Emmet County News Release

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Separate Tax Limitation Proposal on August Ballot

Since 1976, Emmet County voters have been presented with a ballot proposal every four years seeking approval on tax limitations for the county, townships, and intermediate school district (ISD). The last proposal, approved by voters in a 2016 election, expires in 2020.

For the 12th time in the past 44 years, Emmet County officials have placed the "separate tax limitation" proposal on the ballot for the Aug. 4, 2020 primary election. If approved once again by voters, the limitations will be established for 2021-2024.

County officials have made it easy for voters by keeping the same tax limitations on the 2020 proposal as voters approved four years ago. In fact, the same tax limitations have been in place since 2004.

The state constitution provides the maximum number of mills that can be levied against a property in a year, with one mill equaling $1 per $1000 of taxable property valuation.

Over the years, changes have taken place at the state level that have set the taxing limit for Emmet County to 7.8 mills. This limit only applies to the general operating revenue and does not include extra voted millages like those approved by voters in recent years for senior citizen and ambulance services.

The 2016 proposal set the limitations at 5.6 mills for the county, 2.0 mills for the townships, and 0.2 mills for the ISD. The proposal before voters in the Aug. 4 primary election sets those exact same limits.

Emmet County adopted the fixed millage approach in 1976 and the County Tax Allocation Advisory Committee decides how Emmet County's 7.8 mill limit is divided between the county, townships and ISD. The advisory committee acts independently of the three taxing units and sends its determinations to the Emmet County Board of Commissioners for placement on the ballot. The voter-approved limitations allow the taxing units to levy taxes up to the limits established.

Though the county is permitted to levy up to 5.6 mills, it has not levied its maximum during the past two decades. Since 2001, Emmet County's general operating fund has been supported by a 4.85 mill levy.

On the Aug. 4 ballot, the "separate tax limitation" proposal, with the same distribution of the 7.8 mills that has existed since 2004, will again be before the voters for approval. If the proposal fails to pass, the three taxing units will not have funding for general operations in 2021 and will need to put another proposal before the voters in an upcoming election to set those limits again.

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