

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Craig A. Stough 10/21/2020

"Sylvania Ballot Issues"

Election Day is Tuesday, November 3rd. This year is a presidential election year and a large voter turnout is expected. Other federal, state and county offices are also on the ballot. There are no local elections for Sylvania City Council, Township Trustee or School Board because they are held in the odd numbered years.

There are four local issues for consideration by Sylvania residents this year. The first two are to update our 1961 City Charter.

Issue 1 would update our Charter by removing the current requirement for a September primary if the number of candidates for Mayor or City Council exceed twice the number of seats available. Both the Ohio Secretary of State and the Lucas County Board of Elections have encouraged a date change to allow enough time for mail-in ballots, especially overseas absentee and military ballots, to be printed, mailed and returned.

They recommended moving to the statewide May primary date. However, that would require petitions for office to be submitted in February rather than the current July. Because the need for primary elections has been rare in Sylvania, and because February seems too early for residents to decide about running for City office, City Council proposes eliminating the primary election altogether, and having an August petition filing date that would align with Township Trustee and School Board candidate filing dates.

Issue 2 proposes three additional updates to the Sylvania City Charter. First, any remaining references to a "Clerk-Auditor" would be replaced with "Director of Finance" to reflect the office change made years ago. Second, the requirement to hold an Organizational Meeting by January 5th following a November City Council election would be changed to January 8th, allowing the required City Council meeting on the first Monday of January to meet the requirement.

Finally, only the title of proposed legislation could be read once instead of reading the entire legislation three times as currently required. City residents and Councilmembers are able to review printed, or online, copies of the proposed legislation in advance, which wasn't practical when the Charter was written 60 years ago. If five or more Councilmembers vote for the issue, the issue passes. If only four members concur, two more readings and votes would still be required.

I endorse the passage of both Issue 1 and Issue 2. They would update our City of Sylvania Charter, and would result in no changes to City services and no new taxes.

Sylvania voters will also be able to vote on two local property tax levy issues this November. Issue 12 proposes a five year renewal of the current .42 mil property tax to support the operation of the Sylvania Senior Center. It is not a new tax and has been in place since the new Senior Center was built in 2001. The annual cost is \$11.37 for the owner of a \$100,000 home. For more information, go to ["yesforsylvaniaseniors.org."](http://yesforsylvaniaseniors.org)

The other local property tax levy is Issue 13 which proposes a new continuing 1.9 mils for Sylvania Township Fire and Emergency Services. The annual cost would be \$99.75 for the owner of a \$150,000 home.

We currently have excellent fire and emergency services provided by the Sylvania Township Fire Department. The additional millage would be used to maintain current equipment and facilities, replace outdated apparatus and hire additional full-time fire fighters to meet the 35% increase in Fire/EMS calls since 2014. The additional millage would increase their tax funding by approximately one third, and would be comparable to many area fire departments. For more information go to "keepsylvaniasafe.com."

There are also countywide property tax issues on the ballot this year. Sylvania residents can vote on Issue 17 – Metroparks additional 2 mils for 10 years, and Issue 18 – Lucas County Children's Services 5 year renewal of 1.8 mils.

Because of the presidential election and the COVID-19 pandemic, voting could be busier or more difficult this year. You can choose to vote by mail, vote at the Lucas County Early Voting Center in downtown Toledo, or vote in person on Election Day at your regular polling location. Whatever you decide, I encourage you to vote and be a part of deciding the many candidate races and issues this November!