

A Voter's Guide to the 2016 Newaygo County Public Safety/Road Patrol Operating Millage Renewal

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On Tuesday, August 2, 2016 Newaygo County residents will vote on the proposed millage renewal for public safety and road patrol operations. If approved (a "Yes" vote), the renewed millage will provide continued funding to support the Newaygo County Sheriff Department's road patrol (including the dive team and canine unit), investigative and other emergency public safety services. If rejected (a "No" vote), funding supporting public safety and road patrol operations of the Newaygo County Sheriff Department would be considerably reduced, leading to significant reductions in services.

The following guide has been developed by Michigan State University Extension to assist voters in making an informed decision. The information below is based on MSU Extension's research and analysis of the proposed millage renewal and is for educational purposes only. MSU Extension does not endorse nor show bias against any position.

Millage Rates (Taxes)

The proposed millage is a renewal of an existing millage set to expire in December 2016 that provides funding support for additional road deputies, dive team, canine unit, SWAT and a wide variety of community policing, special event and grant programs. The existing millage approved by Newaygo County voters in 2006 was 1.0 mill*. Due to Headlee Rollback** the current rate of the existing millage is 0.9968 mill. The proposed 10 year millage (2017-2026) maintains the millage rate at 0.9968 mill. If this millage renewal passes, an estimated \$1,426,393 would be raised in the first calendar year, maintaining current funding levels for the Newaygo County Sheriff Department. Additionally, property owners will not see an increase or decrease in their existing tax rates: their tax rates will remain unchanged.

**One (1.0) mill is \$1.00 paid per \$1,000.00 of the total taxable value of a property.*

***Headlee Rollback occurs when a local unit of government is required by law to reduce its millage when property value growth is greater than the rate of inflation to ensure that property tax revenues do not exceed the rate of inflation.*

Road Patrol Deputies

The current millage supports 12 full-time road deputies, 3 road patrol command officers and 3 part-time road deputies. The proposed millage would continue to provide support for these Newaygo County Sheriff Department positions. If the millage renewal fails, these positions would all be laid off, resulting in a drastic reduction in road patrol across Newaygo County and an increased workload of remaining deputies that would require prioritizing requests for assistance and lead to delayed response times. The Newaygo County Sheriff Department would be reduced to only 5 full-time road patrol deputy positions. Only 1 road patrol deputy at a time will be patrolling county roads, covering the entire county. Road patrol between the hours of midnight and 8:00 a.m. would be eliminated. Requests for assistance during these hours would be rerouted to the Michigan State Police post located in the City of Hart. The Michigan State Police would see an increase in its volume of requests for assistance with the potential for delayed response times.

Dive Team

The current millage supports the Newaygo County Dive Team. The proposed millage would continue to provide support for the dive team. If the millage renewal fails, the dive team would be reconfigured into an all-volunteer team. During the interim transition of the dive team, all drowning and recovery efforts would be turned over to the Michigan State Police.

Canine Unit

The current millage supports the Newaygo County Canine Unit. The existing canine unit consists of 2 deputies and 2 dogs. The proposed millage would continue to provide support for the canine unit. If the millage renewal fails, 1 canine unit deputy would be laid off and 1 dog would be sold. All training and equipment for the canine unit would be eliminated. The remaining canine deputy's duties would be limited only to the transport of federal prisoners.

CMET (drug enforcement)

The current millage supports the Central Michigan Enforcement Team (CMET), a multi-agency drug enforcement team that services Newaygo County. The proposed millage would continue to provide support for this team. If the millage renewal fails, the loss of deputies (see 'Road Patrol Deputies' above) would result in the elimination of all Newaygo County Sheriff Department deputies from this team. Consequently, the number of drug investigations in our county would be reduced.

SWAT Team

The current millage supports Newaygo County's emergency response SWAT team. The proposed millage would continue to provide support for this team. If the millage renewal fails, all funding and personnel for the Newaygo County SWAT team would be eliminated.

Community Policing Programs

The current millage supports many community policing programs across Newaygo County. The proposed millage would continue to provide support for these programs. If the millage renewal fails, the loss of deputies (see 'Road Patrol Deputies' above) would result in the elimination of all Newaygo County Sheriff Department participation from all local community policing programs including, but not limited to, local crime watch programs, school Team Teaching programs, Summer Magic programs and child safety seat inspections.

Campus Security

The current millage allows for the continued ability to provide deputies assigned to campus security at the Newaygo County complex (courthouse, administration building, etc.) in White Cloud. The proposed millage would allow for the continued support of campus security. If the millage renewal fails, the loss of deputies (see 'Road Patrol Deputies' above) would result in an impact on campus security: the additional workload required to be performed by the reduced number of deputies would limit their availability to campus security.

Grant Programs

The current millage supports several programs that are grant funded, such as the Muskegon River Patrol, Summertime Marine Patrol (inland lakes patrol), ORV Patrol, and the Seatbelt and Drunk Driving Enforcement programs. The proposed millage would continue to provide support for these programs. If the millage renewal fails, the loss of deputies (see 'Road Patrol Deputies' above) would result in the elimination of all Newaygo County Sheriff Department deputies from all of these programs, effectively ending these programs.

Community Special Events

The current millage supports Newaygo County Sheriff Department patrol at community special events such as fireworks, parades and festivals. The proposed millage would continue to provide support for these events. If the millage renewal fails, the loss of deputies (see 'Road Patrol Deputies' above) would result in the elimination of all Newaygo County Sheriff Department deputies from all of these events.

For Additional Information You May Contact:

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