

MLive

Public safety tax increase on May ballot in Pittsfield Township

By Samuel J. Robinson - March 25, 2021



A ballot drop-off box outside the Precinct 1 and 8 polling places at Pittsfield Township Hall on Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020.

PITTSFIELD TOWNSHIP — Pittsfield Township officials are asking voters to approve a public safety tax increase in a special election on Tuesday, May 4,

The money from the increase would go to things like buying new body cams and hiring more officers to keep pace with the township's growth, officials said.

The Public Safety Millage calls for a mill increase from 1.95 to 3.95, which translates to an additional \$60 per month for the median household in Pittsfield Township. It is estimated the 3.95 mills would raise approximately \$8,413,162 when first levied in 2022.

The approval of the millage would equip all uniformed police department personnel with body cameras when in contact with the public, officials said. Additional funding would also be used to increase the number of sworn police officers and to implement more community-centric policing policies and practices, officials said.

If the millage fails, the township would be faced with cutting or maintaining salaries and eliminating as many as six police officers and four firefighters, officials said.

"If the millage is approved we will roll up our sleeves and get to work," Township Supervisor Mandy Grewal said in an email.

The township sees the increase as a way not only to maintain its services, but to enhance community and neighborhood engagement and social justice initiatives.

“Our Pittsfield Township public safety team is committed to providing transparent, respectful and efficient customer service to all residents all the time,” Grewal said.

Grewal said that approval of the millage would mandate racial bias trainings to ensure public safety personnel are well equipped to address issues in a racially and culturally competent manner.

Officials say it wants to increase its public safety department’s interactions and engagement with minority populations by participating in cultural events or educational institutions, as well as inviting faith-based and other leaders to public forums with the goal of providing equitable public safety services.

Township taxes have remained unchanged since November 2009, with the exception of the increase in public safety millage residents approved in 2011.

April 19 is the last day to register to vote in Michigan’s upcoming May 4 election. Voters can register to vote through the date of the election if they vote in-person at their local clerk’s office. For those voting absentee, ballots must be returned to the city or township clerk no later than the close of polls, 8 p.m. on the day of the election.