



# MAKING SENSE OF THE

Benzie County Jail Operations Renewal Millage

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When reading your ballot on November 5, 2024, you'll find a millage request, that has been placed on the ballot by Benzie County for **jail operations**. This millage request is a **renewal** to the existing jail operations millage. It seems like it's in English, yet you wonder, "What does that really mean? Is this an increase or a **renewal**? Why does the County spend so much money on its jail?" If it's confusing, it's not because the County wants it that way, but because the law requires certain wording. For your benefit, here are some answers to your questions!

## THE REQUEST

Although a millage rate was approved in 2022 for Benzie County Jail Operations, this millage expired with the 2023 tax year. Voters approved a 1.2660 millage in 2022 (an average annual cost to a taxpayer of a home valued at \$200,000 of \$253.20) for Benzie County Jail Operations. This covered the full cost to operate the jail at that time, if no changes were made to operations. While the County asked for an increase in August 2024, it was not successful. In November, the County is seeking a renewal in the jail operations millage; **no increase in levy to the taxpayer**.

## EXPLANATION

### Why do we have a jail?

Benzie County is required to provide for care for individuals who are confined to jail by law enforcement or the judicial system. While they're there, the County is obligated to provide all mental health needs and medical needs. In fact, jail residents lose all state and federal assistance as soon as they're jailed; Benzie County has no control over this. If Benzie County does not have a physical building, it is still required to provide these services by way of partnerships with other county agencies. It's important to keep those who are struggling local in these situations.

### How will you make a renewal millage work?

County administration and the sheriff's office have worked diligently to tighten the jail expenditures to stay within the levy of a renewal millage. While the Michigan Department of Corrections has indicated a recommendation to hire additional correctional officer staff, we will be sacrificing other staff positions through attrition and have implemented a limit on spending; prioritizing the true need for items. Benzie County will also continue to house neighboring agencies inmates to provide for revenue outside of the millage.

## MILLAGE LANGUAGE

For the sole purpose of continuing to provide funds for Benzie County Jail Operations at the same rate approved by the voters in 2022, shall the Constitutional limitation upon the total amount of taxes which may be assessed in one (1) year upon all property within the County of Benzie County, Michigan be renewed by up to 1.266 mills, (\$1.266 per \$1,000.00 taxable value), and be levied for a period of three (3) years (2024-2026), inclusive?

If approved and levied in full, this millage will raise an estimated \$2,267,017 to fund County Jail Operations in the first calendar year of the levy based upon taxable value. In accordance with State law, a small portion of the millage may be captured by the City of Frankfort Downtown Development Authority and the Benzie County Brownfield Authority.

### What will this millage do?

This millage will provide for most operations of the Benzie County jail. With officer safety at the forefront of operations, Benzie County will continue to implement strategies that tighten the budget where feasible.

### Is this millage an increase?

**No**, the millage before voters on November 5, 2024, is not an increase in the levy, but rather a renewal of the existing levy.

## ADMINISTRATION

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