



Internal Memo

June 12, 2020

TO: Mark C. Meyers, City Administrator

FROM: Jon Gale, Chief of Police

SUBJECT: Senior Millage Allocation

The County of Muskegon is again planning to release 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 was eligible for \$78,168 in FY2020 and we are expecting a similar allocation in FY2021. I am requesting that a portion of this allocation be used to support the collaborative vulnerable adult investigative team with the Muskegon County Prosecutor's office.

Vulnerable Adult Investigative Team (Safe Seniors)

In conjunction with the Muskegon County Prosecutors office, there is a full-time team of highly skilled and experienced investigators to address crimes involving the senior population. This team which has been labelled Safe Seniors provides victims of senseless crimes a supportive and individualized system. Also, the victims have a specialized detective follow their case all the way through the criminal justice system. More importantly the investigators have provided education to the senior population to avoid being a victim of crimes such as fraud, physical abuse, and other financial losses. They also plan to reach out to area businesses such as banks, churches, and restaurants to provide training on how to spot suspected abuse.

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. The number of cases is expected to rise with education. A large portion of our senior victim are either afraid to report or are embarrassed. We need to break down the barriers and give them hope.

The Vulnerable Adult Investigative Team received funding through a senior Millage grant which was approved by the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners which fully funded a Norton Shores Police Detective through FY2020. The Senior Millage Grant Committee recently met to discuss FY2021 grant submissions. The Committee requested that the team seek other funding sources to keep the team funded. The amount of the grant exceeded the allocated amount for the legal resources portion of the grant. We have reached out to other communities to help fund the team and have received commitments from Fruitport Township, Muskegon Township, and Dalton

Townships which will assist us in reaching our goal. To fully fund a detective our cost will be \$92,850 for FY2021. I am seeking a \$40,000 commitment from the City of Norton Shores using a portion of the Senior Resource Allocation to help continue the Muskegon County Vulnerable Adult Multi-Disciplinary Team into FY2021. The remaining funding would be paid for by the Senior Resource Grant Committee.

I would like to present to the Mayor and City Council the need for this request at the June 23, 2020 work session. Det. Morningstar will be available to give examples of the complex cases involving several Norton Shores residents.