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BY: AB

I had the privilege of serving the Atkins Community as City Clerk for thirty-eight years, retiring in 2014. Over that period, I would like to think I have learned a few things.

In the early 1990's the council had the need to build a new water tower. They looked at assorted designs with different capacities and heights. They choose to build the existing tower based on a number of factors: not wanting to build it too big; building it the same height as the "old tower" and the cost. Thirty years later we all regret the tower is not bigger and taller.

In the early 2010's the council felt the need to build a new Library, City Hall, and Recreation center. After looking at preliminary designs it was apparent that funding was not going to be available to complete a project of that size. The Recreation center was eliminated, and the size of the remaining project was reduced based on the funds available. Less than fifteen years later we all wish the Rec Center could have been built, the Council Room was larger, and we had more space for City Hall.

Which brings us to the Fire Station. I would encourage the Council to request bids based on the design of the **building as presented**. The Opinion of Probable Cost sheet provided by the architect has a number of options, other than the building, which could be reduced or eliminated: Site Improvements-\$1,215,000, Estimating Contingency- \$406,919, Turnout Gear Lockers- \$12,000 (new ones purchased for temporary station) etc.

The Council has done a great job of getting the funding in place for this project. My understanding is we are already collecting property taxes for the payments on the \$4.5 million bond debt. Benton County sent out information regarding Property Taxes for next year showing a 14.76% reduction in taxes for Atkins residences. Even after paying for the Fire Station bonds, my property taxes would be reduced by over \$650 for the year.

Concern about the Debt Limit. The Debt Limit (5% of the total assessed value) will continue to increase as we continue to have new construction coming on the tax rolls. The amount of new debt the City can issue will continue to increase with continued growth and as we pay off existing debt (approximately \$400,000 per year).

Any improvements to the City's water system should be paid for by either a rate increase or a water debt fee.

I would be happy to share my thoughts on any of the items listed above. You can reach me at 319-981-6343.


Dick Lange