

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
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TO: Jeff Irwin
Chair, Ways & Means Committee

FROM: Robert E. Guenzel
County Administrator

DATE: April 19, 2006

SUBJECT: Partial county-wide election reimbursement

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

It is requested that the Board of Commissioners authorize the reimbursement of to local units for approximately 50% of their costs to conduct the county-wide election to be held on May 2, 2006, up to a maximum County expenditure of \$75,000; to create the Election Expense Committee tasked with analyzing the issue of the equitable sharing of costs associated with conducting future County-wide elections and provide recommendations to the Board of Commissioners.

BACKGROUND:

Under Michigan election law, local units of government have always been required to pay for county-wide elections. The Legislature, however, has never allocated specific funds to any local unit of government to pay for such elections. Recognizing that this causes a financial burden to the local units of government, and in response to requests from those entities for relief from the expenses of conducting the May 2, 2006 County-wide election on the 800 Mhz millage, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners has indicated its willingness to consider reimbursing 50% of the local units' costs related to this election, in an amount not to exceed a total of \$75,000. If the proposed Resolution is approved, funding will come from the Board of Commissioners' un-earmarked reserve.

The Board of Commissioners also recognizes the value in studying the issue of election reimbursement in general. To that end, if the Resolution is approved, an Election Expense Committee will be created with the goal of determining an equitable methodology for sharing costs among the various units of government when conducting County-wide elections. Topics of review will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Revenue sources related to the provision of elections;
- Statutory authorities and responsibilities;
- Costs and benefits; and
- Formula recommendations for cost sharing

The membership of the Committee **would** include:

- Two representatives of the Board of Commissioners;
- The County Clerk;
- The County Elections Director;
- A representative from the Washtenaw Intermediate School District;
- The Clerk of the City of Ann Arbor;
- The Clerk from a small city or village; and
- The Clerks from four townships.

The committee will communicate regularly with the Clerks' Association and the Chair of the BOC, with a report to the full Board of Commissioners no later than the end of the 2006 calendar year.

IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCES:

None

IMPACT ON BUDGET:

An expenditure not to exceed \$75,000 will be paid from the Board of Commissioners' un-earmarked reserve to help pay for the cost of conducting the County-wide election on May 2, 2006.

IMPACT ON INDIRECT COSTS:

None

IMPACT ON OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS AND/OR AGENCIES:

None

CONFORMITY TO COUNTY POLICIES:

This request is in conformance with County policies.

ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES:

Resolution

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REIMBURSEMENT TO LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT IN WASHTENAW COUNTY FOR THE COUNTY-WIDE ELECTION TO BE HELD ON MAY 2, 2006; CREATING AN ELECTION EXPENSE COMMITTEE TO ANALYZE THE PAYMENT OF ELECTION COSTS FOR FUTURE COUNTY-WIDE ELECTIONS AND PROVIDING RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

April 19, 2006

WHEREAS, under Michigan election law, local units of government are charged with the cost of conducting county-wide elections; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Legislature has never allocated money to any local unit of government to assist it in paying for such elections; and

WHEREAS, on May 2, 2006, there will be a County-wide election concerning the 800 Mhz millage increase; and

WHEREAS, the Clerks of many of the local units of government have requested that the Board of Commissioners contribute to the cost of this election; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners has agreed to help pay for the cost of conducting this County-wide election;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the reimbursement of local units' costs related to the May 2, 2005 County-wide election, at a rate of approximately 50%, provided, however, that such reimbursement shall not exceed a total County expenditure of \$75,000, to be paid from the Board of Commissioners' un-earmarked reserve fund.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners hereby creates a the Election Expense Committee as a special committee of the Board of Commissioners to analyze the issues pertaining to the cost of conducting County-wide elections, with the goal of determining an equitable methodology for sharing costs among the various units of government responsible for conducting such County-wide elections.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Committee shall be comprised of the following members:

- Two representatives of the Board of Commissioners;

- The County Clerk;
- The County Elections Director;
- A representative from the Washtenaw Intermediate School District;
- The Clerk of the City of Ann Arbor;
- The Clerk from a small city or village; and
- The Clerks from four townships.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Administration staff is directed to send notice to these individuals outlining the Committee's charge and setting the date of the Committee's first meeting.