



Internal Memo

November 18, 2019

TO: Mark C. Meyers, City Administrator

FROM: Anthony Chandler, Director of Administrative Services *AC*

SUBJECT: Public Safety Millage – Renewal Request

Staff has been meeting on a regular basis to discuss the ballot initiative to renew the public safety millage which is set to expire next year. The original millage request, passed in February 2011, was an amendment to the City Charter to authorize a levy of up to two (2) mills for public safety purposes only.

The City shall have the power to assess a dedicated public safety millage which shall not exceed two (2) mills for a Public Safety Fund, annually for a period of ten (10) years, beginning in 2011 and ending in 2020 to be used exclusively for public safety operations.

The original public safety millage was asked of Norton Shores voters because the city had to eliminate seven public safety positions, four police officers and three fire fighters. This reduction in our staffing level was necessary to balance the general fund budget during the recession. The public safety millage allowed the city to bring those positions back by supplementing the general fund.

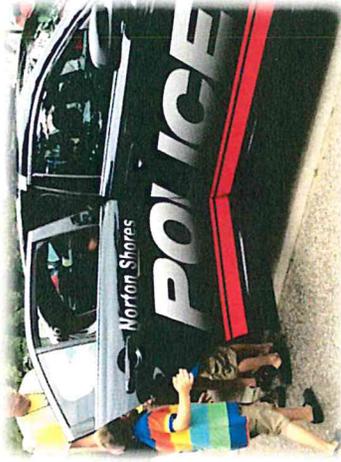
City staff is proposing a renewal to this public safety millage as authorized by the City Charter, Michigan Election Law, and the General Property Tax Act. Michigan Election Law further requires that a Charter Amendment be held during a regular election date. City staff is recommending a public safety millage renewal proposal to be included on the May 5, 2020 general election ballot. The ballot language must explicitly state that this is a millage renewal. The city will need to submit the millage renewal ballot language to the Governor for approval prior to placing it on the May 5, 2020 ballot.

Annual revenues would amount to approximately \$1.8 million if the city were to levy the full two mills. However, the city currently levies 1.35 mills which generates roughly \$1.2 million. The revenues received from this millage have been instrumental in providing the necessary resources to effectively deliver police and fire services to our community.

Attached with this memo is an updated informational pamphlet that serves as a factual overview of the public safety millage renewal and also included is a draft resolution with the renewal ballot language for City Council's review. Additionally, a "Mayor's Message" and talking points documents, both utilized during the original millage request will also be updated. We are also anticipating that a private election committee will be formed to advocate for the millage renewal.

I am recommending that we discuss this millage renewal at the November 26, 2019 work session.

DRAFT



What is the millage money used for?

The Public Safety Millage has and will support operations of the Fire and Police Departments and help maintain staffing and specialty programs. Four Patrol Officers and Firefighter positions would be retained.

What if the millage isn't renewed?

The City will be forced to reduce Fire and Police staffing and have to consider eliminating community outreach and specialty programs. Programs in jeopardy include residential property checks, smoke detector evaluation and installation, marine safety patrol, public education programs and many others.

Is this a tax increase?

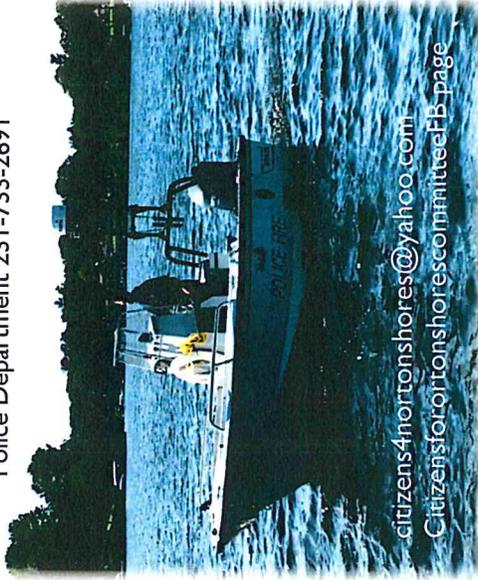
No, this is a renewal of a millage amount already included in your tax bill.

How long will the millage be in effect?

The millage would continue for another ten-year period.

Need more information?

City Administrator 231-798-4391
Finance Director 231-332-2031
Fire Department 231-798-2255
Police Department 231-733-2691



231-798-4391

www.nortonshores.org

4814 Henry St.

Norton Shores, MI 49441



PUBLIC SAFETY MILLAGE RENEWAL INFORMATION SHEET

May 5, 2020



Key Facts

- Originally passed by voters in 2011
- Renewal of up to 2 mills for additional 10 years
- Dedicated to public safety only
- Allows the City to maintain:
 - * Public Safety Positions
 - * Residential checks
 - * Marine patrol
 - * Public safety education

DRAFT

Public Safety Millage Renewal Information

The City of Norton Shores is placing a Public Safety Millage Renewal proposal on the May 5, 2020 ballot. We trust the following information will be useful in making an informed decision before you vote.

What is a Public Safety Millage?

The Public Safety Millage provides funds specifically for Fire and Police services. This is to **renew a millage** in which taxes have been collected since 2011. This millage is due to expire.

Why do we need a millage?

Funds for Fire and Police services come from the General Fund. This fund is comprised of money received from property taxes and state shared revenue sources. These sources have not been adequate to collect enough money to provide the public safety needs of our community.



May 5, 2020 Election



What millage amount is proposed?

The current millage to levy **up to 2 mills** is being proposed for renewal. Two mills would raise approximately \$1,842,423. However, the City currently levies 1.35 mills which raises approximately \$1,226,602.

Cost per year for 2 mills.

<u>Home Value</u>	<u>2 Mills</u>
\$100,000	\$100
\$200,000	\$200
\$300,000	\$300

Will the money be used for public safety only?

The law requires that all money collected under the millage be kept in a **separate dedicated fund** for public safety services only.

What has the City done to reduce expenses?

The City no longer offers defined benefit pension plans and retiree health insurance to newly hired employees. Also, we've contracted public safety services with Muskegon County Airport, Mona Shores School District, City of Roosevelt Park and the Health Project to offset costs.

How many Firefighters are on duty at each station?

Each 24-hr shift typically has eight full-time personnel: one Captain, one Lieutenant and six Firefighters assigned between four stations. Additionally, our Part-time Firefighters supplement the department readiness by staffing stations when needed and responding to calls for service off duty.

How many Patrol Officers are on the road?

The Police Department employs four shifts of four officers to cover road patrol duties. Additionally community officers and detectives handle non-emergency type calls and investigations serving over 24,000 residents. Average staffing levels in Michigan for police agencies is 1.8 per 1,000 residents. This places our police department eleven officers below the Michigan average.

**CITY OF NORTON SHORES
RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A RENEWAL
OF THE AMENDMENT TO SECTION 6.8 OF THE CITY CHARTER**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Norton Shores, Michigan as follows:

1. That on February 2, 2011, by a 3/5 vote of its members-elect, pursuant to the authority granted by Public Act 279 of 1909, as amended, the City of Norton Shores established that Section 6.8 of the Charter of the City of Norton Shores read, in part, as follows:

The City shall have the power to assess a dedicated public safety millage which shall not exceed two (2) mills for a Public Safety Fund, annually for a period of ten (10) years, beginning in 2011 and ending in 2020 to be used exclusively for public safety operations.

2. The purpose of the proposed amendment is to provide for a renewal of the ten-year dedicated millage for public safety operations under the jurisdiction of the City of Norton Shores.

3. The City Clerk shall transmit a copy of the proposed amendment to the Governor of the State of Michigan for approval and transmit a copy of the foregoing statement of purpose of such proposed amendment to the Attorney General of the State of Michigan for approval, as required by law.

4. The proposed Charter amendment shall be submitted to the qualified electors of this City at an election to be held in Norton Shores on May 5, 2020, and the City Clerk is directed to give notice of the election and notice of registration in the manner prescribed by law.

5. The proposed amendment shall be submitted to the electors in the following format:

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO SECTION 6.8 OF THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF
NORTON SHORES TO PROVIDE FOR A RENEWAL OF THE TEN-YEAR
DEDICATED PUBLIC SAFETY MILLAGE.

Shall Section 6.8 of the Charter of the City of Norton Shores, amended on February 2, 2011 to provide for a dedicated public safety millage, be renewed for an additional ten (10) years starting in 2021 and ending in 2030?

It is estimated that the renewed millage will generate \$1,688,358.00 in first year revenue.

[YES] [NO]

6. The proposed amendment shall be published in full together with the existing Charter provision altered by the amendment as part of the notice of election.

7. The canvass and determination of the votes of said question shall be made in accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan and the Charter of the City of Norton Shores.