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Atchison City Commissioners Swear in Bower

Jack Bower gets sworn in as the newest Atchison City Commissioner.

He was elected by a three to one margin Monday afternoon to fill the term of resigned Commissioner Andrew Werring until 2015.

Mayor Allen Reavis and Commissioners Dave Butler and Larry Purcell voted for Bower, while Commissioner Rita Hartman voted for the other candidate in the running, Kay Greenly.

This is Bower's second stint on the commission, previously serving from April 2009 until April 2011.

Commissioners also sought public feedback on the future of stop lights at the intersections of 4th and Main streets, and 5th through 7th and Kansas Avenue.

Only one citizen spoke publically, Sally Irons.

She spoke in support of removal of the stop lights, replacing them with four way stops.

City officials posed the question on their Facebook page, asking how citizens would feel if the lights were removed.

They received around 100 people giving feedback, which is two to three times the feedback they have gotten compared to other questions asked in the past.

City Finance Director Mandy Cawby discusses the feedback(Play Audio 34 secs)

Online comments also suggested, if the lights were to remain in place, to flash them overnight beginning at 10 to give motorists flexibility during off-peak hours.

Cawby also discussed feedback of those against removing the lights(Play Audio 20 secs)

Commissioners also discussed their feedback from the community.

Commissioner Hartman polled 50 people at her workplace, with 42 against removing the lights, citing safety concerns.

She also said the joggers she spoke to around town like the certainty of stoplights.

Mayor Reavis suggested when it comes time to take action, potential changes, if any, to the lights can be looked at on an individual basis.

Commissioners asked Police Chief Mike Wilson to weigh in on the discussion.

He says there should be some form of traffic regulation at these intersections, which he says is not necessarily stop lights(Play Audio 37 secs)

Chief also cited the concern of having stop signs on 4th and main on the side of the railroad tracks, which long lines could put vehicles on the tracks.

Current stop lights are pre-empted on those side, giving a green light to those going northbound to avoid that problem.

No action was taken and City Manager Trey Cocking said staff would like two to four more weeks to discuss the matter before final action is taken.

In other business, Commissioners unanimously approved the one point one two million dollar wastewater treatment plant UV disinfection system project.

Commissioners also received a pilot payment from the Atchison Housing Authority for 23 thousand 639 dollars.

Director Sherry Swendson reported the positives of having zero audit findings as well as the construction of the Boys and Girls Club parking lot, but the negative of continued federal cuts from HUD.

Commissioners also unanimously approved an 18 thousand 500 dollar raw water intake roof replacement.

Utilities Director Mike Matthews said the current roof is 21 to 30 years old and the new one will have a guaranteed lifespan of 15 years.

Commissioners unanimously approved Sue Van Gordon to replace resigning member Phyllis Downing on the Park Board until July 2015.