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## REPORT TO TOWN BOARD

**FROM:** Kyle Patterson, Township Supervisor

**DATE:** August 6, 2024

**SUBJECT:** A Resolution Providing for and Requiring the Submission of a Proposition to Increase the Limiting Rate for the City of Champaign Township, Illinois to the Voters of the Township at the General Election on November 5, 2024, Resolution No. 2024-0801

### INTRODUCTION:

If approved, this Resolution would be certified to the County Clerk, and the County Clerk would be directed to submit a proposition to the voters of the City of Champaign Township to increase the limiting rate for the Township at the General Election on November 5, 2024.

### BACKGROUND:

Pursuant to the Illinois Property Tax Extension Limitation Law ("PTELL"), the current City of Champaign Township capped property tax levy has a limiting rate of 0.0417, and, in the tax year of 2023, produced \$933,909.39 in revenue. A homeowner of a property valued at \$100,000 pays a rate of about \$13.90 towards the Township.

The City of Champaign Township is facing current and impending funding shortfalls in 4 key areas: the Strides low barrier shelter, General Assistance, Rental Assistance and appropriate staffing levels in the Township Assessor's Office. There is a need to expand upon existing programs to more adequately serve the public. The Township's current levy is inadequate to fund the needs of the Township, particularly with the end of ARPA funding, and voters can be given the option to increase the levy. The needs for the Township are as follows:

#### -Strides Low Barrier Shelter:

Currently, the shelter's staffing costs are primarily funded by federal Covid relief ARPA dollars provided by the City of Champaign through an intergovernmental agreement. These ARPA funds are estimated to last through the end of June 2025. There are no identified alternative funding sources to fully cover Stride's staffing and operational costs and without further action, closure of the facility would be the likely outcome.

The Township's goal is to improve safety and services at Strides. To do this the Township needs increased staffing for case management, support staff, safety personnel, and a street outreach worker to stabilize a Street Outreach program. The Township needs an increased budget for guest food and other supplies like hygiene items and clothing. The Township also needs a budget for guest transportation to assist with housing placement and healthcare appointments.

The Township wants to help more shelter guests obtain permanent housing through a Rapid Rehousing program, which will require program funds for personnel, rent/deposit assistance and utility assistance.



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-General Assistance

The City of Champaign Township currently pays a monthly rate of \$340 a month to General Transitional Assistance recipients who have pending applications for Social Security Disability benefits. The State's new rate for General Assistance is \$425 a month. A levy increase would allow the Township to meet the difference and be better equipped to keep up with rate increases which are expected to happen every 2 years, sometimes annually.

-Rental Assistance

The Township received \$200,000 in ARPA funds from the City of Champaign for Rental Assistance funds in FY23, which has been exhausted as of April 2024. Through July 2023 to April 2024, the Township served 208 households, totaling approximately \$150,000 spent in Rental Assistance, which depleted the remaining Rental Assistance balance for FY24. Without ARPA funds, the Township will have no Rental Assistance funding for FY25.

-Assessor Staffing

The City of Champaign has seen a large growth in housing construction, particularly multifamily housing on the University of Illinois campus. Under the current staffing levels, it has been difficult for the Assessor's Office to thoroughly assess the growth. With the addition of 1 full time Deputy Assessor, the office could provide more thorough and fair assessments for taxpayers.

**PROCESS:**

If the Town Board desires to increase the maximum tax rate, it must pass this Resolution ordering that a referendum be held at the general election on November 5, 2024. If the Resolution passes, the Board shall certify the Resolution, including the proposed ballot language, to the local election official, who will submit the proposition to the voters at an election in accordance with the general election law. If a majority of the votes cast on the proposition is in favor of the proposition, the Township may levy the tax at a rate not exceeding the higher rate approved by the voters at the election.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Township Supervisor recommends that the Township Board pass a resolution putting forth a levy increase referendum to the voters of the City of Champaign Township for the November 5, 2024, general election.

The current cost of the Township's needs breaks down to:

Strides Funding: \$3,400,000  
Increased General Assistance: \$70,000  
Increased Rental Assistance: \$200,000  
New Assessor Staffing (approx.): \$85,000  
Total Increased Needs: \$3,755,000



The City of Champaign Township Administration recommends increasing the limiting rate to 0.2203, which would produce an additional \$4,000,000 to the annual property tax revenue. A home valued at \$100,000 would pay an estimated \$73.87 annually towards the Township levy. This amount would bring financial security to the Township and would cover increasing costs of services year to year.

Pursuant to the Township and Election Codes, the deadline for passage of a resolution placing a referendum on the November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, election ballot is August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**IMPACTS:**

As identified above, majority of the funding increase would apply to Strides Shelter, impacting both staffing and operational costs. Currently, Strides operates with a staff of 31 individuals. Three on site leadership members, eight case managers, eight support staff and twelve safety personnel. This is not adequate staffing for a 24/7/365 shelter serving between 64 and 74 of the most vulnerable individuals in our community each night. With the levy increase, Township would employ ten support staff, sixteen safety personnel and thirteen case managers, two focused solely on Centralized Intake for the Homeless (CIH), ten focused on case management for permanent bed holders, two case managers for a Rapid Rehousing program and a street outreach worker, all positions which are full time with benefits. This level of staffing would guarantee a minimum of two to three staff in each service area of the shelter which is required for the safety of guests and staff and allow the Township to expand service provision to include Street Outreach and Rapid Rehousing. Staffing costs needed for expansion would require a budget of at least \$2.4 million. An additional one million is needed to cover program costs of Street Outreach, Rapid Rehousing and Strides. This includes a computer lab with IT assistance for guests to use on site at Strides, assistance with move in costs such as acquiring a bed and other basic household needs and expanding the availability of food for guests. In the 2024 Point in Time count (PIT), 42 individuals were identified as actively unsheltered. This is up from the nine individuals identified in the 2023 PIT. Without the continued operation of Strides and the addition of low-cost permanent beds in the community through Rapid Rehousing the Champaign County community is likely to see a significant increase in the number of unsheltered individuals.

The State's recommendation for General Assistance award amount is \$425. The Township needs a budget expansion of \$70,000 in order for award amounts to increase from \$340 to the recommended \$425. The average number of participants receiving General Assistance each month is 40. The individuals currently receiving General Assistance are individuals applying for Social Security income, a process that is tedious and time consuming, and often not receiving a determination for several months or years. Without a budget increase and without an award increase many of these individuals will encounter food insecurity, utility shut offs, rental arrears and evictions or avoid seeking healthcare.

A healthy Rental Assistance budget is needed in order to prevent more individuals and households from experiencing homelessness in Champaign. With a budget of \$200,000, Township would increase the award amount from \$800 to \$1000 and serve an average of 200 households per fiscal year.



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**CONCLUSION:**

Approving this resolution would put the Township one step closer to expanding service provisions in Champaign for its most vulnerable individuals. While the Township will continue to apply and receive state and federal grants, these funds are not enough to stabilize services at Strides, nor would they suffice for additional program development. Township residents would not see increased support through General Assistance until a referendum were to pass and the Assessor's office would see increased difficulty keeping up with the work from new developments. The City of Champaign Township is dedicated to its mission and vision to "deliver individualized services in an equitable and responsive manner" and to "provide our residents with a sense of safety, acceptance and care to improve their lives while encouraging all others to see them as a valued part of our community".

City of Champaign Township

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Kyle Patterson

Title: Township Supervisor