

**BUDGET COMMISSION**

The Geauga County Budget Commission met in special session on Wednesday, November 1, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at the County Administration Building, 12611 Ravenwood Drive, Suite A333-A334, Claridon Township, Ohio. Present: Geauga County Auditor Charles E. Walder, Geauga County Prosecutor James Flaiz, and Geauga County Treasurer C. P. Hitchcock. Also Present: Chief Deputy Auditor, Ron Leyde and Fiscal Office Manager, Pam McMahan

**Meeting was advertised:** Meet with Geauga County Local Government Elected Officials and support staff to discuss the 2023 Revaluation Inside Millage Increase and Regular Business Virtual attendance was offered.

Roll call was taken Auditor Walder, present Prosecutor Flaiz, present and Treasurer Hitchcock, present.

Mr. Walder began by going through his PowerPoint presentation defining inside and outside millage. The presentation is included in these minutes.

Mr. Hitchcock told the group that he has extended collection through the end of February 2024. The Commission wanted everyone to know the County Commissioners were in support of this idea and have already taken action to mitigate their increase to the taxpayers. Mr. Walder continued saying many districts have already reached out to see what they can do. Mr. Flaiz said a sample resolution was available with fill-in information required from both the Auditor and Prosecutor's offices. Mr. Walder also mentioned that each District's Schedule B, form GCA-001 and DTE27 from tax year 2022 collection year 2023 was available and these documents would be helpful in completing the resolution as well as deciding which levy to reduce. The suggestion was to choose a "non-qualified" levy to ensure the taxpayers receive the most relief. Mr. Hitchcock said this was the first time in 15 years he has worked together with the County Commissioners to get something like this completed. Mr. Walder added that he was in communications with Senator O'Brien who is interested in trying to solve this problem as well.

Mr. Walder advised that there is a tax estimator calculator on the Auditor's website that will give an estimate of the increase to each taxpayer's taxes by name, parcel, address, or even street. He will add each district to the footnote on the page to make sure the taxpayers know who is participating in this initiative, so that people know what their local officials are doing.

Mr. Walder continued saying that the Budget Commission will be considering this at next year's budget hearings. Mr. Flaiz noted that if the State does come up with a solution of their own by the end of the year, this can be undone, but he felt that was unlikely.

**Questions:**

Jonathan Tiber, Trustee Claridon Township asked whether this is common for property to increase in value just not common for it to increase this much? Mr. Walder confirmed that to be correct.

Parkman Township Trustee, Joyce Peters asked what will determine if this situation continues into next year? Mr. Flaiz answered that the problem will continue as more counties go through this process. A further question, will the resolutions be available if they are having a meeting next week. Mr. Walder answered yes. Mr. Flaiz said not to have an illegal meeting but have the Fiscal Officer gather the information and run it by legal counsel or your APA and have it ready for the meeting in case the Officials would like to move forward.

Carolyn Brakey wanted to alert the group of a petition she has started to stop this tax hike. There are 400 signatures currently.

Chris Aluscheff, Aquilla Village Councilman, took issue with the Budget Commission painting this issue with a "broad brush". His municipality is not getting that much money. He is worried that his renewal levy on the ballot next week will fail due to all the press around this issue. Mr. Walder said this is the nature of 'average', some are higher, some are lower. He continued that he is asking officials to consider this as an option. The Commission is not taking a side. Some Counties are not even publishing their rate average increase.

Matt Rambo via virtual asked about House Bill 187. Mr. Walder wanted to address concerns over HB187. The bill is not going to be heard in the Senate until November 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Walder went on to say the legislation is not good legislation. Mr. Flaiz wanted to again re-iterate that all resolution will be rejected by the Budget Commission if the State does come up with a solution before the end of the year.

Ms. Kristina Port via virtual asked who the Tax Commissioner is. Mr. Walder was not able to confirm who that is currently.

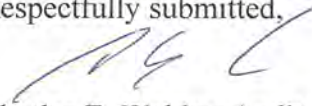
A question was asked what the typical increase has been in previous revaluation years. The average was 3.3% per year. New construction is typically around 3% per year.

Any additional levy on the ballot will be adjusted per HB920.

A Newbury resident asked if all districts were “up to speed” on this issue. Mr. Walder confirmed all Districts and School Treasurers, and Board Members were sent this information through the Auditor’s office.

Being no further business to conduct, Christopher Hitchcock moved to adjourn the November 1, 2023 regular meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Charles E. Walder, Auditor  
Secretary/Budget Commission

