

SANDOVAL COUNTY BOND ISSUES

There are a total of five bond questions for voters to consider during the 2024 General Election. Passing all four Sandoval County bonds would result in an increase of \$11 over tax year 2024 for an average \$300,000 home. The fifth question is from the Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District for land, water, and soil conservation projects. The Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District question will not appear on all Sandoval County residents' ballots.

Here are the bond questions as they will appear on the ballot in Sandoval County:

#1. General Obligation Bond for Library Facilities

Ballot Language: "Shall Sandoval County, New Mexico, be authorized to issue its general obligation bonds, in one series or more, in an aggregate principal amount not exceeding \$3,100,000 for the purpose of planning, designing, upgrading, constructing, remodeling, furnishing, equipping, repairing and otherwise improving library facilities within Sandoval County, New Mexico, and purchasing books and other library resources for libraries within Sandoval County, New Mexico, said bonds to be payable from the general (ad valorem) taxes, and to be issued and sold at such time or times and upon such terms and conditions as the Board of County Commissioners may determine and as permitted by law?"

Opposition: While libraries can be valuable community resources, adding \$3.1 million in bond debt places an unnecessary burden on property owners. The County could seek state funding or other alternatives instead of relying on property taxes. Alternative funding was found when the county's residents rejected the bond for District Court Expansion. Voting against this request would reduce the overall increase in taxes over tax year 2024.

Support: Libraries historically provide free access to books, digital resources, and community programs that promote education and lifelong learning for residents throughout Sandoval County. They also provide spaces for community gatherings and offer services such as job search help and public workshops. Alternative funding sources are often untimely or unavailable – particularly for library uses.

#2 General Obligation Bond for Fire Department, Public Safety, and Telecommunications

Ballot Language: "Shall Sandoval County be authorized to issue up to \$11,200,000 of general obligation bonds for the purpose of planning, designing, engineering, constructing, acquiring, installing and expanding County Fire Department water delivery systems and County public safety and government telecommunication systems equipment and related County buildings, said bonds to be issued and sold at such time or times and upon such terms and conditions as the Board of County Commissioners may determine and as permitted by law?"

Opposition: Public safety is crucial, yet before approving this \$11.2 million bond, the County should exhaust all federal and state funding sources. Approval of this bond amounts to 46% of the overall request. While this might seem small, it adds up quickly, especially as residents have faced substantial tax increases in recent assessments.

Support: Upgrading fire department water systems and public safety infrastructure would enhance safety throughout Sandoval County and enable the completion of Phase 3 of the four-phased EMS Communications Program. It also provides funding for the fire suppression water project for the Placitas Library and the Algodones Business Loop. #3 General Obligation Bond for Animal Shelter

Ballot Language: "Shall Sandoval County be authorized to issue up to \$7,500,000 of general obligation bonds for the purpose of designing, constructing, equipping, and furnishing a County animal shelter, said bonds to be payable from general (ad valorem) taxes, and to be issued and sold at such time or times and upon such terms and conditions as the Board of County Commissioners may determine and as permitted by law?"

Opposition: While animal welfare is important, with all the other inflation going on, some residents risk losing their homes due to rising property taxes. The County should consider public-private partnerships or working with non-profit shelters and rescues that are already part of the community. Helping people stay in their homes and reducing taxes will help animals not be surrendered because the owner can't afford their food or because they lost their home.

Support: Sandoval County has a severe lack of shelter space for stray animals. Public and private shelters are full to bursting and many of the county's smaller communities simply lack the capacity to provide animal service resources. Passage completes the funding package for an 11,000 square foot facility that includes funding from state capital outlay, county general funds and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Should this bond fail, the county would have to delay the project indefinitely due to the loss of ARPA funding.

#4 General Obligation Bond for Fleet, Road, and County Facilities

Ballot Language: "Shall Sandoval County be authorized to issue up to \$2,607,000 of general obligation bonds for the purpose of acquiring vehicles, paving roads, acquiring equipment and making improvements to County facilities, said bonds to be payable from general (ad valorem) taxes, and to issued and sold at such time or times and upon such terms and conditions as the Board of County Commissioners may determine and as permitted by law?"

Opposition: While maintaining infrastructure is necessary, we need to prioritize fiscal responsibility. Sandoval County has options that don't involve increasing taxes for residents. The County should look to existing state funds and grants rather than increasing or extending debt burden.

Support: Improving road conditions can potentially reduce vehicle maintenance costs for residents. Fleet and facility upgrades may ensure improved public services delivered supporting long-term savings by reducing operational costs and enhancing service. #5 Mill Levy for Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation

Ballot Language: "Shall the duly elected Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors establish a levy of up to 0.25 mills to: protect drinking water sources and the health of rivers and streams by improving stormwater and floodplain management; reduce the risk of wildfire for our communities by improving the health of our forests, including the Sandia and Manzano Forests; restore wildlife habitat, including along the Rio Grande; preserve agricultural land by partnering with local farmers to promote healthy soil practices; restore and conserve natural areas

and open spaces to provide equitable access to the outdoors; and provide natural resources education for youth and adults; with all revenues and expenditures subject to an independent annual audit?”

Opposition: Conservation efforts are worthwhile, but property taxes are already high. Before levying additional taxes, alternative funding methods should be examined. Many property owners are struggling, and additional levies will only deepen financial distress.

Support: Funding conservation efforts will help safeguard water resources and soil management. This could reduce future costs related to water shortages, protect forests, and the environment.