

The Honorable Larry Kestenbaum
Washtenaw County Clerk/Register of Deeds
200 N. Main St., Suite 120
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

May 6, 2019

Dear Clerk Kestenbaum:

I write to you regarding the filing fees owed by the **Yes to Our Mental Health and Public Safety** committee (Committee #B-2017-006) organized under Michigan Campaign Finance Law as a ballot committee.

In July of 2017 the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners placed a 1.0 mill ballot issue on the November ballot. There was discussion of rescinding the resolution authorizing the ballot question, so it was not until after the August Board meeting that it was certain the question would be on the ballot. This millage was unprecedented in terms of its complexity. While ultimately passing by a nearly two-to-one margin, there was much initial doubt about the millage's chance of passage. The Committee was formed to support the millage on August 28, 2017.

From the beginning of the campaign process there were several practical errors made in the organization of the campaign structure. This included having three different individuals operating as the treasurer, campaign manager, and record keeper. Combined with a shortened campaign cycle, the use of outside vendors, and a large number of small contributors, there was a great deal of confusion as to who was responsible for what components of campaign finance compliance. For example, notices were sent to one individual, records were kept by another, and reports were filed by a third.

In January of 2019 I became fully aware of how much debt the committee owed the Clerk's office for late filing fees. The total was \$7,600.00. At that point I became the campaign treasurer (on January 29) and immediately began the process of completing any and all outstanding reporting obligations. This process took several weeks, and thanks to the assistance of your staff, by mid-February 2019 all outstanding reports had been filed, and previously filed reports had been re-filed to account for any technical errors. In addition to taking over as treasurer, I also began organizing fund raising efforts to raise the funds needed to pay off our obligations.

Throughout the period prior to the November 7, 2017 election, and at all times since, the Committee has consistently complied with the spirit of campaign finance laws to ensure full transparency of where campaign funds we both raised and spent. Every dollar raised and spent is fully available to the public through the reports maintained on your website.

With the election now 18 months past, and with full transparency of campaign finances provided, I ask that you consider exercising your authority to waive or reduce the fees owed to your office. This issue was complex in its content and its campaign structure, but ultimately it was widely supported by the voters of Washtenaw County. Given these factors I hope you will consider the request.

Sincerely,



Andy LaBarre
Treasurer for Yes to Our Mental Health and Public Safety
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