



## NOVEMBER 2014 HAMILTON COUNTY BALLOT ISSUES

### ISSUE 1

**PROPOSED TAX LEVY (RENEWAL) - CINCINNATI CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
A majority affirmative vote is necessary for passage.

Shall a levy renewing an existing levy be imposed by the Cincinnati City School District, County of Hamilton, Ohio, for the purpose of EMERGENCY REQUIREMENTS, in the sum of \$65,178,000 and a levy of taxes to be made outside of the ten-mill limitation estimated by the county auditor to average ten and twenty-six hundredths (10.26) mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to one dollar and two and six-tenths cents (\$1.026) for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for five (5) years, commencing in 2015, first due in calendar year 2016?

FOR THE TAX LEVY  
AGAINST THE TAX LEVY

**EXPLANATION:** In April, the Cincinnati Board of Education voted to place a renewal levy of 10.26 mills on the November ballot. If approved, it will continue an **emergency** levy (NOTE: because this levy is a renewal of an emergency levy, it, too, must be designated “emergency”) that was last approved in 2009 and will expire in December 2014. Voters are being asked to approve this renewal of 10.26 mills for a five-year period (commencing in 2015, first due in calendar year 2016) which will raise approximately \$65,178,000 per year and will be used to fund the operations of the Cincinnati Public School District (CPS).

The estimated cost to the owner of a \$100,000 home will be \$307.92, which is slightly less than the amount paid currently. Since it is a renewal, a homeowner’s taxes will not be raised.

The levy was placed on the ballot by the Cincinnati Board of Education per a resolution passed at its April 14, 2014 meeting.

**WHAT THE LEVY WILL DO:** At its June 23, 2014 meeting, the Cincinnati Board of Education approved a \$497 million General Fund Budget for 2014-15. Some of the expenses included in that General Fund are personnel salaries and benefits, athletics, facilities/security, career technical expenses, information technology, evaluation and testing, and transportation for + 31,000 students. This levy, if approved, will provide about 14-15% of that budget figure.

The district obtains its funding from several sources: Federal - 13.8%, State - 35%; Local - 45.8%; Other non-tax sources - 4.4%. By law, they must operate with a balanced budget.

**BACKGROUND:** Voters are being asked to renew a levy that has been renewed successfully for many years. Its last renewal was in 2009. The district has had no **new** money since 2008, when a 5-year emergency levy for new monies was passed. A subsequent request for new monies was defeated in 2011. While making needed cuts to stay within their budget as required by law, in 2014 CPS achieved a 97% passing level of 3rd graders reading at grade level at the end of Grade 3, and the district reached a performance index trend of 87.5, the highest of Ohio’s urban districts.

CPS has faced decreasing funds from reduced State formula reductions in the 2011 and 2012 budget cycle. They have instigated several reforms to enable them to operate with less funding:

- Downsized the number of schools from 75 to 55 over a 10-year period;
- No pay raises for six years;
- Employees now pay 20% of their health care premiums and co-pays;
- Reworking transportation routes and school starting times;
- Utilized consultants to recommend best pricing for utilities and bulk purchasing.

Despite these efforts, however, the district could face severe deficits if levy is not approved.

A newly negotiated contract with the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers led to a complete overhaul in the Teacher Evaluation System. It is now aligned with more rigorous standards and requires student growth equal to 50% as part of the evaluation. The contract defines a clear, more expeditious exit ramp created for teachers who perform ineffectively. All employees receive their first pay raises in six years.

Through the effort of the Health Foundation and changes in the Affordable Health Care Act, twenty-one schools in the district are now equipped with in-house health clinics. CPS partners with several health institutions to staff the clinics; the plan is to provide needed services to the whole community.

The district has gained national recognition for its Community Learning Centers and outperforms all other urban districts in Ohio academically. Passage of this renewal and the resources it will provide will ensure that the district’s progress will continue.

### ISSUE 6

**PROPOSED TAX LEVY (RENEWAL) - HAMILTON COUNTY** A majority affirmative vote is necessary for passage.

A renewal of a tax for the benefit of Hamilton County, Ohio, for the purpose of SUPPLEMENTING THE GENERAL FUND TO PROVIDE FAMILY SERVICES AND TREATMENT PROGRAMS, INCLUDING THOSE PROVIDED BY TALBERT HOUSE at a rate not exceeding thirty-four hundredths (0.34) mill for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to three and four-tenths cents (\$0.034) for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for five (5) years, commencing in 2014, first due in calendar year 2015.

FOR THE TAX LEVY  
AGAINST THE TAX LEVY

## NOVEMBER 2014 HAMILTON COUNTY BALLOT ISSUES, *continued*

**EXPLANATION:** The Family Services and Treatment levy (FST) is a renewal of an existing levy of 0.34 mills on residential and commercial property for family services and treatment programs including those currently provided by Talbert House for five years beginning in 2014, first due in calendar year 2015. Under this proposed levy the owner of property valued at \$100,000 will pay \$10.20 per year the same amount as is paid currently. The proposed levy will raise approximately \$6 million per year. The levy was placed on the ballot by the Hamilton County commissioners following a review by the Tax Levy Review Committee.

**WHAT THE LEVY WILL DO:** This levy will fund alternatives to incarceration that will educate, rehabilitate and retrain offenders who have alcohol and drug addiction and mental illness associated with criminal behaviors under the county policy to reduce recidivism and preserve limited jail space for the most serious offenders. The levy also supports community based anti-drug programs. The levy would produce approximately \$6 million a year for five years for Talbert House programs and other agencies:

- Residential Treatment Programs for incarcerated offenders (1617 Reading Road): jail-based treatment for men and women offenders.
- Turning Point: provides screening and intake, assessment, pre-treatment, treatment services, transitional, and aftercare services.
- 10-day DUI Program: residential rehabilitation services
- ADAPT (Drug Court): residential/outpatient services for men and women with felony drug-driven offenses.

Levy funds also are for Hamilton County Prison Reentry Programs, the Sheriff's Office for facility security, Probation and Municipal Court, Drug Free Communities Program and Treatment Court Staff Program.

**BACKGROUND:** The Family Services and Treatment levy was first approved in 2009 to continue funding for programs previously provided for in an expired levy. The FST levy provides treatment opportunities for individuals in the criminal justice system.

The largest programs paid for by the FST levy are programs for inmates at 1617 Reading Road approximately 38% of the total levy in 2013. The contract with Talbert House for Turning Point and 10-Day DUI represented about 16% and the ADAPT (Drug Court) was about 21.7% of total levy funding in 2013. The Sheriff's Corrections Staff for security at Turning Point and 10 Day DUI was 9.3% of 2013 levy funds. Reentry programs beginning with entry into the criminal justice system through community reintegration aim to include connecting offenders to appropriate programs including Medicaid and were about 6% of levy funds in 2013. The Drug Free Communities funds youth directed educational programs promoting drug free environments through supporting community mobilization efforts and was a small proportion of levy funds.

Inmates in detention are not eligible for healthcare under the Affordable Care Act. Health coverage purchased through a Health Insurance Exchange is accessible to those who are in jail custody but not yet adjudicated. Inmates in a jail or prison remain eligible for Medicaid coverage for "inpatient services", i.e., medical services provided through a hospital or long-term care facility for a period longer than 24 hours.

In Hamilton County the opiate epidemic is a large burden on local county services. Directing candidates to the programs paid for by the FST levy is being significantly impaired due to the need to first detox an individual before they are eligible for entry. There is a shortage of detox centers in the County.

Without a millage increase, there would be an insufficient fund balance at the end of the upcoming levy cycle. The current proposed millage rate represents a 10% cut in the funding for these programs and will provide flat funding of the programs during the levy cycle. The Off the Streets program serving indigent women will be moved to the Health & Hospitalization Indigent Care levy.

**TAX LEVY REVIEW COMMITTEE (TLRC) Recommendations:** Consultants reported that service providers were doing more with less and did not identify any areas of non-compliance with terms of the current levy agreements. Based on those

reviews and discussions, TLRC recommended: the Family Services and Treatment (FST) levy be renewed at the same millage, an across the board 10% reduction of all currently funded programs and flat funding of the programs during the levy cycle. Also TLRC recommended moving the Off the Streets program out of the FST levy and into the Health and Hospitalization Indigent Care levy since this program primarily serves indigent women who have no place to turn to get off the streets. For TLRC Reports: [www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/tlrc](http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/tlrc)

### **ISSUE 7**

**PROPOSED TAX LEVY (RENEWAL) - HAMILTON COUNTY A** majority affirmative vote is necessary for passage.

A renewal of a tax for the benefit of Hamilton County, Ohio, for the purpose of SUPPLEMENTING THE GENERAL FUND TO PROVIDE HEALTH AND HOSPITALIZATION SERVICES, INCLUDING UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL, NOW KNOWN AS UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI MEDICAL CENTER at a rate not exceeding four and seven-hundredths (4.07) mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to forty and seven-tenths cents (\$0.407) for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for three (3) years, commencing in 2014, first due in calendar year 2015.

**FOR THE TAX LEVY AGAINST THE TAX LEVY**

**EXPLANATION:** The Health and Hospitalization levy is a renewal of an existing levy adopted in 2011 to provide health and hospitalization services at a rate of 4.07 mills on residential and commercial property for three years beginning in 2014 first due in calendar year 2015. The proposed levy will raise approximately \$37 million per year for medically indigent residents of Hamilton County at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center (UCMC) and Children's Hospital Medical Center (CHMC) and county services for indigent care.

It will cost the owner of a \$100,000 home approximately \$51.11 per year, the same as is paid currently. The levy maintains current millage with no adjustment for inflation. The levy was placed on the ballot by the Hamilton County commissioners

## NOVEMBER 2014 HAMILTON COUNTY BALLOT ISSUES, *continued*

following a review by the Tax Levy Review Committee.

**WHAT THE LEVY WILL DO:** The Health & Hospitalization levy would provide funds for medically indigent county residents at University Hospital, Children’s Hospital and certain indigent care programs.

The levy would provide \$14.9 million to UCMC and about \$5 million to CHMC for 2015, 2016, 2017.

And the levy would provide funding for non-hospital Indigent Care services including:

- Sheriff Inmate Medical Contract
- Sheriff Inmate Medical Staffing
- MHRS Treatment Programming (Extended Detoxification Program and Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services overseen by Mental Health and Recovery Services Board)
- Health District (TB Control Syphilis Prevention)
- Juvenile Medical
- Alternative Interventions for Women
- Probate Hearings
- Homeless Medical Coordination
- Charitable Pharmacy
- Medical Enrollment
- 1617 Reading Rd (22 beds)
- Off The Streets

Eligible residents of Hamilton County who are at or below the federal poverty level (FPL) and who are ineligible for Medicaid are eligible for indigent care levy-funded services. Both hospitals have active programs to identify insurance coverage for uninsured patients and help patients obtain coverage where available.

The majority of direct inmate medical services takes place at the Hamilton County Justice Center

(HCJC) through contracted health care services. Costs for inmate Emergency Room or admission to University Hospital or a local nursing home are covered by funds provided to University Hospital from the Indigent Care Levy. The Sheriff’s Department provides security for the Admissions Section, Health Services Section and the Psychiatric Unit located at the HCJC (Hamilton County Justice

Center) and the 1617 Reading Road facility for adult misdemeanor and felony offenders.

The County Health Department will reallocate some Indigent Care Levy funds to syphilis testing in the Justice Center.

The costs of medical services associated with the Juvenile Court are funded from the HHIC Levy.

The Youth Center contracts with Children’s Hospital Medical Center (CHMC) for on-site medical services.

The Alternative Interventions for Women (AIW) Program provides court ordered services for women in the criminal justice system who have both mental health and substance abuse disorders. In 2013, approximately 68% of all current funding for AIW was derived from the HHIC Levy.

Homeless Healthcare Coordination would provide funding to Strategies to End Homelessness (STEH), an organization that coordinates the work of agencies that shelter and service the homeless in Hamilton County. The funds would support costs related to on-site medical and behavioral health care, case management, and accessing resources (Medicaid, health and behavioral health services).

St. Vincent de Paul Charitable Pharmacy (“SVDP”) provides free pharmaceutical care to individuals who do not have insurance coverage and cannot afford their medication. SVDP serves as the pharmacy of last resort for those who do not qualify for other programs or are unable to pay for discounted medication.

Medical Enrollment program would fund one medical enrollment specialist dedicated to efficiently facilitating the enrollment of indigent persons living in Hamilton County in Medicaid or other programs through the Affordable Care Act.

Residential Treatment Programs for incarcerated men and women offenders are located at 1617 Reading Road. Prior to 2009 158 beds were primarily funded by the Hamilton County Health and Hospitalization Services Levy. Beginning with 2009 twenty-two of the 158 beds that are contracted were funded by the Levy.

Off the Streets coordinates services to assist women involved in prostitution,

providing housing and non-traditional group services to assist women through the recovery process.

**BACKGROUND:** The aim of the current levy approved by voters in 2011 is focused on prevention of illness and disease and coordination of medical care. Payments to UCMC and CHMC are conditioned on the hospitals providing services to medically indigent Hamilton County residents for which the Hospital receives no payment. The amount of services must be at least equal to the levy payments made each year. Both Hospitals meet this requirement.

Two provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) are: the reduction in the number of uninsured residents through Medicaid expansion and Health Insurance Exchanges, and mandated hospital reimbursement reductions. The financial benefits to hospitals because of fewer uninsured residents in Hamilton County are somewhat modified by Medicare and Medicaid reductions in reimbursements to hospitals.

CHMC patients are children who have a higher rate of insurance coverage from existing programs than adults. The net impact of the ACA changes on CHMC is estimated to be relatively modest \$2.1 million, less than 0.2% of revenue.

The levy has a 38 year history of support for indigent care at the two hospitals. Funding for other county health care-related programs has been added over time.

**TAX LEVY REVIEW COMMITTEE (TLRC) Recommendations:** The TLRC recommended placing the levy on November ballot at the current millage, with no adjustment for inflation, for a three year term. The estimates of the impact of the ACA are uncertain because implementation continues.

UCMC should be funded in the levy and has:

- been good steward of levy funds,
- taken positive steps to expand its Emergency Department diversions program,
- expanded its presence in its primary care clinics
- encouraged indigent patients to seek health care coverage

## NOVEMBER 2014 HAMILTON COUNTY BALLOT ISSUES, *continued*

CHMC should be funded in the levy and:

- has done an outstanding job diverting Emergency Department visits to its primary care system
- is commended for reopening a pediatric health care clinic in Harrison
- has been a good steward of Levy funds.

Other TLRC recommendations include:

- Adjust the annual services test in the levy contracts with CHMC to account for a more realistic estimate of uncompensated care;
- Enforce current reporting requirements with UHMC and CHMC and work with both to develop better measurements to analyze the services provided by the Levy and ensure funds are well spent.
- The Sheriff Inmate Medical Contract should be renegotiated to better manage costs and a funding cap should be set for Inmate Medical Staffing at the 1617 Reading Road facility.
- For Homeless Healthcare coordination TLRC recommends that STEH receive funds in a phased in manner as facilities and additional healthcare related services are brought on-line and work with the Off the Streets program to help secure housing for women in that program.
- The County needs a knowledgeable healthcare finance professional to negotiate more effectively with the hospitals. This person would be focused on managing and overseeing the expenditure of taxpayer dollars on health care in the county, with the goal of maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of county funding.

### **ISSUE 8**

**PROPOSED SALES AND USE TAX - HAMILTON COUNTY** A majority affirmative vote is necessary for passage.

The Board of County Commissioners of Hamilton County proposes to increase the levy of the sales and use tax in the amount of one-quarter of one percent for the purpose of providing additional general revenues and paying the expenses of administering such levy, the application of which general revenues shall be limited to acquiring, constructing, equipping,

improving, maintaining, rehabilitating, and renovating Union Terminal for a period of five years.

Shall the resolution of the Hamilton County Commissioners proposing to increase the levy of the sales and use tax in the amount of one-quarter of one percent for a period of five years be approved?

YES

NO

**EXPLANATION:** This is a proposed sales tax increase of one-quarter of one percent for five years which is estimated to generate \$170 million for Union Terminal. It would provide the Museum Center funding for renovation and repair of the Cincinnati Union Terminal, a public building occupied by the Cincinnati Museum Center. It would raise the sales tax currently paid in Hamilton County from 6.75% to 7%, and remain for five years beginning in 2015.

The levy was placed on the ballot by the Hamilton County Commissioners.

**WHAT THE LEVY WILL DO:** The proposed levy would provide funding for the renovation of Union Terminal to keep as a functional asset for years to come. According to a University of Cincinnati Economic Center study of June 2014, approximately 53% of the sales tax support would come from Hamilton County residents and the remaining 47% of the sales tax would be paid by non-residents. The projected cost of the sales tax is estimated to be \$23 per resident per year. A family of four would provide \$92 per year support to the renovation projects.

The Cincinnati Cultural Facilities Task Force study prioritized work needed for restoration which included:

- Exterior restoration and preservation to prevent continuing water infiltration and damage.
- Mechanical equipment replacement since most of this equipment dates from 1970's.
- Replacement of obsolete and inefficient lighting and electrical systems.

**BACKGROUND:** Built as a train station in 1933, Union Terminal was renovated and reopened as a Museum Center in 1990.

A 2013 Comprehensive Cincinnati Museum plan indicated the need for significant repair and renovation to preserve Union Terminal. The Art Deco structure has been deteriorating for many years largely because of the construction methods used to build it. The building's design allows moisture to get behind the bricks, which causes the structure's supporting steel beams to rust.

Currently the Cincinnati Museum Center receives funding from a Hamilton County 2009 property tax levy for operations, maintenance and repair of the Union Terminal. Building improvements were funded in part by this levy which expires in 2014 and will not be renewed. When the Museum Center requested a renewal, the Tax Levy Review Committee recommended the Museum Center establish an achievable plan to repair and restore Union Terminal. Hamilton County Commissioners wanted a comprehensive plan for the restoration of the building.

Located at Union Terminal, the Cincinnati Museum Center is a non-profit cultural organization including the Cincinnati Natural History Museum, Cincinnati History Museum and Library, Children's Museum and the Omnimax Theatre. In addition the Museum Center maintains collections and provides exhibitions and programming for the general public.

**TAX LEVY REVIEW COMMITTEE (TLRC) Recommendations:** In December 2013 the Cultural Facilities Task Force was formed and in June 2014 proposed addressing renovation of Union Terminal and included Music Hall renovation which was the proposal reviewed by TLRC.

In a November 2013 review, the TLRC found the Cincinnati Museum Center does an excellent job of running all 4 segments of the Museum center (the Children's Museum, the Omnimax Theatre, and the Natural History Museum and the History Museum). They have improved operating efficiencies, and enhanced non-museum revenue.

### **ISSUE 11**

**PROPOSED CHARTER REVISION - CITY OF CINCINNATI** A majority affirmative vote is necessary for passage.

## NOVEMBER 2014 HAMILTON COUNTY BALLOT ISSUES, *continued*

Shall the Charter of the City of Cincinnati be amended to remove obsolete language from the Charter, improve clarity and remove ambiguity related to existing provisions, ensure consistency with state and federal law, and to improve efficiencies related to the operations of municipal government, by amending Article 1, “Powers of the City”; amending Sections 5, 6 and 7 of Article II, “Legislative Power”; repealing Sections 4 and 5 of Article III, “Mayor”; amending Sections 5 and 6 of Article IV, “Executive and Administrative Service”; repealing Section 7 of Article IV, “Executive and Administrative Service”; amending Sections 1, 5 and 6 of Article V, “Civil Service”; repealing Article VI, “Institutions”; amending Section 2 of Article VII, “Boards and Commissions”; repealing Sections 12 and 13 of Article VII, “Boards and Commissions”; repealing Article X, “Miscellaneous”; amending Sections 1, 3 and 4 of Article XIII, “Campaign Finance”; and repealing Section 5 of Article XIII, “Campaign Finance”?

YES  
NO

**EXPLANATION:** This proposed ballot issue would amend the Charter of the City of Cincinnati by changing certain sections of the Charter and repealing others.

The changes in this Charter Amendment are proposed to remove obsolete language from the Charter, as well as to improve clarity and remove ambiguity from existing provisions in the Charter, ensure consistency with state and federal law, and improve operational efficiencies of municipal government.

This proposed Charter amendment was placed on the ballot by an ordinance passed by City Council.

### WHAT THE AMENDMENT WOULD DO:

The amendment proposes to remove obsolete language from the Charter, improve clarity and remove ambiguity related to existing provisions, ensure consistency with state and federal law, and to improve efficiencies related to the operations of Cincinnati’s municipal government (without substantive policy changes).

The amendment proposes to add a general severability clause in the charter (Article I)

which would affect the whole charter and repeal individual severability clauses in Article III, Sec 5; Article X, Sec 2 & 4; and Article XIII, Sec 5.

The amendment proposes changes in Article II, Sec 5 & 6, which clarify how legislation is enacted by Council, how and when notice of proposed legislation is given to the Council and the public, and how and when notification of legislation is made available to the public and media after its passage.

The proposed amendment would clarify the duties of City Solicitor and fix gender-specific pronouns (Article IV, Sec 5 and 6) and repeal the section requiring the appointment of a director of public utilities by the City Manager (Article IV, Sec 7).

The proposed amendment would clarify appointment procedures for the Civil Service Commission (Article V, Sec 1) and remove obsolete language from Article VII, Sec 2 (City Planning Commission).

The amendment proposes to list additional ranks as currently used by the Police and Fire forces and clarify whether they are in the unclassified or classified civil service (Article V, Sec 5 & 6).

The proposed amendment would repeal in its entirety Article VI (Institutions) of the current Charter. This Article details the process of conversion of the University of Cincinnati and its affiliated hospital (Cincinnati General Hospital) from a municipal university to a state university. Since this conversion was completed in 1977, the Article is obsolete and can be repealed.

The proposed amendment would repeal sections in Article VII providing for the “board of trustees of the sinking fund” (Sec 12) and the “board of rapid transit commissioners” (Sec 13), both of which are obsolete.

The amendment proposes to repeal Article X (“Miscellaneous”) in its entirety because its provisions are obsolete or will now be covered in other sections of the charter.

The amendment proposes to delete references to public financing of campaigns in Article XIII, Sec 1, 3 and 4 (Campaign Finance). In 2002 voters passed a Charter amendment (Article XIII, Sec 3) prohibiting public financing of campaigns.

**BACKGROUND:** Many of the changes proposed in this Charter Amendment have been recommended by the Charter Review Task Force. The Charter Review Task Force was established by a majority vote of the Cincinnati City Council. The citizen task force members have been meeting since May 2014. After an initial determination of the items within the Charter that merit review, study and public discussion and potential modification, the Charter Review Task Force made recommendations to the Cincinnati City Council related to certain obsolete language in the Charter, as well as proposed minor amendments which would clarify or remove ambiguity from the Charter, ensure consistency with state and federal law, and improve operational efficiencies of municipal government without substantive policy changes. After review by the Rules and Audit Committee of City Council, Cincinnati City Council voted in early September to put this Charter Amendment on the November 2014 ballot. The Charter Review Task Force is continuing to meet and work on more substantive issues and will bring these issues to the public for discussion over the next year. Based on these discussions, additional Charter Amendments may be proposed for the ballot in the future.

The Cincinnati City Charter is the municipality’s constitution and any changes to it require an affirmative vote of the electorate. The Cincinnati City Charter can be viewed at [cincinnati-oh.gov](http://cincinnati-oh.gov). Select government and enter charter in the search box.