

To: Mayor and Ames City Council Members

From: Steven L. Schainker, City Manager

Date: August 3, 2021

Subject: Correcting Information Provided Previously Regarding
Number of Signatures Needed for Reverse Referendum

At the July 13th and the July 27th City Council meetings, City staff reported to the City Council that the number of signatures required to petition for a reverse referendum regarding the Indoor Aquatic Center bonds was 3,189. This was based on 10% of the total voters in the last regular election held in Ames, which was the November 2020 General Election.

Upon further examination, and after consultation with the City's outside Bond Attorney, it has been determined that this total is incorrect. It appears that there was a miscommunication between our Bond Attorney and the City staff team that discussed the matter.

The law indicates that the number of signatures required is equal to 10% of the number of people voting in the last regular city election. This type of election would have City Council (and/or Mayor) elections on the ballot and held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of each odd-numbered year.

In accordance with this definition, the last regular city election was on November 5, 2019. Based on information provided on **the County Auditor's website, staff has calculated that the total ballots cast in Ames during that election is 4,767, meaning 477 signatures of eligible Ames voters would be required on a petition to demand a reverse referendum for the Aquatic Center bonds.** On Thursday, July 29th the City Attorney verified these numbers with the Story County Auditor.

We regret providing an incorrect interpretation and, therefore, an incorrect number for the required signatures. Recognizing the importance of transparency with the community, it is important that this issue be placed back on the City Council agenda in order to correct this information.

By creating an agenda item, the correct figure will be included in readily searchable official records (minutes, agenda, and memo) should community members seek it out via the City website or through records requests. The last thing we want is for anyone to rely on the incorrect information that was provided previously by the City staff.