

NCSD Levy Renewal – Nov. 2018

Submitted by Joyce Dupont, Treasurer

Norwalk City School District | Norwalk, Ohio

The Norwalk City School District has placed a renewal levy on the November 6, 2018 ballot for the operations of the school district. Ohio Revised Code §9.03 requires that a political subdivision may only distribute certain factual information about the impact of the levy. As a public school we may not advocate for or against the levy. We are allowed to provide factual information about the levy and the impact upon the school district. So here they are - just the facts!

The levy is called an emergency operating levy and the exact language on the ballot is determined by Ohio Revised Code §5705.197. *“Shall a levy renewing an existing levy be imposed by the Norwalk City School District for the purpose of providing for the emergency requirements of the school district in the sum of \$1,540,000 and a levy of taxes be made outside the ten-mill limitation estimated by the county auditor to average four and eighty-five hundredths mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to forty-eight and one-half cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for a period of ten years, commencing in 2019, first due in calendar year 2020?”*

In plain language this is asking for renewal of a current levy that brings in \$1,540,000 to Norwalk City School District and costs our property taxpayer .485 cents for every \$100 their property is valued at for tax purposes. Tax valuation is not what you buy or sell a house for. It is 35% of the appraised or market value which is called the taxable assessed value. We usually think of this in terms of a \$100,000 house - $\$100,000 \times 35\% \times .00485 = \169.75 per year. If you are at least 65 or disabled you may be eligible for a homestead reduction on your property taxes. This reduces the appraised value of your property by \$25,000, a homestead taxpayer would pay $(\$100,000 - \$25,000) \times 35\% \times .00485 = \127.32

for the school levy. Contact our county auditor for more information on the homestead reduction; it is a positive benefit to the taxpayer and the school!

A renewal does not increase property taxes. The levy was first passed in May of 2014 as a 4.95 mill levy; the renewal is on the ballot as a 4.85 mill levy. Since the district has grown since 2014, the millage is decreased. This brings in the same amount of revenue to the school each year. Outside the ten-mill limitation means the tax has to be voted on and approved by voters to be collected.

Emergency requirements say the levy keeps the school district from operating in a deficit; it keeps us in the black. Since the levy was first passed in 2014 the school has maintained a positive financial year end after many years of operating deficits. Reductions in staff and budgets were not enough to avoid the red ink in those days of state education funding reductions. Even with the current levy in place Norwalk City School District is among the 20% of public districts with the lowest operating expenses per pupil – this information comes from the Ohio Department of Education’s report card. Check out the financial data and comparisons to other districts at ODE’s website.

Accountability and transparency in the schools finances and spending are important to the district. You can access the school districts checkbook level spending at OhioCheckbook.gov. I am pleased to say Norwalk City Schools was one of the first public entities in the area to open up our checkbook for public viewing and search capability. Our monthly financial reports are posted on the schools website along with the five year forecast and financial statements.

If you would like more information about the renewal levy, or school finance in general, please contact Joyce Dupont, Treasurer at 419-668-2779.