won't be until September. So there is a slight possibility that this money won't happen and if that is the case the Town is on the hook for the whole amount. Mr. Pulham asked for clarification that we are going to establish our road base at 48'. Then there will be added curb and gutter around the outside. It is a good idea but very expensive. Mayor Johns said Civco Engineering is working on the engineering part. He also stated there is an issue on the alignment of the road on Guide Row. Ms. Kunkel asked if there will be a study to determine where there will be the most traffic and the best use of the money. Mayor Johns said the two main roads for egress are Sixth Ave. and the Bench Road. These could be opportunities for developers to do these roads. Ms. Kunkel

asked if there was a time limit for spending the money – can it wait until 2027. Mayor Johns said we would spend the CIB money now because of the savings that we will receive with the batch plant being here. The cost in 2027 would be approximately \$2.45 million and now will be \$1.824 million. We can do whatever we can do with what money we have. Worse case scenario is that in 2027 we will have a million dollars to do what we can. That money would only be for resurfacing, not curb and gutter. Ms. Kunkel clarified that there would be a full resurfacing, not chip and seal.

If the curb and gutter portion happens, then developers will have to cut out sections for access to their property.

Ms. Kunkel asked if improving our roads will initiate the need for a property tax for our citizens. Mayor Johns said CIB is asking the question, do we have a property tax. The answer is no, because we haven't implemented one. This discussion started last October and Mayor Johns is pursuing this now because he is the Mayor. It will happen. Ms. Kunkel said now is good. Before we didn't have a reason to tax the people, we couldn't show a real need. Now with this road project we have a substantial need and the maintenance which will be incurred about installation are good reasons for establishing a property tax.

The other point being made is CIB money comes from oil gas and how does our Town fit into that. Mayor Johns says we fit because we support the facility at Clay Basin and we have gas lines throughout our property so this is not an issue. Ms. Kunkel reminded that CIB funding is highly competitive. Mayor Johns agreed and said the Joint Highway Funding was also very competitive. An engineer from the State suggested we submit our case through a funding opportunity that no one had ever used before and that is how we were funded. Next years others will apply for money in this manner. Ms. Kunkel asked about funding for maintenance. We do

have money in our road reserve funds that can be used, hopefully, to match grants received for maintenance and new projects.

Last, we need to establish a Road Maintenance Program and a Transportation Plan, but they are being worked on.

Ms. Lorraine McDonald questioned the implementation of a tax of the residents of Dutch John. She wonders how much money is the Town thinking about collecting. Mayor Johns said we need to remember that a substantial number of people are living on a fixed income, and we need to look at what they can afford. Mr. Pulham added he feels there is an injustice in the way taxes are collected and it seems that the Town can't have some of that money for infrastructure in our Town. Ms. Kunkel asked if the money generated will even make a dent in the costs and Mayor Johns said it will be more than we have now and having a property tax will increase our chances for obtaining grant funding. Discussion about the federal employees who will never pay property tax, acquiring the PILT money generated by our Town from the County. These avenues will be explored.

There was only support from those in attendance.

Mayor Johns closed the public hearing at 7:30 p.m.



Harriet Dickerson, Clerk