

OPINION: I FIND THE MARSHALL NEWS MESSENGER ARTICLE CONFUSING AND A LITTLE MISLEADING

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On Saturday the Marshall News Messenger published an article titled, "No bond election for new animal shelter after split Marshall commissioners vote." When I read the headline, I assumed that after 6 years the City Commission had approved the project and construction would start in the fall.

After reading the rest of the article and making a few calls, I think the fate of the animal shelter is still up in the air.

The MNM article said, "Commissioners Larry Hurta, Vernia Calhoun and Doug Lewis voted against the \$2.2 million certificate of obligation funding option." It is my understanding that these commissioners will support an election petition that if successful will prevent the City from using the certificate of obligation that passed on Thursday.

Last week I wrote an article that said, "in my opinion if the city commissioners decide on a bond election rather than using a certificate of obligation, they would be shooting themselves in the foot."

After Thursday's vote it looks like Commissioners Hurta, Calhoun, and Lewis missed with their first shot but are putting another bullet in the chamber and getting ready to take another shot. The only difference is that if this one hits the foot it is going to be even more damaging. I'll explain why in the remaining part of this article.

The MNM states, "If a petition is successful and if either project failed in an election, the city would not be able to revisit any funding options for the projects for a period of three years, unless the city paid for them outright with cash on hand."

It is my understanding that if a person signs the Commissioners Hurta, Calhoun, and Lewis supported petition and the petition succeeds it will prevent the use of the certificate for every project mentioned in

the certificate. It is not an either/or.

In essence if a person signs the petition they are saying they favor killing all of the projects included in the certificate of obligation for the next three years.

If the petition succeeds here are some of the problems the City will face.

The city will need to use bonds to finance these projects. That will require a bond election.

If the City wants to hold a bond election in November it must put it on the ballot in early August. The petition drive will not end until July 26. Getting all the signatures verified and the petition certified in time to write a ballot bond initiative and on the ballot by the August date will almost be impossible. This means that the vote would be delayed until May 2019.

Even if it gets on the May 2019 ballot the chances of people voting to raise their taxes is very low based on Marshall's voting history.

So, if the Commissioners Hurta, Calhoun, and Lewis support petition is successful it will basically shut down Marshall's capital investment projects until May 2022.

Is this how to move Marshall forward?

The MNM headline is misleading. The animal shelter is not "out of the woods" yet.

Think twice before you sign the Commissioners Hurta, Calhoun, and Lewis supported petition.

City Manager Jack Redmon said, "If the petition is not successful ... the city could potentially begin construction on the new animal shelter this fall."

Victory is so close. All Marshall voters need to do is to reject this petition and the City can declare victory.

Will Commissioners Hurta, Calhoun, and Lewis snatch defeat from the jaws of victory? Let's all pray they are a bad shot.