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Contact: Mayor Bill Cole

Contact email: coleb@billingsmt.gov

Contact phone: 406-294-5700 (o)

406-294-5921 (c)

Contact: City Administrator Chris Kukulski

Contact email: kukulskic@billingsmt.gov

Contact phone: 406-581-7026 ©

Billings Passes First Public Safety Levy in Sixteen Years

For the first time in sixteen years, Billings voters have passed a public safety mill levy to increase funding for municipal fire, police, and related public safety services. The “Repeal and Replace” Public Safety Mill Levy 2 passed September 15th, 2020. The levy will generate an estimated additional \$4.12 million in public safety funding and allow the City to maintain current levels of service.

Originally passed in 2004, Public Safety Levy 2 (PS2) was capped at a fixed \$8.2 million dollars. The “Repeal and Replace” measure asked voters to repeal this original levy and replace it with one calculated at 60 mills. For the homeowner of a median value \$211,000 house, this will raise property taxes by \$4.75 a month. By using mills instead of a fixed sum the levy will slowly increase with the value of property to help the City better meet future needs.

“Billings is committed to our police and firefighters, and the results today make that clear,” said Billings Mayor Bill Cole. “For several years we have used dwindling reserves to pay for public safety. Even though we will need more police and firefighters in the future, this will at least prevent us from going backwards for now,” said Cole. “Despite the pandemic the voters recognized that public safety is a priority, and we appreciate their support.”

The City wishes to thank the voters for their engagement in this process during this difficult time. COVID-19 has detrimentally impacted many families and local businesses. Finances are tight and we appreciate this commitment from the citizens to maintaining our current public safety services and keeping the community as safe as possible. The City will do everything it can to ensure quality, reliable service with the funding authorized by the voters.