

**HAMILTON COUNTY TAX LEVY REVIEW COMMITTEE
138 EAST COURT STREET, ROOM 603
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45202**

June 30, 2017

Hamilton County Board of Commissioners
Hon. Todd Portune, President
Hon. Denise Driehaus, Vice-president
Hon. Chris Monzel
138 East Court Street Room 603
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Re: 2017 Tax Levy Review Committee Recommendations

Dear Commissioners:

Attached to this letter are the reports and recommendations of the Tax Levy Review Committee (TLRC) for the year 2017.

I want to first thank the county commissioners for appointing the current members of the TLRC, many of whom are new to the TLRC board. All member of the TLRC have been good stewards and are serving to continue the mission to “create a balance between the needs for funding for various levy agencies on the one hand and the tax burden on the home and business owners on the other hand”. Also I want to thank the county staff and Lisa Webb for her outstanding leadership, patience and commitment. Lisa has been a valuable resource to all of us, and finally I want to the Health Management Associates consultants who provide detailed information regarding the agencies that were involved in this process.

The reports could not have been completed without the hard work of the committee members, the numerous meetings they attended, the late night meetings and early morning meetings as well. Each member met with their assigned agencies, and like a sponge attempted to soak up all the information and create a succinct and transparent report for TLRC. The committee members were diligent in their responsibilities and reflected the professionalism expected in their roles as a TLRC member. The committee for the Indigent Care Levy was chaired by Jeanette Hargreaves and included Robert Furnier. The Mental Health Levy was chaired by Janaya Trotter-Bratton and included Rev. Bobby Hilton and Mark Quarry. The Senior Services Levy was chaired by Ed Herzig, and included Jenny O’Donnell and John Silverman.

Each of the reports were recommended and adopted by the TLRC committee members

Senior Services Levy

1. The Council on Aging, in conjunction with Hamilton County, form a strategic planning committee to: (a) review the scope of the services that can reasonably be provided to our senior citizens and needed to address the growing population and, (b) to develop plans for increased funding that does not only depend on taxes.
2. The tax levy be renewed at the current rate of 1.2 mills (\$19.4 million a year) for a 3 year period. At the 2 year point, in concert with the strategic plan results noted in item 1, a renewal can be requested for the period after this period ends and is structured so it allows for a sufficient period between the levy vote and the initiation/change/termination of funding, lowering the amount of money needed to be held in reserve in case of complete termination of tax payer funding.
3. The Adult Protective Services and Senior Veteran's Relief Program have not asked for an increase, they should continue at the requested levels of funding.

Mental Health Levy

1. The MHRSB (Hamilton County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board) must be vigilant in monitoring its use of levy carryover funds within the next budget cycle to determine if continued utilization reserves require at any action from the MHRSB in order to maintain adequate reserves. At the mid-term point, any impact from state changes to Medicaid or healthcare policy changes at the Federal level may be better understood.
2. The Mental Health Levy be renewed at the current rate of 2.99 mills.

Health and Hospitalization – Indigent Care Levy

1. The levy term should be returned for 5 years
2. The levy be placed on the November 2017 ballot at the TLRC inflation policy adjusted millage rate
3. The Sheriff Inmate Health Care Contract and the Inmate Health care staffing (Sheriff Inmate Medical) should be funded by the levy as a fixed amount of \$7,159,400 and \$5,775,418 respectively.
4. The Hamilton County Public Health's blood borne infectious disease program should be funded at \$150,000 per year.
5. The Hamilton County's Public Health's Oral Health Dental Coordinator should be funded for \$72,000 per year.
6. In-Home Health care Services should be funded at \$750,000 per year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gwen McFarlin, Chair
Tax Levy Review Committee