

At its meeting of May 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Bath Township Board of Trustees approved a Resolution of Necessity to move forward with placing a five-year replacement and increase levy for the parks system on the November 7<sup>th</sup> General Election ballot. If approved by voters, it would replace a current .75 mill levy set to expire on December 31, 2023, but collect through December 31, 2024. The existing levy would be replaced and increased by .35 mills for a total of 1.1 mills to provide funding for the operations, maintenance and capital expenses of the Township's over 500 acres of park property. The levy would generate annual revenue of roughly \$688,000.

The parks levy is the primary funding source for operations and maintenance of the township parks. Currently, the taxpayer expense of the .75 mill levy amounts to \$22.97 per \$100,000 of value on an owner-occupied property. In addition to the position of Parks Director, a staff of three full-time people and three seasonal employees during the spring and summer months operate and maintain the five Bath Township parks. Aside from reservation fees, donations and revenue from the lease of a portion of township park land to the University of Akron, park operations for each of the five parks are funded primarily through the current .75 mill levy, collecting at only .65 mills due to reduction factors.

Perhaps the most significant and evolving park in the entire park system is the Bath Nature Preserve. Grant funding has subsidized many capital improvements in the Nature Preserve over the years, and the Township Parks Division is entrusted with its daily operation and maintenance.

Scheduled sporting events with athletes from the Revere Local School District are a large part of the activity in the Bath Parks. In 2022, there were 1,628 scheduled field reservations and 212 shelter reservations during the season in the Bath Parks.

The decision to replace and increase the parks levy is necessary as expenses for Park operations, maintenance and capital expenses continue to climb. Under Ohio's Omnibus Budget Bill approved in 2013, the state's prior subsidy to homeowners of 12.5% of property taxes was eliminated for certain changes to levies. As a result of the budget bill and under the new legislative process, levies which are replaced or newly presented to voters lose the 12.5% rollback subsidy. As such, taxpayers will assume the additional taxes previously reimbursed by the state. If approved by voters, the cost of the 1.1 mill replacement and increase levy would be \$39 per \$100,000 of value on an owner-occupied property.

It is readily apparent, through community response from a survey conducted in 2022 the Bath Township parks system is an important part of this community. With an estimated 100,000 visitors to our parks in 2022, Bath Township's commitment to preserving and maintaining our parks system is undeniable. Bath Township will continue to ensure the viability and excellence of our parks system now and in the future.