



Internal Memo

January 17, 2020

TO: Mark C. Meyers, City Administrator

FROM: Jon Gale, Chief of Police
Anthony Chandler, Adm. Services. Dir./Asst. to CA

SUBJECT: Senior Millage Allocation

This memo is to inform the City Council of funding opportunities available to participate in a collaborative vulnerable adult investigative team with the Muskegon County Prosecutor's office and also fund programs called Yellow Dot and Senior Wellness programs for the citizens of Norton Shores.

The County of Muskegon recently released Senior Millage monies to the City of Norton Shores with a goal of the money being spent to support seniors in our jurisdiction. The City of Norton Shores is eligible for \$78,168 to be used before October of 2020. The below ideas are recommendations from staff on how the Senior Millage Monies can be spent for our citizens.

Vulnerable Adult Investigative Team

As you know our Police Department staffing is far below the Michigan average for police departments per capita. Our police department would need to add a staff of ten officers to meet the State average. I have worked hard to find other funds to meet the needs of our community and have been awarded funding from the State of Michigan (Crimes against Women grant), Mona Shores Schools (School Resource officers), Muskegon County Airport (Airport Security), and Mercy Health (Ride with Pride management) to supplement our police force.

With limited resources it is difficult to keep up with the increasing demand for investigations involving the senior population. In 14 months, the Muskegon County Vulnerable Adult Multi-Disciplinary Team (VA-MDT) has reviewed 37 cases of alleged abuse, neglect and financial exploitation cases. Nine cases have led to criminal prosecution which represents a 450% increase from 2015. The number of complicated cases has risen in an overburdened and underfunded system in Muskegon County. If we are to continue our outreach efforts to protect seniors we need to expand the team to provide a full time staff.

In conjunction with the Muskegon County Prosecutors office, there could be a full time team of highly skilled and experienced investigators to address crimes involving the senior population. This team will provide victims of these senseless crimes a supportive and individualized system. Also, the victims will have a specialized detective follow their case all the way through the criminal justice system. More importantly the investigators will provide education to the senior population to avoid being a victim of crimes such as fraud, physical abuse, and other financial losses. They will also reach

out to area businesses such as banks, churches, and restaurants to provide training on how to spot suspected abuse.

The Vulnerable Adult Investigative Team will receive funding through a senior Millage grant which has already been approved at the Grant committee level and is waiting to be approved at the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners meeting in February. If this grant is awarded, the funding will cover the cost of one detective's wages and benefits for up to a three year period in an annual amount of **\$92,850**. The funding will also cover administrative costs and equipment costs, therefore will remain budget neutral. It should be noted that this funding is *in addition* to Norton Shores' \$78,168 share of the Senior Millage allocation.

Yellow Dot Program

The Yellow Dot Program was first introduced to Muskegon County by the Norton Shores Police Department. It is a voluntary program geared toward the elderly. The program provides emergency responders immediate medical information after a traffic crash when occupants may not be able to communicate for themselves and family is not immediately reachable. Participants come into a Police Department or Fire Department to have their picture taken and form filled out. The documents are then placed in a marked envelope in the glove box. A sticker is then placed in the back window to inform first responders of the available information (allergies, blood type, and medical history). This program is widely used in the States of Pennsylvania, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and Illinois. We are the first to bring it to Michigan. This program is endorsed by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety and AARP

We need funding to roll out this program to our seniors. Expenses include printing costs for the Yellow Dot stickers, camera equipment for the photos and marketing costs. I estimate we can get the program started for an estimated cost of **\$7,500**. We will also look for other funding sources for the continuation of the program.

Senior Wellness Program

AgeWell Services proposes a new partnership to the City of Norton Shores to engage seniors 60 and older at the Tanglewood Park Wellness Center. Studies show the key to remaining healthy as adults age in place is being active and connected. Since the Wellness Center is the only senior center located in the city's jurisdiction, this presents an amazing opportunity to engage more individuals in programs that provide physical fitness, social connections, intellectual learning opportunities, access to healthy food and nutrition education to retain their residency for as long as possible. A grant of **\$25,000** would provide adults 60 and older living in the City of Norton Shores a free annual membership to the Center, a complimentary mobility review with follow-up coaching, and discounted fitness class rates. Part of this grant would include a \$5,000 marketing budget to provide a kick-off event where residents would tour the facility, "Door to Door" advertising through post card mailings, features in the Norton Examiner and Lighthouse View, as well as targeted Facebook Marketing Ads. The City of Norton Shores would be recognized in all marketing efforts, including our quarterly publication of classes called, "The AdvantAGE". The City would also receive complimentary ad space in this publication each quarter for anything you would like to promote. This grant would also allow

us to provide a Premier Spin Class at a significant discount to Norton Shores residents. For an additional **\$5,000** (a total grant of **\$30,000**), we would also add complimentary art classes once per month (4-week session) to Norton Shores residents.

Senior Transportation Services

Seniors over 60 years of age make up the majority of Norton Shores' population at 30% or 7,400 residents. With the likely introduction of micro transit being implemented by the Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS), residents would have an on-demand transit option (think Uber and Lyft). Senior Millage funds could be a resource to provide discounted rates for seniors and also help fund the City's local share towards MATS which may increase significantly next fiscal year. Estimated cost is **\$40,000**.

I would like to present these programs to the Mayor and City Council at the January 28, 2020 work session. If the funding is approved I will be seeking an amendment to the FY2020 budget to cover the reimbursed costs of the new added detective position. The position would begin March 2020 if awarded and approved by the City Council and the County of Muskegon.