

For Immediate Release

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Maine Township Trustees Vote for Unprecedented Tax Abatement
Move Will Save Taxpayers Over \$1.2 Million Dollars

A majority on the Maine Township Board finally succeeded Wednesday night in obtaining a significant savings for its taxpayers at a special Township meeting to discuss an abatement of previously agreed-upon 2019 property taxes.

The Township decided for the first time ever to “abate” – or suspend – a portion of property taxes for its citizens. Abatement is a rare action which lifts some or all of a previously agreed-upon tax levy. The 3-2 Township Board vote will provide a 100% tax abatement in 2019 for the Township’s General Assistance (“GA”) Fund and a 10% tax abatement for the Township Fund. “Local officials owe it to the taxpayers to use money already collected, for its stated purposes, before they seek another dime,” said Township Trustee Susan Sweeney.

Illinois law caps Township reserve funds at 2.5 times their annual expenditures. Maine Township's total reserves is well over \$11,000,000. One of the funds, the GA Fund, has about \$2.7 million in surplus with expenditures around \$830,000. Given this disparity, Trustees Sweeney, Dave Carrabotta, and Claire McKenzie voted for a 100% reduction in the 2019 GA fund tax levy and a 10% reduction in the Town Fund levy. This will save taxpayers over \$1,200,000.

Sweeney expressed concerns back in 2018 over the unusually large surpluses. Though the vote for an abatement initially failed in January 2019, Trustees Sweeney and Carrabotta raised the issue again in February and were denied any consideration on the issue after it was tabled to a Special Meeting in March.

Township Supervisor Laura Morask and Trustee Kim Jones, who both wanted no more than a 5% cut to the levy in December 2018, also voted against the proposed abatements and, instead, sought to minimize the abatements and reduce fund surpluses through pre-payment of future pension liabilities. Trustee McKenzie joined Trustees Sweeney and Carrabotta to pass the full abatement.

“Maine Township has previously overtaxed citizens - for years - to the point of legal non-compliance. Let the example set by the Maine Township board majority inspire all Illinois local governments to reconsider the over-taxation of citizens that unnecessarily builds up fund balances,” said Sweeney.

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