

An Introduction to

Township Millage Questions



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This Michigan Townships Association packet was prepared by MTA Staff and MTA Legal Counsel for informational purposes (updated April 2017). The sample language provided is not intended as legal advice, and townships are urged to consult with their local legal counsel to ensure that any ballot language used is appropriate to the individual township’s specific needs and circumstances.

Getting Started—Some Ground Rules

To choose the correct sample millage ballot language, a township board must understand its options.

1 ■ Is the township a general law or charter township?

General law townships and charter townships must take different approaches to property taxes:

General Law Townships

Allocated Millage (General Operating)

A general law township is authorized to levy a minimum of one mill for general operating purposes. ([MCL 211.211\(4\)](#))

This minimum general operating millage is allocated to townships by the county allocation process in one of two ways by the Property Tax Limitation Act, Public Act 62 of 1933, [MCL 211.201, et seq.](#):

1) Allocated by Fixed (“pegged”) Millage Established by Vote of the Electors:

The allocated millage (separate tax limitation) may be established by the electors, up to an 18-mill limit. (The ballot question for this vote is submitted by the county board of commissioners to the county clerk for a countywide ballot, according to [MCL 211.205g](#).) As of 2003, 73 Michigan counties had fixed allocated millages. ([MCLs 211.204a](#) to 211.205l)

2) Allocated by County Allocation Board: A county allocation board establishes allocated tax rates up to a 15-mill limit. As of 2003, 10 counties had allocation boards. ([MCLs 211.208](#) to 211.217a)

Charter townships and school districts are not included in allocated millage.

Allocated millage is **unrestricted general operating revenue** that the township board may use for any lawful purpose.

Extra-Voted Millage

The electors must vote to approve any extra millage over and above the allocated millage before a township may levy that additional millage. ([MCL 211.203](#)) This includes any additional general operating millage or any millage voted for a **specific purpose**, such as emergency medical services, recreation, or roads.

A general law township is limited in how much millage it can levy of the 50-mill limit on all property taxes (excluding debt service millage) levied within the township by any taxing entity. ([Article 9, Section 6, Michigan Constitution of 1963](#))

The revenues raised by an extra-voted millage for **specific purpose(s)** are restricted and may be used only for the purpose(s) listed in the ballot question that the voters approved. So it is very important that the ballot language include any use(s) intended for those revenues. ([MCL 211.24f](#))

Charter Townships

A charter township does not receive allocated millage. ([Article 9, Section 6, Michigan Constitution of 1963](#)) All charter townships may levy up to 10 mills, determined on assessed value (not counting debt service millage). The Charter Township Act does not require a charter township to levy any or all of the additional mills available to it under the Act. ([MCL 42.27](#))

There are two schools of thought on when a charter township must go to the voters for millage approval.

MCL 42.27 authorizes a charter township board to annually provide for a levy of taxes upon real and personal property that cannot exceed 5 mills. The township board may choose to automatically levy up to the first 5 mills (“charter millage”) without additional voter approval, and without limit in the number of years. The township may then levy up to five additional mills (for a maximum of 10 mills), but only by voter approval and limited to 20 years. (MCL 42.27)

But following the 1978 Headlee Amendment, Attorney General Opinion 6285 of 1985 stated: “[C]harter townships incorporated after December 22, 1978, the effective date [the Headlee Amendment], by final resolution of the township board and without an approving vote of the township's electors, are prohibited from levying millage at a charter township rate higher than the township's previously authorized millage limitation as a general law township.”

Based on AGO 6285, MTA Legal Counsel have taken a “conservative” approach to avoid exposing a township to the risk of litigation and advised that a charter township that incorporated after 1978 by board resolution (not election) has the authority to levy only the total authorized millage rate it had as a general law township when it incorporated (subject to rollbacks) for its authorized charter millage. The township can levy additional mills only by voter approval, up to the maximum 10 mills.

However, it needs to be noted that the Charter Act does not specifically require this restriction, and other municipal attorneys have questioned the reasoning in AGO 6285. (*Note that Attorney General opinions are not binding on townships.*)

Since that opinion, the Michigan Supreme Court has held, in the case of *American Axle and Manufacturing, Inc. v Hamtramck*, 461 Mich 352, p.357 (2000), “that the Headlee exemption of taxes authorized by law when the section was ratified permits the levying of previously authorized taxes even where they were not being levied at the time Headlee was ratified and even though the circumstances making the tax or rate applicable did not exist before that date.”

The *American Axle* opinion calls into question the continued validity of restricting a charter township that incorporated by resolution to a charter millage levy of less than 5 mills (i.e. original allocated rolled back millage). ***A charter township board that incorporated by resolution after 1978 that is considering exercising the automatic authority to levy should consult with its attorney for specific legal guidance.***

2. Be sure you intend to levy a property tax.

Property taxes are approved, collected, and increased under one set of rules. Special assessments are not property taxes, and they are established, collected, and increased under different sets of rules. Fees, such as for garbage collection, are established, collected, and increased under yet another set of rules.

	Township Property Tax	Special Assessment PA 188 of 1954 Public Improvements	Special Assessment PA 33 of 1951 Police / Fire / or Emergency Services	Fee
When Collected	December	Annually, at any time	December tax bill	At any time (annually, monthly, as service is provided)
Life Span	20 years maximum, except allocated, charter millage, or debt	No limit	No limit, except substantial capital expenditures are limited to 15 years (See 261 Mich. App. 308)	No limit
Subject Property	Real and Personal	Real Property ONLY on which the public improvement confers a special benefit	Real Property ONLY; may be township-wide)	Property or persons served.
Exempt Property	Property exempt from taxation under the General Property Tax Act	Personal Property / (also any Real Property on which a benefit is not conferred)	Property exempt from property taxes is exempt from PA 33 special assessment [MCL 41.801(3)] (including facility--but not land--subject to PA 198 industrial facilities tax MCL211.7k)	No exemptions
Apportioned By	Uniform tax rate based on Taxable Value of assessed property	The cost of the special benefit conferred by the public improvement	Ad valorem millage rate based on Taxable Value of Real Property ONLY	Portion of or entire cost of service to that property/user
Subject to 15/18 or 50-mill limit?	Yes	No	No, except for 10-mill maximum for capital improvements	No
Subject to Headlee rollback?	Yes	No	No	No
Voter approval to establish or renew?	Yes	No	Yes, upon petition of owners of 10% or more of land	No
Voter approval to increase?	Yes	No	No	No
Property Tax Admin. Fee?	Yes	No	No	No

NOTE: Special assessments under [Public Act 33 of 1951](#), or other special assessment acts, even though township-wide and based upon a millage rate, are not controlled by the 15- or 50-mill tax limitations. These special assessments are annually renewed by holding a public hearing on the estimated annual costs and the amount to be levied to cover all or any portion of such costs, preceded by the appropriate notices required by the special assessment acts. (See the specific act, and [Public Act 162 of 1962, MCL 211.741, et seq.](#))

An ad valorem special assessment (such as a special assessment under [Public Act 33 of 1951](#)) levied on property after December 31, 1998, shall be levied on the property's **taxable value** as determined under [MCL 211.44c](#). These special assessments can only be levied on real property not exempt from taxation.

3. Understand the Headlee rollback

All township millage rates are subject to a millage reduction fraction referred to as the Headlee Amendment “rollback,” which is annually applied to a township’s maximum authorized millage rates to ensure that the total revenues raised on existing property do not increase more than the rate of inflation.

The only exception is when a **new** millage (an increase) is approved by the voters after May 1 and levied (collected) in December of that same calendar year; that millage will be levied “intact” in that first levy.

(Note that millage revenues are subject to other potential reductions in the equalization process, but the Headlee rollback is automatically applied by operation of law.)

In practice, this means that a new millage with a rate of 2 mills will be “rolled back” (reduced) to less than two mills in the second year it is levied, and rolled back again in the third year it is levied—experiencing a rollback for every subsequent year it is levied until it expires.

For example:

Levy Year 1	Levy Year 2	Levy Year 3	Levy Year 4	Levy Year 5
2.0000	1.9598	1.9327	1.9100	1.8949

The Headlee rollback affects the type of millage language that can be used:

Increase

Technically, every millage question is an “increase.” To understand this concept, imagine a rubber band around your wrist. This represents the township’s current allocated millage. Pulling the band away from your wrist represents any additional millage. Millage over and above the township’s allocated millage has a “life span” of no more than 20 years. When the millage expires, the rubber band snaps back to your wrist.

To illustrate the effect of the Headlee rollback, imagine pulling the band away from your wrist to represent a 1-mill property tax. Then lower the band a little bit. That represents the first annual rollback. Lower the band a second time to represent the next annual rollback. Over time, the rubber band will be much closer to your wrist, and it will snap back to your wrist when it expires.

Renewal

So what does a “renewal” look like in our example? According to the law, a property tax increase may be called a “renewal” when it is approved at the same or lower millage rate the previous millage was at **when it expired**. Let’s say a township had a 2-mill road millage for five years. With the annual rollbacks, the road millage rate was at 1.8755 in the last year the millage was levied. If the township wants to use a renewal ballot question—and label the millage as a “renewal”—it must ask the voters to approve the road millage at 1.8755. (**Note:** Under [MCL 211.34d\(11\)](#), if the election occurs before June 1, the millage reduction is based on the immediately preceding year’s millage reduction applicable to that millage. If the election occurs after May 31 of a year, the millage reduction shall be based on that year’s millage reduction applicable to that millage had it not expired.)

So, pull out the rubber band for the initial millage, lower it a few times to represent the rollbacks, let it snap back to show the millage expiring—and then pull the band out only as far as it was before you let it snap back. That’s a renewal.

Offsetting the Headlee rollback

Wait a minute, ... what about getting back to the full 2 mills again? That is possible, just not as a renewal.

A township board can get back to the original millage rate of a property tax in two ways:

1) **Increase:** After a property tax expires, a township can simply place on the ballot a proposal for the same millage rate and purpose(s) as the initial or "original" tax. But the township cannot label the proposal a "renewal" of the previous millage. **OR**

2) **Renewal plus increase:** After a property tax expires, a township can seek voter approval of a renewal of the tax (at the rate it was at when it expired), AND seek voter approval of an increase that represents the difference between the renewal rate and the original rate.

If the increase is .5 mills or less, the renewal and increase can be combined in one question. It is the opinion of MTA Legal Counsel that this combined millage ballot question may be called a “renewal.”

If the increase is over .5 mills, the renewal and increase must be presented as two separate ballot questions.

4. When should a millage proposal be put on the ballot?

There are several factors a township board should consider in determining when to place a millage proposal on the ballot:

A. Know where the millage is in its “life span.” When does it expire?

A millage (other than allocated millage) can be approved for a “life span” (duration) of a minimum of one year up to a maximum of 20 years. The ballot proposal must state the duration of the millage in years. (MCL 211.24f)

A township millage can be levied (certified for collection) and collected only on the December property tax bill. If a millage question says the millage will be levied “for five years, 2017 through 2021, exclusive,” then the millage will be collected in December 2017, December 2018 ... and so on, through the December 2021 tax collection.

Be careful! The language “2017 through 2021, inclusive” is NOT for four years! Don’t subtract the years to determine the number of collections. **Tip:** Count each year in the sequence on a finger—2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021—to correctly count the five years the millage will be collected. A four-year millage starting in 2017 would end in 2020. Know how many years you want the millage to be levied—or what year you want the millage to come up for renewal, and be sure the ballot language agrees.

For example, let’s say our sample 2-mill property tax is an initial millage (increase) approved for five years at an election in August 2017. It would be levied for the first time in December 2017. Count each December tax collection after that until you’ve counted five total collections. This millage would expire (be levied for the last time) with the December 2021 tax collection.

Dec. 2017	Dec. 2018	Dec. 2019	Dec. 2020	Dec. 2021
2.0000	1.9598	1.9327	1.9100	1.8949

The proper time to place a question to renew the millage on the ballot is in the calendar year following its last levy. This millage expires after the December 2021 tax collection. To be renewed, it should be approved at an election no later than November 2022. If approved, the renewed millage is levied for the first time as part of the December 2022 tax collection, and there is no gap or overlap between the last year of the expiring millage and the first year of the renewed millage.

Year 2, Dec. '18	Year 3, Dec. '19	Year 4, Dec. '20	Expires Dec. '21	Year 1, Dec. '22
1.9598	1.9327	1.9100	1.8949	1.8949*

*(*If on the ballot before the rollback for that year is known, use the last rollback rate in the question. Actual levy is subject to the rollback rate for that tax year.)*

If a millage is **renewed** too “early” (in any year prior to the year in which it expires), it is subject to the Headlee rollback for each year between its approval and expiration, regardless of whether it is actually levied. (Attorney General Opinion 7193 of 2006) If a millage is approved and **actually levied** before a previous millage expires, then two millages will be collected, both subject to the rollback.

If a millage expires and there is a gap of one or more years before a millage to replace it is approved and levied, then the new millage cannot be a renewal or a renewal plus increase; it can only be an increase.

B. Will the board prefer one election date to another? With consolidated elections, there are at least four “regular” election dates available in any calendar year. A millage ballot question may be placed on any election ballot, starting with February, May, August, up through the November election. **But, to be levied intact (without a Headlee Rollback) in its first year**, a new millage (an increase) must be approved at an election held between May 1 ([MCL 211.34d\(9\)](#)) up through the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. ([MCL 211.36\(4\)](#))

C. Will the board prefer one election year to another? Different township boards may have different “theories” about when a millage has the best chance for approval.

All township offices come up for election in even-numbered years. All elected township officials serve the same four-year township term, and vacancies that occur in the first part of the term are filled at the “mid-term” primary and general election held in the even-numbered year two years after the term begins. (All township offices will be elected in the 2016 primary and general election—also a presidential election; vacancies in current township offices will be filled at the 2014 mid-term primary and general election—a gubernatorial election.)

The establishment of consolidated election dates has increased the likelihood of three to four elections being held in any given year.

Whether a board prefers even-numbered years to odd-numbered years, or vice versa, the important thing to remember is that:

If a millage expires (will be levied for the last time) in an **odd**-numbered year, it will go on the ballot for renewal at an election in an **even**-numbered year.

If a millage expires (will be levied for the last time) in an **even**-numbered year, it will go on the ballot for renewal at an election in an **odd**-numbered year.

D. “It’s not over ’til it’s over!” A millage proposal may be placed on the November election ballot, and if it’s approved, it the county board of commissioners must meet to certify that millage in time to levy it on the December tax bill. ([MCL 211.36\(4\)](#))

E. How many times can a township put millage proposals on the ballot?

Under [MCL 211.24f](#), a township can take millage proposals to the electors twice in one calendar year. A township may place as many millage questions as it wishes on the ballots for those two elections. If a township has put millage questions on the May ballot, it can still put millage questions on either the August or November ballot.

5. How does a millage ballot question get on the ballot?

To place a millage proposal on a ballot, the township board must adopt by roll call vote a resolution stating the ballot language and indicating the board's intention to place it before the voters on a specified election date (MCL 211.24e). See the sample resolution on page 15.

Millage proposals cannot be placed on a ballot by citizen petition (except for a petition for a tax for a free public library (MCL 397.210)). [*Citizens may petition for a referendum on establishing a special assessment district for police or fire protection under Public Act 33 of 1951 (MCL 41.801, et seq.), but that ballot question is not a property tax proposal, even though the special assessment is apportioned by millage rate.*]

What information must a millage proposal include?

According to MCL 211.24f, a millage ballot proposal must include the following:

1. The extra-voted millage amount in dollars per thousand dollars of taxable value.

For example, a fire protection millage of 2 mills (the millage amount) equals \$2 for every \$1,000 of taxable value. A property with a taxable value of \$50,000 would be taxed \$100 for the millage.

2. The purpose for the millage. The taxes raised by the millage are restricted funds that may be used only for the purpose(s) listed in the ballot language. The more specific the language used, the more restricted the uses for the revenues raised. For example, if the purpose is “to purchase fire equipment for Apex Township Fire Department,” then that millage cannot be used for payroll or overhead costs of the Apex Township Fire Department, and it cannot be used to purchase equipment for another fire department. A broader purpose such as “to provide fire protection services” may include operating a fire department or contracting with another unit for fire protection.

3. The number of years that the millage will be effective. A property tax cannot exceed 20 years, but a township board may wish to use a shorter “life span.” A millage is subject to rollback and will be subject to levy less and less each year. A short life span, such as three to five years, brings the levy up for renewal before it is rolled back very much. A millage can be renewed by election at its original amount upon its expiration. Short life spans also give a board flexibility to recover a rolled back millage or to not renew it.

Also, the duration of the millage determines when it will come up for renewal—and what elections the renewal question might be scheduled for.

4. The estimated revenue the township will collect in the first year of the levy. This is the township's total taxable value divided by 1,000 and multiplied by the number of mills. Using our 2-mill fire millage example, a township with a total taxable value of \$67 million would state in the ballot language that it expects to levy an estimated total of \$134,000 in the first year the millage is levied. A new millage (increase) approved after April 30 will not be rolled back in its first year if it is levied in that same year (MCL 211.34d(9)).

5. Whether the millage is new (an increase) or a renewal (of a previous voted increase). Technically, a renewal is also an increase, but the ballot language can say that the previous voted increase is being “renewed,” instead of “increased.” A millage proposal is a renewal if it **states the same number of mills and the same purpose** stated in the previous ballot proposal. Also, if there will be a gap of one or more tax years between the last collection of the previous millage and the first collection of the proposed millage, then the proposal is an increase, not a renewal. A renewal of a rollback of .5 mills or less can be a single ballot. Otherwise, two ballot questions are required.

6. Each local unit of government to which the revenue from that millage will be disbursed. [MCL 211.24f\(1\)](#) requires a millage ballot question to “fully disclose each local unit of government to which the revenue from that millage will be disbursed.” Local unit is then defined to include “county, city, village, township, school district, intermediate school district, community college district, public library, or local authority created under state law.”

MTA Legal Counsel have indicated that “the application of this requirement becomes difficult when multiple ‘local units of government’ may receive disbursements from the proposed millage. This is especially difficult when the millage is for a number of years within which time the recipients of any portion of the millage may change. Where millage may be captured under a tax increment financing program by an authority [such as a downtown development authority] during the period of the levy, language should be used or added which would afford flexibility in eliminating named ‘local units of government’ and adding currently unknown ‘local units of government.’ Such broad additional language could be as follows: “ ... and such other or fewer local units of government as the Township Board determines appropriate.”

Bond Issues

[MCL 211.24f](#) also addresses requirements for ballot proposals to issue bonds: In addition to any other requirement provided by law, when submitting a proposal to authorize the issuance of bonds, the ballot shall state all of the following: (a) The principal amount to be borrowed; (b) The maximum number of years the bonds may be outstanding, exclusive of any refunding; and (c) A clear statement of the purpose for which the proceeds of the bonds will be used.

Bond issues involve complicated procedures and require specialized expertise that is beyond the scope of this informational material. Any township considering a bond issue should consult with a bond attorney.

Campaign finance regulations apply to millage ballot questions

It is beyond the scope of this material to discuss campaign finance regulations in depth. But township officials should be aware that the use of township funds regarding a ballot question is statutorily regulated.

The [Michigan Campaign Finance Act, MCL 169.201, et seq.](#), regulates the use of public money for ballot questions. Under the Act, using public money to influence elections is strictly prohibited. Any committees organized to run a campaign for a ballot question must be funded with private donations. Michigan courts, Attorney General opinions, and Secretary of State interpretive statements conclude that governmental units cannot use public monies or resources to "expressly advocate" voting "yes" or "no" on a millage. Township stationery cannot be used for letters, memos, or other communications expressly advocating that voters vote "yes" or "no" on a ballot question. Campaign materials expressly advocating a "yes" or "no" vote cannot be posted on township property.

[MCL 41.110c](#) authorizes townships to appropriate money or expend funds to maintain and circulate a publication to distribute information regarding township improvements, activities, and functions. However, the township board must take extreme caution that the information presented does not expressly advocate that voters vote to approve a millage or other ballot proposal.

No public or governmental employee may promote an opinion about a proposed millage during working hours ([MCL 15.404](#)). However, township officials and employees may advocate for a proposed millage on "their own time and dime." It may impress voters that officials are willing to work hard to get the millage passed.

Public Act 264 of 1995 added [Section 57 \(MCL 169.257\)](#) to Michigan's Campaign Finance Act to specifically prohibit a public body or anyone acting for a public body from making contributions or expenditures as defined in the Act. Effective March 28, 1996, actions that could be construed as a campaign contribution or expenditure became a felony offense, subject to a fine of up to \$20,000.

How does an approved millage question get on the tax bill?

On or before September 30 of each year, the township clerk must deliver to the supervisor and county clerk a certified copy of all statements and certificates on file (Form L-4029 for each tax levying entity) and all records of any vote or resolution authorizing or directing money to be raised in the township by taxation for any purpose, along with a statement of the aggregate amount to be raised.

In September, the township board must authorize the millage amount it will levy that December and report it to the county board of commissioners on the Form L-4029.

The township clerk and supervisor must sign a Millage Request Report to the County Board of Commissioners ([Form L-4029](#)) and submit it to the county clerk and equalization department on or before October 1.

The supervisor delivers the tax roll and warrant to the township treasurer on or before December 1.

How does a millage question approved at a November election get on the December tax bill?

If a millage election is held at the November election, and the millage passes, it will be certified and levied on the December tax bill in that same year. ([MCL 211.36\(4\)](#))

Within five days after any election that includes a township millage proposal, a certified copy of the official election results must be filed with the county treasurer. (MCL 211.203)

Where the millage election is held in November, it still may be submitted to the county for levy in that year because [MCL 211.36\(4\)](#) requires the county board of commissioners to meet to amend the L-4029. See page 21 for a copy of Form L-4029.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION TO ADOPT MILLAGE BALLOT LANGUAGE

_____ Township, _____ County
Resolution Number _____

WHEREAS, the Township Board of _____ Township wishes to provide
(indicate purpose of millage); and

WHEREAS, townships may provide *(indicate purpose of millage)*, as authorized
by Public Act ____ of _____, MCL _____ *(indicate the statute that authorizes a
township to do the purpose of the millage)*; and

*(Optional: May use the following if the township will use the millage to contract/
cooperate with other entities: WHEREAS, townships may contract and cooperate with
other entities to provide (indicate purpose of millage), as authorized by the
Michigan Constitution of 1963 and other laws; and)*

WHEREAS, townships may impose and levy ad valorem property taxes to finance lawful
public services, as authorized by the Michigan Constitution of 1963 and other laws; and

WHEREAS, the Township Board of _____ Township wishes to levy ____ mills
to *(indicate purpose of millage)*;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Board of _____
Township, _____ County, approves the following millage ballot question
language and directs the Clerk to submit it to be placed on the _____, 20__,
election ballot:

(insert ballot language)

Motion made by _____. Seconded by _____.

Upon roll call vote the following voted

"Aye": _____
(list names of members voting "Aye")

"No": _____
(list names of members voting "No")

The Supervisor declared the resolution adopted.

(name) _____, Clerk

CERTIFICATE

I, _____, the duly elected and acting Clerk of _____ Township, hereby
certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Township Board by a roll call vote at a
regular *(or special)* meeting of the Board held on _____, 20__, at which meeting a
quorum was present; and that this resolution was ordered to take immediate effect.

(name) _____, Clerk

General Law Township Extra-Voted Millage Language

NOTE—All Samples Revised February 2007. The previously included language will work, but this language more clearly identifies what is being levied.

Note: To comply with [MCL 211.24f\(1\)](#), if applicable, add the following language at the asterisk (*) in any of the sample ballot questions:

Where the millage will be disbursed to a specific unit or units, include that unit by name:

“ ... of which a portion will be disbursed to the _____ Downtown Development Authority.”

Where the millage may be disbursed to multiple units or units under an agreement or contract subject to change, the following broad, additional language could be used as follows:

“ ... of which a portion will be disbursed to such other or fewer local units of government as the Township Board determines appropriate.”

Extra-Voted Millage

May be for general operating purposes or a specified purpose

1. **Initial Question for Extra-Voted Millage (Increase)**

Shall _____ Township impose an increase of up to ___ mills (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value) in the tax limitation imposed under Article IX, Sec. 6 of the Michigan Constitution and levy it for ___ (*number of years of levy*) years, 20__ through 20__ inclusive, for (*general township operating purposes or insert language identifying specified purpose*), which _____-mills increase will raise an estimated \$_____ in the first year the millage is levied*.

[] Yes

[] No

2. **Renewal Question for Extra-Voted Millage (Renewal)**

Shall the expired previous voted increase in the tax limitation imposed under Article IX, Sec. 6 of the Michigan Constitution in _____ Township, of ___ mills (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value), reduced to ___ mills (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value) by the required millage rollbacks, be renewed at up to ___ mills (*must be the same number as the reduced mills--identical to the rate levied in the immediately preceding year--or a lesser amount*) (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value) and levied for _____ (*number of years of levy*) years, 20__ through 20__ inclusive, for (*general township operating purposes or insert language identifying specified purposes*), raising an estimated \$_____ in the first year the millage is levied*.

[] Yes

[] No

3. **Renew and Increase** Extra-Voted Millage to Offset Headlee Rollbacks

To “renew” at the original voted millage rate

Increase is .5 mills or less (One question may be used and called a “Renewal”):

Shall the expired previous voted increase in the tax limitations imposed under Article IX, Sec. 6 of the Michigan Constitution in _____ Township, of ___ mills (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value), reduced to ___ mills (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value) by the required millage rollbacks, be renewed at and increased up to the original voted ___ mills (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value) and levied for ____ (*number of years of levy*) years, 20__ through 20__ inclusive, for (*general township operating purposes or insert language identifying specified purposes*), raising an estimated \$_____ in the first year the millage is levied*.

[] Yes

[] No

Increase is over .5 mills (2 questions required):

Renewal

1. Shall the expired previous voted increase in the tax limitation imposed under Article IX, Sec. 6 of the Michigan Constitution in _____ Township, of ___ mills (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value), reduced to ___ mills (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value) by the required millage rollbacks, be renewed by up to ___ mills (*must be the same number as the reduced mills--identical to the rate levied in the immediately preceding year--or a lesser amount*) (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value) and levied for ____ (*number of years of levy*) years, 20__ through 20__ inclusive, for (*general township operating purposes or insert language identifying specified purposes*), raising an estimated \$_____ in the first year the millage is levied*.

[] Yes

[] No

Increase

2. Shall the expired previous voted increase in the tax limitation imposed under Article IX, Sec. 6 of the Michigan Constitution in _____ Township, of ___ mills (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value), reduced to ___ mills (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value) by the required millage rollbacks, be increased by up to ___ mills (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value) to recover that millage reduction and levied for ____ (*number of years of levy*) years, 20__ through 20__ inclusive, for (*general township operating purposes or insert language identifying specified purposes*), which ____-mills increase will raise an estimated \$_____ in the first year the millage is levied*.

[] Yes

[] No

Charter Township Millage Language

NOTE—All Samples Revised February 2007. The previously included language will work, but this language more clearly identifies what is being levied.

Note: To comply with [MCL 211.24f\(1\)](#), if applicable, add the following language at the asterisk (*) in any of the sample ballot questions:

*Where the millage will be disbursed to a specific unit or units, include that unit by name:
“ ... of which a portion will be disbursed to the _____ Downtown Development Authority.”*

Where the millage may be disbursed to multiple units or units under an agreement or contract subject to change, the following broad, additional language could be used as follows:

“ ... of which a portion will be disbursed to such other or fewer local units of government as the Township Board determines appropriate.”

Sample 1. To authorize additional millage beyond the initial 5 mills (or to authorize any mills beyond the authorized rate when the township incorporated if the township incorporated by resolution after 1978)

Note: *When a charter township goes to the voters for approval of additional millage, the township must identify a purpose in the ballot language—it may be for general operating or a specific purpose (which will restrict that millage to that purpose).*

Shall the Charter Township of _____ impose an increase of up to ____ mills (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value) in the charter township tax levy limitation imposed under MCL 42.27 and levy it for ____ (number of years of levy up to 20 years) years, 20__ through 20__ inclusive, for (insert language identifying specified purpose, including general operating), which ____-mills increase will raise an estimated \$_____ in the first year the millage is levied*.

- Yes
- No

Sample 2. To “offset the Headlee rollback of “charter millage”; not limited in duration of years

Shall the authorized charter millage for the Charter Township of _____, established at ____ mills (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value) and reduced to ____ mills (\$__ per \$1,000 of taxable value) by the required millage rollbacks, be increased by up to ____ mills (\$__ per \$1,000 taxable value) to the original authorized charter millage rate to recover that millage reduction, which ____-mills increase will raise an estimated \$_____ in the first year the millage is levied*.

- Yes
- No

2017 Millage Reduction Fraction Calculations Worksheet

Including Millage Reduction Fraction Calculations Not Specifically Assigned to the County Equalization Director by Law

County	Taxing Jurisdiction
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2016 Total Taxable Value..... _____

Losses _____

Additions..... _____

2017 Total Taxable Value Based on SEV _____

2017 Total Taxable Value Based on Assessed Value (A.V.) _____

2017 Total Taxable Value Based on CEV _____

NOTE: The last two items above are only needed when it is necessary to calculate a Truth in Assessing or Truth in County Equalization Rollback Fraction.

1. Section 211.34d, MCL, "Headlee" (for each unit of local government)

$$\frac{(2016 \text{ Total Taxable Value} - \text{Losses}) \times \text{Inflation Rate of 1.009}}{(2017 \text{ Total Taxable Value Based on SEV} - \text{Additions})} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

2017 Millage Reduction Fraction (Headlee). Round to 4 decimal places in the conventional manner. If number exceeds 1.0000, line through and enter 1.0000.

See State Tax Commission Bulletins No. 3 of 1995 and 19 of 2002 regarding the calculation of losses and additions.
See also the Supplements to STC Bulletin No. 3 of 1995 contained in STC Bulletin No. 3 of 1997.

2a. Section 211.34, MCL, "Truth in Assessing" (for cities and townships if S.E.V. exceeds A.V. for 2017 only)

$$\frac{2017 \text{ Total Taxable Value Based on Assessed Value for all Classes}}{2017 \text{ Total Taxable Value Based on SEV for all Classes}} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

2017 Rollback Fraction (Truth in Assessing)
Round to 4 decimal places in the conventional manner.

See State Tax Commission Bulletin 3 of 2017 for more information regarding this calculation.

2b. Section 211.34, MCL, "Truth in County Equalization" (for villages, counties and authorities if S.E.V. exceeds C.E.V. for 2017 only)

$$\frac{2017 \text{ Total Taxable Value Based on CEV for all Classes}}{2017 \text{ Total Taxable Value Based on SEV for all Classes}} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

2017 Rollback Fraction (Truth in County Equalization)
Round to 4 decimal places in the conventional manner.

See State Tax Commission Bulletin 3 of 2017 for more information regarding this calculation.

3. Section 211.24e, MCL, "Truth in Taxation" (for each taxing jurisdiction that levied more than 1 mill for operating purposes in 2016 only).

$$\frac{(2016 \text{ Total Taxable Value} - \text{Losses})}{(2017 \text{ Total Taxable Value Based on SEV} - \text{Additions})} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

2017 Base Tax Rate Fraction (Truth in Taxation)
Round to 4 decimal places in the conventional manner.

Use the same amounts for additions and losses as were used for the 211.34d ("Headlee") rollback.

NOTE: The truth in taxation BTRF is independent from the cumulative millage reductions provided by sections 211.34d and 211.34. The Base Tax Rate equals the BTRF X 2016 Operating Rate levied.

Instructions For Completing Form 614 (L-4029) 2017 Tax Rate Request, Millage Request Report To County Board Of Commissioners

These instructions are provided under MCL Sections 211.24e (truth in taxation), 211.34 (truth in county equalization and truth in assessing), 211.34d (Headlee), and 211.36 and 211.37 (apportionment).

Column 1: Source. Enter the source of each millage. For example, allocated millage, separate millage limitations voted, charter, approved extra-voted millage, public act number, etc. Do not include taxes levied on the Industrial Facilities Tax Roll.

Column 2: Purpose of millage. Examples are: operating, debt service, special assessments, school enhancement millage, sinking fund millage, etc. A local school district must separately list operating millages by whether they are levied against ALL PROPERTIES in the school district or against the NON-HOME group of properties. (See State Tax Commission Bulletin 3 of 2017 for more explanation.) A local school district may use the following abbreviations when completing Column 2: "Operating ALL" and "Operating NON-HOME". "Operating ALL" is short for "Operating millage to be levied on ALL PROPERTIES in the local school district" such as Supplemental (Hold Harmless) Millages and Building and Site Sinking Fund Millages. "Operating NON-HOME" is short for "Operating millage to be levied on ALL PROPERTIES EXCLUDING PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE, QUALIFIED AGRICULTURAL, QUALIFIED FOREST AND INDUSTRIAL PERSONAL PROPERTIES in the local school district" such as the 18 mills in a district which does not levy a Supplemental (Hold Harmless) Millage.

Column 3: Date of Election. Enter the month and year of the election for each millage authorized by direct voter approval.

Column 4: Millage Authorized. List the allocated rate, charter aggregate rate, extra-voted authorized before 1979, each separate rate authorized by voters after 1978, debt service rate, etc. (This rate is the rate before any reductions.)

Column 5: 2016 Millage Rate Permanently Reduced by MCL 211.34d ("Headlee") Rollback. Starting with taxes levied in 1994, the "Headlee" rollback permanently reduces the maximum rate or rates authorized by law or charter. The **2016** permanently reduced rate can be found in column 7 of the **2016** Form L-4029. For operating millage approved by the voters after April 30, 2016, enter the millage approved by the voters. For debt service or special assessments not subject to a millage reduction fraction, enter "NA" signifying "not applicable."

Column 6: Current Year Millage Reduction Fraction. List the millage reduction fraction certified by the county treasurer for the current year as calculated on Form 2166 (L-4034), *2017 Millage Reduction Fraction Calculations Worksheet*. The millage reduction fraction shall be rounded to four (4) decimal places. The current year millage reduction fraction shall not exceed 1.0000 for 2017 and future years. This prevents any increase or "roll up" of millage rates. Use

1.0000 for new millage approved by the voters after April 30, 2017. For debt service or special assessments not subject to a millage reduction fraction, enter 1.0000.

Column 7: 2017 Millage Rate Permanently Reduced by MCL 211.34d ("Headlee") Rollback. The number in column 7 is found by multiplying column 5 by column 6 on this 2017 Form L-4029. This rate must be rounded DOWN to 4 decimal places. (See STC Bulletin No. 11 of 1999, Supplemented by Letter of 6/7/2000.) For debt service or special assessments not subject to a millage reduction fraction, enter "NA" signifying "not applicable."

Column 8: Section 211.34 Millage Rollback Fraction (Truth in Assessing or Truth in Equalization). List the millage rollback fraction for 2017 for each millage which is an operating rate. Round this millage rollback fraction to 4 decimal places. Use 1.0000 for school districts, for special assessments and for bonded debt retirement levies. For counties, villages and authorities, enter the Truth in Equalization Rollback Fraction calculated on STC Form L-4034 as TOTAL TAXABLE VALUE BASED ON CEV FOR ALL CLASSES/TOTAL TAXABLE VALUE BASED ON SEV FOR ALL CLASSES. Use 1.0000 for an authority located in more than one county. For further information, see State Tax Commission Bulletin 3 of 2017. For townships and cities, enter the Truth in Assessing Rollback Fraction calculated on STC Form L-4034 as TOTAL TAXABLE VALUE BASED ON ASSESSED VALUE FOR ALL CLASSES/TOTAL TAXABLE VALUE BASED ON SEV FOR ALL CLASSES. The Section 211.34 Millage Rollback Fraction shall not exceed 1.0000.

Column 9: Maximum Allowable Millage Levy. Multiply column 7 (2017 Millage Rate Permanently Reduced by MCL 211.34d) by column 8 (Section 211.34 millage rollback fraction). Round the rate DOWN to 4 decimal places. (See STC Bulletin No. 11 of 1999, Supplemented by Letter of 6/7/2000.) For debt service or special assessments not subject to a millage reduction fraction, enter millage from Column 4.

Column 10/Column 11: Millage Requested to be Levied. Enter the tax rate approved by the unit of local government provided that the rate does not exceed the maximum allowable millage levy (column 9). A millage rate that exceeds the base tax rate (Truth in Taxation) cannot be requested unless the requirements of MCL 211.24e have been met. For further information, see State Tax Commission Bulletin 3 of 2017. A LOCAL School District which levies a Supplemental (Hold Harmless) Millage shall not levy a Supplemental Millage in excess of that allowed by MCL 380.1211(3). Please see the memo to assessors dated October 26, 2004 regarding the change in the collection date of certain county taxes.

Column 12: Expiration Date of Millage. Enter the month and year on which the millage will expire.

Getting the Word Out:

Campaign Finance Act Compliance (PA 269 of 2015 is under permanent injunction)

Township boards are often asked to take a position on issues of importance to their community. And many townships put millage or other questions on the ballot. But Section 57 of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA) limits how a public body can use public funds or property when it comes to campaigning for ballot questions or candidates.

Here's what a township board or township board members may do in their official capacity:

- A township board may advocate (lobby) for or against legislation to state and federal legislators or officials. (*Hays v. City of Kalamazoo*, 316 Mich. 443, 1947)
- A board member may express his or her views in their policy-making capacity.
- A township board may produce and distribute factual information concerning issues relevant to township functions. This includes informing the “electors in a fair and objective manner of the facts surrounding an upcoming ballot proposal.” (*Attorney General Opinion 6531 of 1988*)
- A township board may adopt a resolution to support or oppose a ballot question, as long as the ballot question relates to township concerns, property or government.” The township cannot use township funds, property or resources to distribute such a resolution in any way that differs from any other township resolution.
- A township board may allow any candidate or campaign committee to use a township facility that is already open for public use by policy, as long as any candidate or campaign committee may use the public facility.

Here's what individual board members may do as private individuals:

- Elected or appointed public officials or employees of a township may express their own personal views when they are not acting for the township, on their own personal time, expending their own personal funds, or providing their own personal volunteer services. They may use their township titles, for example, sending a letter to the editor and signing it as “Clerk of Cherry Lake Township.”

What a township board or board members must avoid doing:

- It is not lawful to use township funds, township-owned office space or other property to **expressly advocate** a vote for or against a candidate or ballot question. “Expressly advocate” means to state support for the passage or defeat of a ballot question or the election or defeat of a candidate. In other words, to say “Vote yes for” (or no) or “Support” (or defeat) a candidate or ballot question.
- A township cannot put links on its website only to sites that expressly advocate only for or against one candidate, one slate of candidates or one side of a ballot question.
- A township board cannot authorize or use public resources for a payroll deduction plan to collect for a campaign committee.

The Michigan Secretary of State is permanently enjoined from enforcing MCL 169.257 (3) as enacted in P.A. 269 of 2015, per Consent Agreement as ordered by U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division on April 28, 2016.