



Legislation Text

File #: 18-1909, **Version:** 1

Resolution to Conduct a Survey of Ann Arbor Residents to Assess Community Preferences Regarding the City's Spending of County Mental Health & Public Safety Millage Proceeds

Whereas, In November 2017, Washtenaw County voters approved an eight-year Mental Health & Public Safety Millage that will provide the City of Ann Arbor with \$2.2M annually in unrestricted revenue beginning in FY19;

Whereas, After reflecting normal taxable value growth, the total unrestricted revenue to the City over the eight-year period will be approximately \$20 million;

Whereas, The City's receipt of such a large sum of new, incremental, unrestricted revenue is unprecedented and it would be wholly appropriate and fiscally responsible to seek input from taxpayers on their preferences regarding how the new revenue should be utilized;

Whereas, In September 2017, City Council adopted a resolution stating it was Council's intent to utilize the Mental Health & Public Safety Millage proceeds (if approved by voters) with an allocation of 40% for affordable housing, 40% for climate action programs, and 20% for pedestrian safety;

Whereas, In an April 2018 survey conducted by *Citizens for Mental Health & Public Safety* (CMHPS), 59% of respondents indicated they had no awareness of the Council resolution of intent and another 16% were only vaguely aware;

Whereas, There was no reference/language in the Mental Health & Public Safety Millage ballot proposal related to Ann Arbor's planned spending on Climate Action programs, Affordable Housing or Pedestrian Safety;

Whereas, 77% of respondents to the CMHPS survey indicated they expected the revenues from the millage would be devoted to mental health and public safety services, which is consistent with the lack of awareness of the Council resolution of intent and the fact there was no reference in the ballot proposal itself to funding for climate action programs, affordable housing, or pedestrian safety;

Whereas, Based on the results of the CMHPS survey as well as resident communications, it is evident there is not a widespread understanding or community consensus regarding how the millage proceeds should be utilized, and that fact, coupled with the magnitude of dollars involved, strongly suggests additional community feedback is necessary and appropriate;

Whereas, The City is currently conducting an online budget priorities community survey to solicit input that will help inform the FY20 budget and FY21 plan, and while a specific survey question related to use of the millage proceeds was considered for that survey and would have provided valuable input, the question was not included with the understanding there could be a follow-up question/survey;

Whereas, On October 15, 2018, City Council postponed action on a proposal to amend the FY19 budget to add \$313,000 in expenditures for climate action programs funded by the county millage proceeds and the rationale for postponement included discussion of conducting a follow-up survey of Ann Arbor residents to solicit community input on spending preferences for the \$20 million in county millage proceeds; and

Whereas, The FY19 General Fund expenditure budget included \$50,000 for the purposes of obtaining citizen input on City spending and budget priorities in advance of discussions on the FY20 budget and FY21 financial plan, and adequate funds will remain following the in-process survey to conduct a follow-up survey;

RESOLVED, That City Council directs the City Administrator and City CFO to design and conduct a scientifically-based and statistically valid follow-up survey of Ann Arbor residents only that is specifically focused on citizen preferences for utilization of the county millage proceeds;

RESOLVED, That the Administrator and CFO are authorized to work with the Center for Priority Based Budgeting (CPBB) or other firm as necessary to design the survey questions(s) and methodology at a cost not to exceed the balance of budgeted funds remaining in the \$50,000 line item budget for citizen input on spending and budget priorities; and

RESOLVED, That it is Council's expectation that the follow-up survey will be conducted as soon as possible following the November 18th closing of the in-process survey and that Council be provided a draft copy of the follow-up survey for possible comment prior to its being issued.

Sponsored by: Councilmember Lumm