



Pittsfield Charter Township

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Office of the Supervisor

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Mandy Grewal, Supervisor

DATE: June 1, 2021

SUBJECT: Public Safety Millage

Since the failure of Public Safety millage in May 2021, Director Harshberger and I have worked with our team and others to compile the following:

1. The majority of the public did not understand and does not support the 2 mill increase because: (a) They strongly feel that General Fund should (further) increase its contributions toward public safety; (b) They were unclear on how the money raised via the millage would be spent; and (c) They didn't know why we needed to raise so much given the passage of the Washtenaw County Mental Health and Public Safety millage a few years ago.
2. In order to address these concerns and feedback, we propose reducing both the millage rate and length of millage by half: 2.95 mills for 5 years. This will, of course, require increased contributions from General Fund but will also align the Township millage cycle with that of the County. This will require the Township to make changes to its public safety millage rate, 2026 and beyond, based on what the outcome is for the County millage.
3. The public and residents did not fully comprehend the fact that the township has raised its overall millage rate by just 1 mill in 15+ years that has required the township to function at an extremely cost-conscious basis, requiring dispatch elimination, steep declines in fund balances, and overworking public safety personnel by keeping employee count the same as it was a decade ago despite a 10,000 increase in population. To rectify the same, especially with the pandemic in the rear-view mirror, Director Harshberger will lead public forums both prior to the July BOT meeting and prior to the millage vote in November that will, among other things, share the line-item expenditure projections for public safety from 2022-2027.
4. While a higher millage rate such as 3.0 or 3.25 would greatly relieve pressure on the General Fund, after careful consideration and input from stakeholders including many of you, the 2.95 mill rate appears to be the highest most likely acceptable rate to the public. Of course, as noted above, the same will be vetted through public engagement later this month.
5. After BOT approval of a specific millage rate at the July BOT meeting, we will provide you with various cost-cutting measures and considerations for the General Fund as part of overall budget discussions assuming passage of the millage request in September. Alternative scenarios, if required, will be discussed after the November election.

Given the absolutely basic and essential functions of public safety, it is incumbent upon us, however difficult the task, to continue – as we have since November 2008 – placing public safety as a top priority.
