

RESOLUTION HOLDING THE SECOND OF TWO PUBLIC HEARINGS ON RESOLUTIONS DETERMINING TO SUBMIT TO THE ELECTORS THE QUESTION OF FUNDING LAW ENFORCEMENT, CONSTRUCTION OF A DETENTION FACILITY, AND OTHERWISE SUPPORTING CRIMINAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE THROUGH LEVYING A COUNTY SALES AND USE TAX AT THE RATE OF ONE-HALF OF ONE PERCENT PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 5739.021 AND 5741.021 OF THE REVISED CODE

WHEREAS, this being the date set by the Board of Ashtabula County Commissioners on its Journal of June 1, 2021 by Resolution Number 2021-33FINA, for the second of two public hearings on resolutions determining to submit to the electors the question of funding law enforcement, construction of a detention facility, and otherwise supporting criminal and administrative justice through levying a county sales and use tax at the rate of one-half of one percent pursuant to Sections 5739.021 and 5741.021 of the Revised Code; and

WHEREAS, such hearing was held, as follows:

Commissioner Whittington opened the hearing at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed the public to the public hearing on proposed resolutions that would put a ½ percent modification to the sales and use tax for a continuous period on the November ballot. We have proposed these resolutions as a means to address growing crime, recidivism, and addiction crises by promoting law and order in Ashtabula County. If approved by the voters, the funds generated will be used to fund the hiring and training of additional law enforcement and corrections officers, construction of a community corrections, rehabilitation, and detention facility and enable programming to address the problems of addiction, mental illness, and recidivism among those entering the county's criminal justice system.

The purpose of today's hearing is to hear comments regarding these resolutions. Public input is invaluable to us and will be used to finalize the details of the proposal. If the resolutions are adopted, this issue will be on the November ballot for consideration by Ashtabula County voters. The public will be afforded an opportunity to speak on this issue and sign in sheets are provided for those who wish to speak.

This is the second of two required public hearings to place the modification question on the ballot for the public vote. In accordance with Ohio Revised Code 5739.021(G), the Statement and Preliminary Plan for Criminal and Administrative Justice Services is available for public inspection and comment at this hearing. The Statement and Preliminary plan is a statutorily required schedule that outlines the forecasted expenditures of the revenue, should the voters approve the issue. County Administrator Janet Discher spoke to the Statement and Preliminary Plan for Criminal and Administrative Justice Services. Lieutenant Kemmerle gave a short presentation regarding the CCRF piece.

WHEREAS, several members of the public attended the public hearing and voiced their questions, concerns and statements; as follows:

Joe Moroski spoke regarding comments he has heard from community members which included: tax rate comparison to surrounding counties and potential revenue source compared to the median household income of counties like Cuyahoga, Lake and Geauga. Senior citizens may see this issue somewhat differently as to why county is considering raising sales tax for victims to give criminals a better jail experience. These are the people bringing dangerous drugs and substances, breaking into homes, steal money or anything to be sold, bikes motorcycles, assault and brutalize the citizens of the county. Some people are concerned shroud of secrecy, what is the final number, where will it be located, in able to make an informed decision, if sales tax is limited, what is that time. When is the last time the government has ever repealed a tax. Tourism dollars are only for a portion of the year.

Rebel Mead asked several questions regarding if the county had looked at other ways to fund a jail; contacted any banks to receive loans versus a sales tax increase to fund the project; if any outside firms have analyzed county spending; are there cheaper solutions available regarding rehabilitation while incarcerated; could treatment be offered as a condition to release; how many of those could be in rehab versus sitting in jail, and how many current inmates are drug related. Responses included: The county is seeking every possible dollar. The State of Ohio is looking to create a funding model similar to schools. We would be one of the first counties to have this state share, should it go forward. We are asking legislators to set up capital funds of \$1.3 billion dollars in jail projects, includes ours. The state put away \$50 million asking for another round when in becomes available. The resolution has sales tax at a continuous period, the Board is hearing all

the comments in order to make an informed decision to set a specific term. There is specific money just for programming only. We do not have \$45 million to build a facility, but should be able to add funds from other revenue sources, income that could be generated and put back. Going to the bond market is a way to fund but includes a bond rating with a formal process. It would require identified revenue to pay back the bonds. A majority of these services are funded by the General Fund, we have an independent budget committee made up of private citizens they review our revenues and expenditures that analyzes the general fund budget. The monies collected would be kept in a separate fund. There will be efficiencies with the new facility so the cost in the long run will be personnel more than the facility. Estimate 80% of inmates are drug related incarcerations.

Programs were discussed and the role the courts play in treatment options and jail sentences.

Pat Martuccio despite population decrease level of crime going up. Is this specific to this county and how do we compare to other counties? Responses included: it is a generational problem, a national trend due to the drug epidemic that our county is facing due to limited jail space. The State of Ohio has overcrowded prison population and passed legislation reclassifying felony inmates. Majority are drug related, medical needs are an issue. The sales tax funding option is an opportunity for more people to share the burden, so not only the county residents bear the burden, includes visitors as opposed to a property tax.

Robin Parsons-the old jail and renovation idea for county office space, is it built into this money and still our tax dollars. Responses included: it is far less expensive to renovate office space than a county jail and other entities that come in may contribute funding to pay for the renovation. We have the ability to spread over time and do in phases. May still be tax dollars, but other projects have been completed within existing budgets. There have been prior attempts regarding sales tax, including imposing the sales tax. This board opposes that. We are trying to find solutions to problems, but is important to come before the voters. We want to give all the information, preparing the question to the voters to decide.

Jen Capo what can the state make us do; ½ of 1 percent? Responses included: Cuyahoga county recently had the state enact consent decree and ran their jail. They can say this housing area isn't adequate, go down to 80 bed facility. Exploring the needed funding and could be shortened if additional funds are received. Would rather have the ability to be able to offer additional services and programs. Doing nothing is not an option, as we cannot continue. To address the issues, we need to try to have better outcomes for those released, have programs and partnerships, take in every possible resource there is to integrate into the facility. The current facility does not have the ability to do this.

Julie Hall- spoke regarding advocacy of addressing mental health needs. \$30 million new versus 10 million to fix the current facility. If you can, put \$30 million into mental health. Responses included: the correction rehabilitation is part of the solution. Having a new facility would help address the criminal aspect, addiction, and mental health. We are turning down grant dollars due to no space and working tirelessly to get a continuum of care from detox to re-entry into the community. The new facility would address the core.

Peachie Chapman- ask the people for money, then don't ask again, we have to get this right.

Jim Kemmerle stated the Community Corrections Planning Board consisting of sheriffs, mental health providers, judges, prosecutors, etc. has been working on this project since 2015. Have an extensive amount of work leading up to. The problem is complex cannot throw a broad brush to fix it. We need a facility to address almost on a one on one level. Discussed the location of the property, this would be put out in the public forum before November the location.

Roland Ferguson – asked what kind of property and how many acres. Advised to not give specific acreage, but are in the process of narrowing down the properties.

The Board of Commissioners thanked everyone for coming and provided brief closing comments.

WHEREAS, the Statement and Preliminary Plan for Criminal and Administrative Justice Services has been adopted and made available for public inspection and comment as required by Section 5739.021(G); now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, By the Board of Commissioners of Ashtabula County, Ohio, that there being no further testimony offered, the second hearing on the proposed resolutions determining to submit to the electors the question of funding law enforcement, construction of a detention facility, and otherwise supporting criminal and administrative justice

through levying a county sales and use tax at the rate of one-half of one percent pursuant to Sections 5739.021 and 5741.021 of the Revised Code is declared adjourned.

**ASHTABULA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CERTIFICATION PAGE**

Resolution No. 2021-45FINA

July 14, 2021

RESOLUTION HOLDING THE SECOND OF TWO PUBLIC HEARINGS ON RESOLUTIONS DETERMINING TO SUBMIT TO THE ELECTORS THE QUESTION OF FUNDING LAW ENFORCEMENT, CONSTRUCTION OF A DETENTION FACILITY, AND OTHERWISE SUPPORTING CRIMINAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE THROUGH LEVYING A COUNTY SALES AND USE TAX AT THE RATE OF ONE-HALF OF ONE PERCENT PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 5739.021 AND 5741.021 OF THE REVISED CODE

Upon the motion of Casey R. Kozlowski, seconded by J.P. Ducro IV.

VOTE:

**Kathryn L. Whittington
J.P. Ducro IV
Casey R. Kozlowski**

**Aye
Aye
Aye**

CERTIFICATE OF CLERK

IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of a resolution acted upon and duly passed by the Board of County Commissioners of Ashtabula County, Ohio, on the date noted above.



Crystal Sturgill, Clerk of the Board
Board of County Commissioners
Ashtabula County, Ohio