



Pittsfield Charter Township

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Office of the Supervisor

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Mandy Grewal, Ph.D., Supervisor

DATE: July 21, 2021

SUBJECT: June 9- July 14 Review

I want to begin by expressing my sincere and deepest appreciation to the Pittsfield Team for stepping in and stepping up to assist in handling a multitude of issues that arose during my absence over the past few weeks (reference June 1, 2021 BOT Memo 'Medical Leave'). To the best of my knowledge, over these past few weeks:

1. The Public Safety Public Forum yielded an overwhelming support by the public to increase General Fund's contribution toward police and fire expenditures. There was expansive discussion on why public was not in favor of the 3.95 millage rate and, as noted, wanting to ensure maximum funding was being made available through General Fund for public safety.
2. The Park Commission has an urgent need to fill the Parks & Recreation Director position. This is paired with an urgent need to address the vacant Director of Municipal Services position; both left unfilled after the failure of the 3.95 Public Safety millage vote in May.
3. The Public Safety Director is a finalist for the position as EMU's Director of Public Safety. The final decision is expected by the end of this month.
4. BOT, at its July 14, 2021 meeting decided to continue holding Pittsfield Township's public meetings virtually while in agreement with the Pandemic Transition Protocol Committee's recommendation to transition Township employees to full time in-person work, which will be effective beginning September.
5. BOT voted last week to approve the 2.95 Public Safety millage language for the November 2nd election with an upcoming amendment to clarify millage language about 'replacement.'

Next steps:

1. With the outcome of the public safety millage determining many – if not all – next steps, do we want to consider seeking assistance in educating/informing the public?
 2. Even if the 2.95 millage is approved, it will require \$800,000 reduction in General Fund expenditures, as outlined in an earlier presentation to the Board. Since this will entail significant changes, it is important we begin Board discussions on the same ASAP. While not possible for this special meeting due to staff and data constraints, we hope to begin the same at the August BOT meeting, so we may begin addressing urgent above-noted issues.
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Pittsfield Township asking voters again for public safety tax increase

By Samuel Dodge – July 15, 2021

PITTSFIELD TWP., MI - Pittsfield Township is entering round two in its fight to provide tax funding for its public safety department.

The township unanimously voted during its Wednesday, July 14 Board of Trustees meeting for a resolution approving ballot language to increase the public safety millage from 1.95 to 2.95 mills.

This increase, which would raise about \$6.5 million in its first year, would start in November 2021 if approved by voters in the Nov. 2 election. The township calculated that the millage would increase taxes by \$20 a month on households with a taxable value of about \$240,000, according to Matthew Harshberger, director of the township's public safety department.

Residents [rejected the township's previous millage increase proposal](#) that was placed on Washtenaw County's May 4 election ballot. That proposal called for an increase to 3.95 mills. The township previously calculated using median household income, which meant that taxes would increase by a median amount of additional \$30 per month.

The median household income for Pittsfield Township is \$79,965, according to census data.

Officials said in March that if the millage failed, the township would be faced with cutting or maintaining salaries and eliminating as many as six police officers and four firefighters.

The previous ballot language was confusing, Harshberger said during Wednesday's meeting. He noted that residents thought the previous proposal made it seem that there would be two public safety millages, even though the new, increased millage would have replaced the old one.

He and Trustee Gerald Krone requested that the current proposal clarify that the new millage replaces the old one. The Pittsfield Township Board of Trustees unanimously approved the ballot language pending a review from their legal team that ensures the ballot language alleviates this concern.

Once the legal review is over, the township will send its ballot language to the Washtenaw County Clerk by not later than Aug. 10 to start the certification process to place the proposal on the November 2021 ballot.

In addition to maintaining public safety staffing, Pittsfield Township wants more funding to implement more community-centric policing policies, as well as equip all uniformed police department personnel with body cameras when in contact with the public.

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