

# VOTING GUIDE

2020 - KNOX COUNTY





## STATE REPRESENTATIVE



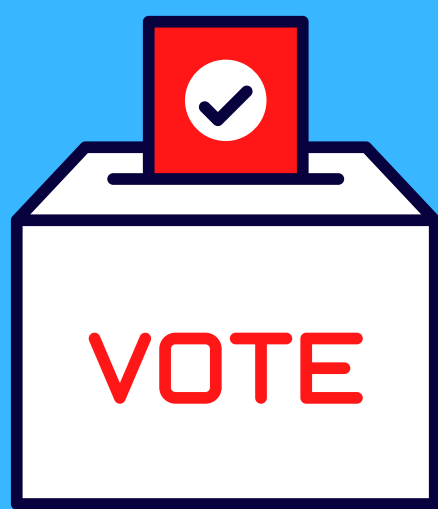
### RICK CARFAGNA (R)

Rick Carfagna is running for his third term in the Ohio House of Representatives for District 68, which includes all of Knox County and the eastern half of Delaware County. After graduating from John Carroll University, he worked in staff positions in the Ohio legislature and for fifteen years as a Government Relations Manager for Time Warner Cable. Prior to election to the General Assembly, Carfagna was a Township Trustee for Genoa Township, where he lives.

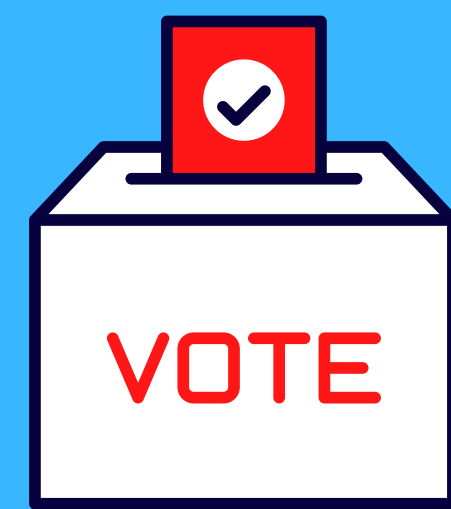


### STEVEN F. MOUNT (D)

Steven F. Mount, also from Genoa Township, is running for office for the first time. He is a senior partner at Squire, Patton, Boggs, a global law firm. A graduate of Muskingum College in Zanesville, Ohio and Harvard Law School, Mr. Mount's law practice focuses on community development financings developed to promote investment in low-income communities.



# ELECTED COUNTY OFFICES



## TREASURER, RECORDER, AND COMMISSIONERS

The Treasurer essentially acts as the county banker, disbursing tax money to the appropriate places and investing surplus funds. The Recorder keeps property deeds and other official records relating to real estate ownership. Doing this correctly and efficiently allows property sellers and buyers, realtors, lenders, and others to engage in transactions.

The three-member County Commission acts as the legislative and executive body for county government. The Commission appropriates funds, determines county taxes, manages personnel, and oversees everything from development and waste management to parks, juvenile justice, and the KAT service that runs to Gambier.

## ENGINEER

Ohio is the only state that elects its County Engineer. Dating back to the state's admission to the union in 1803, the position was originally called the "County Surveyor," but as Ohio's road system developed with its industrial economy, the position evolved to include engineering and surveying responsibilities. Today, county engineers must have both professional engineer and professional land surveyors licenses and are responsible for the county's public roads, lands, and waterways.

## COUNTY JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

The County Justice department primarily consists of the Prosecuting Attorney and the Sheriff. The Prosecuting Attorney acts as the criminal and civil attorney for the county, prosecuting cases in the name of the state. While most college students know the Sheriff for his issuing of many parking tickets, the position is actually traced back to 9th century England, when the King had a personal representative in each county who oversaw the jails and punished criminals.

## CORONER

In situations where a death is deemed suspicious or violent, the Coroner performs autopsies, generates toxicology reports, subpoenas witnesses to testify on the nature or timing of a death, and, per Ohio Revised Code 313.19, determines the official cause of death. Unlike some states, Ohio requires coroners to be licensed physicians. The Coroner has been an elected local position since the days of Medieval England, when the requirements were to be a property holder with basic anatomical knowledge.



# COUNTY ELECTIONS

REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES ARE RUNNING UNOPPOSED

## COUNTY COMMISSIONER

**TERESA  
BEMILLER (R)**



**“I began my service as Knox County Commissioner in 2009 bringing twenty-six years of previous administrative and management experience as an elected and appointed official, a strong background in government finance, and extensive involvement with local and state boards and committees. Having taken office during a recession, I am proud of where the County is today. Our fiscal condition is strong, and our bond rating has been upgraded. I will continue to use my knowledge, skills and experience to work with my fellow Commissioners to make informed decisions that are in the best interest of Knox County.”**

**THOM  
COLLIER (R)**



**According to the Knox County commissioners office, Mr. Collier is running for his third term inoffice as a county commissioner. Previously he served in the Ohio House of Representatives from 2000-2008.**

## COUNTY SHERIFF

**DAVID  
SHAFFER (R)**



**“I have 33 years of full time, law enforcement experience, serving with the Knox County Sheriff’s Office as a deputy, sergeant, lieutenant, captain, and sheriff. I have served as sheriff since 2013. Our deputies operate a 100 bed full service jail, conduct law enforcement and investigative operations, and provide services of the court.”**



# COUNTY ELECTIONS

REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES ARE RUNNING UNOPPOSED

## John Burke Lybarger (R) County Recorder

"My name is John Lybarger and I have been the County Recorder for the past 28 years. All records recorded in the Recorder's Office are open for public inspection and reproduction. The only documents that are not an open record are Veteran DD:214's and Veteran Service Discharge's. These records are only available to persons prescribed by the Ohio Revised Code after proper identification. I follow the Ohio Revised Code to properly record documents. I am very careful with recorded documents and very discreet with the information contained within those documents. I thank you and appreciate your trust."



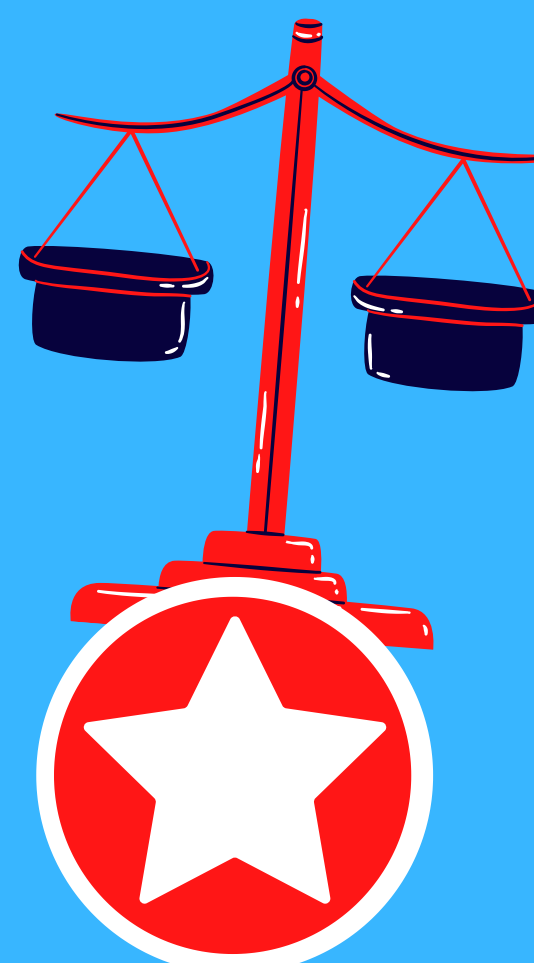
## Shelley Coon (R) County Treasurer

"My background is county government. For four years, I worked for the auditor's office, prior to working in this office. My years of experience working in the daily operations and annual tax collections was advantageous to perform the duties on day one, without needing any training. Since day one in office, I have been a "hands on" treasurer and involved in the daily operations of my office. I have an open door policy and am willing to work with all taxpayers in Knox County."



## Christy Milligan Staton (R) Clerk of Courts

"My name is Christy Milligan Staton. I am the Clerk of Courts for Knox County Ohio. I am in charge of two county offices; the legal department and Title office. I have been in my current position since September of 2019. I was appointed by the Knox County Republican party to finish out the term of the previous clerk, Mary Jo Hawkins who retired in August of 2019. I have been with the office since 1998. Over the years I have assumed many different job titles, Accounts Manager, Bookkeeper, Accounts Receivable clerk and Chief Deputy. I have been the go to problem solver whether it's finding a file, figuring out court costs or dealing with irritated customers. I am always willing to lend a helping hand to my staff."





# COUNTY ELECTIONS

REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES ARE RUNNING UNOPPOSED

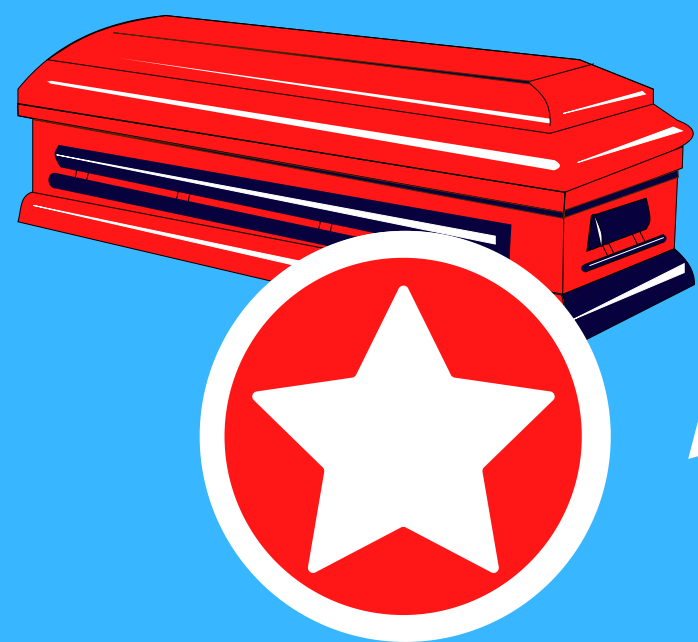
## Chip McConville (R) Prosecuting Attorney

Mr. McConville is running for his second term as Knox County Prosecutor.



## Jennifer Ogle (R) County Coroner

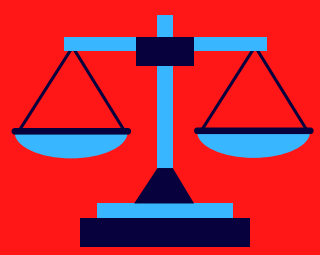
Dr. Ogle is seeking reelection to this position.



## Cameron Keaton (R) County Engineer

"I work hard to bring as much grant funding into Knox County as possible. Over the next five (5) years we will be utilizing over seven million dollars in grants to repair and replace county bridges and roadways."





# OHIO SUPREME COURT



JUDICIAL ELECTIONS ARE NON PARTISAN, BUT WE IDENTIFIED THE PARTY THAT ENDORSED EACH CANDIDATE

## Jennifer Brunner (D)



**"Judge Jennifer Brunner is dedicated to public service. As Ohio's first female Secretary of State she protected voting rights. She will protect all of our rights as a justice of the Ohio Supreme Court and with fairness and impartiality."**

**Brunner has been a judge on the Tenth District Court of Appeals since 2014. Previously, she was a Common Pleas Judge (2000-2005) and the Ohio Secretary of State (2007-2011).**

## Judi French (R)



**Judi French is the incumbent and assumed her seat on the Ohio Supreme Court in 2013, according to the website of the Supreme Court of Ohio. Over the course of her career, French was the Deputy Director for Legal Affairs at the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, Assistant Attorney General for the State of Ohio, Counsel to the Governor, and a judge on the Tenth District Court of Appeals.**

## Sharon L. Kennedy (R)



**According to the website of the Supreme Court of Ohio, Sharon L. Kennedy is the incumbent and assumed her seat on the Ohio Supreme Court in 2012. Early in her career, Kennedy was a police officer. Since graduating Law School, Kennedy has practiced privately, served as Special Counsel to the Attorney General of Ohio, and served as the Administrative Judge of the Butler County Court of Common Pleas, Domestic Relations Division.**

## John P. O'Donnell (D)



**John P. O'Donnell has served on the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas since 2002 and has presided over felony cases, civil lawsuits, and a commercial docket over his time on the bench. O'Donnell is running because "whoever wins will preside over some of the biggest cases Ohio has seen in decades," according to his campaign website.**



# ADDITIONAL COURT SEATS



## COURT OF APPEALS

THE FIFTH DISTRICT COURT OF APPEALS HANDLES APPEALS FROM THE COMMON PLEAS, MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY COURTS IN FIFTEEN COUNTIES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN OHIO.

### WILLIAM B. HOFFMAN (D)



“Judge William B. Hoffman has served on The Fifth District Court of Appeals since February 1, 1991. Prior to joining this court, Judge Hoffman served three years as a Canton Municipal Court Judge; ten years as a Canton prosecuting attorney; and engaged in the private practice of law for eleven years.”

### JEFF FURR (R)



Jeff Furr has been a private attorney since 1993 and specializes in intellectual property law. Prior to the race, his political experience included serving on the Johnstown Village Council. According to an interview with the Canton Repository, Furr is running for a chance to serve his community.

## COUNTY COMMON PLEAS

### JAY W. NIXON (R)



Jay W. Nixon has been the Knox County Juvenile/Probate Court Judge since being appointed in 2018. Nixon started his career as a private attorney, then served as a Magistrate for the Juvenile/Probate Court for three and a half years, according to [CourtnewsOhio.gov](http://CourtnewsOhio.gov). In public statements, Nixon has emphasized the importance of the drug court in facing the challenges of widespread drug use.



# FAQS ABOUT TOWNSHIPS AND TAXES

## What is Millage?

“Mills” or “millage” is another way of expressing the tax rate on real property (property that is attached to the land like buildings). One mill is equal to 1/1,000 of a dollar. So, for a 1 mill tax this would mean that for every \$1,000 in assessed property value, the property owner would pay \$1 in taxes. In

Ohio, the assessed value of a property for tax purposes is 35% of its market value. For example, if a house in Gambier had a market value of \$200,000, its assessed value would be \$70,000. Therefore, every 1 mill tax increase would cost that property owner \$70 per year

## Do Ohio voters have a say on taxes for local government services?

Partially, yes. Under the Ohio Constitution, property taxes above 1% (10 mills) need voter approval or must be included in a city charter. City councils, village councils, township boards, school district boards and other local government entities can put a levy on the ballot for voters' approval. Levies may be approved for a defined period of time or as “continuing” levies.

The question on the ballot could be about renewing an existing levy (continuing the millage rate for a new, defined period of time), replacing an existing levy (with the millage the same, increased or decreased), or creating a new tax for some new purpose.

## Where can I find a copy of the ballot for my precinct?

Sample ballots for each precinct are available at the Knox County Board of Elections website, [here](https://lookup.boe.ohio.gov/vtrapp/knox/ballotlist.aspx). The ballot in each Gambier precinct is the same. <https://lookup.boe.ohio.gov/vtrapp/knox/ballotlist.aspx>

## If my property increases in value, will I owe more taxes?

Potentially, but the amount of revenue the government can collect from a given voter approved levy is limited. If the voters' property increases in value, state law provides an adjustment mechanism so that the government does not collect more revenue than the voters approved. The amount of millage revenue collected is determined by the assessed property values of the year the tax was approved. Even if assessed property values go up in subsequent years due to inflation, the government will collect the same amount of revenue based on the property values of the first year unless they go back to the voters and ask for more millage.

## What are townships and how do they operate?

The state of Ohio has 1,308 political subdivisions known as townships with responsibilities for zoning and road and cemetery maintenance. Townships may provide other services including: fire and emergency medical, police, parks, recreation programs, or waste management. Townships cooperate with each other and county and city officials through the Regional Planning Commission.

Townships are governed by three elected trustees and an elected fiscal officer, who serve four-year terms. These are part-time positions.

Townships cannot impose sales or income taxes. Their only means of raising revenue is property taxes.

# CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE TAX LEVY ON THE FIRE STATION/EMS THAT SERVES GAMBIER?\*

## What is the question for voters?

The College Township trustees are asking voters to approve a new (additional) tax levy, for fire protection and emergency medical services, for no more than 6 mills for five years, beginning in 2020 and first due in 2021

## Pros and Cons:

Opponents of the levy note the substantial increase in millage rate creates a financial burden falling only on property owners in the township. The new levy would double their taxes, through 2021. (College Township property owners currently pay a 4-mill levy that expires 12/31/21 and a 2-mill levy that expires in 2022.)

Proponents of the levy argue that without a fire station in Gambier, emergency response times would increase by fifteen minutes, putting lives at risk and raising homeowner's home insurance costs more than 25%, since Gambier is five miles from the MVFD station.

The Gambier Village council endorsed this levy. Mayor Kessler: "Personally I support this levy, but recognize we need a long term solution that doesn't unduly burden our community members."

## About the fire department:

The College Township Fire Department, located at 102 E. Brooklyn St., serves the Village of Gambier, Kenyon College, and township residents outside the village limits. The department has full-time paid firefighters and EMTs.

For decades, the station has trained Kenyon students, whose volunteer or paid work at the department led to careers in medicine or emergency services.

For details on the station's services, operating costs, and professional training, see the College Township website

## About the township's goals for this levy:

Trustees say the fire station in Gambier will close permanently if the levy fails.

The levy is not expected to solve the fiscal challenges long-term. Rather, trustees ask voters to approve the new levy to buy time, so that township, village, and college officials can construct a more sustainable solution.

The short-term goal is to keep professional fire and EMS services in Gambier.

The medium-term goal is to fund those services in a way that spreads the cost burden to all who benefit from the services (residents, the college and its students, and people who work in or visit the village). A committee of community members is at work developing a more sustainable funding strategy.

# WHAT ARE THE BALLOT ISSUES IN OTHER COMMUNITIES OF KNOX COUNTY?

## Brinkhaven

**Proposal for an additional 2 mill levy, beginning in 2020 for 5 years to provide for current village expenses.**

**In the April primaries, voters in Brinkhaven Village passed a five year, 2.5 mill replacement levy for the village's general funds. The levy on the November ballot would add on an additional 2 mills to the replacement levy passed in April. Both levies commence in 2021.**

## Central Ohio Joint Fire Department

**Proposal to replace and increase existing levy to 5.925 mills for four years, beginning in 2021. The levy will provide fire protection and emergency medical services.**

**According to their website, the COJFD serves "Centerburg Village, Hilliar Township and Milford Township in Southwestern Knox County Ohio. COJFD also serves South Bloomfield Township and Sparta Village in Southeastern Morrow County. COJFD provides: fire prevention, fire suppression, ALS Paramedic Emergency Medical Services, CPR and First Aid class, fire extinguisher use classes to approximately 7700 residents over 71 square miles." This levy serves three main purposes, according to Chief Mark McCann. The first is to improve the retention rate of staff through better pay and benefits. The second is to increase the number of staff to respond to more calls in the district. According to the COJFD, this is needed because 22% of the time the district is responding to two calls at once, leaving no one at the fire station with the closest help 10-15 minutes away. The third purpose is to replace a 20-year-old fire truck and aging rescue equipment.**



# WHAT ARE THE BALLOT ISSUES IN OTHER COMMUNITIES OF KNOX COUNTY?

## Fredericktown Village\*\*

Proposal to renew levy of 3 mills for 5 years beginning in 2021. The levy will provide police protection services to Fredericktown Village.

The levy will raise \$115,000 “for the purpose of providing and maintaining motor vehicles, communications, other equipment, buildings, and sites for such buildings used directly in the operation of a police department, for the payment of salaries of permanent or part-time police, communications, or administrative personnel to operate the same, including the payment of any employer contributions required for such personnel under section 145.48 or 742.33 of the revised code, for the payment of the costs incurred by townships as a result of contracts made with other political subdivisions in order to obtain police protection, for the provision of ambulance or emergency medical services operated by a police department, or for the payment of other related costs.”

## Fredericktown Community Joint Fire District

Proposal to renew a 1 mill levy for five years, beginning in 2021 to provide fire protection services.

FCJFD serves a 118 square mile area covering Berlin, Middlebury, Morris, Pike, and Wayne Townships, as well as the Village of Fredericktown. The department operates through two stations and 28 members. The department fleet includes “two engines, a rescue tanker, two grass trucks, dive rescue boat, dive rescue trailer, fire ATV, and a chief’s vehicle.” According to FCFD Public Information Officer Jason Bostic, “The levy that our residents are seeing in November directly impacts our ability to operate and provide their fire protection,” he said. “Our levy funding determines our ability to decide what equipment we can purchase and the level of services that we are able to offer to the community.” This equipment and these services include fire apparatus, training, community outreach, the operation of two stations, the operation of a fire cadet program, and daytime staffing Monday through Friday.

# WHAT ARE THE BALLOT ISSUES IN OTHER COMMUNITIES OF KNOX COUNTY?

## Fredericktown Community Joint Ambulance District

**Proposal for an additional 1 mill tax for a continuing period of time, beginning in 2020 to provide ambulance and emergency medical services.**

**According to their website, Fredericktown EMS serves the 8,700 residents of Berlin, Middlebury, Pike, and Wayne Townships, the northern half of Morris Township, and the Village of Fredericktown. An identical version of this proposal was voted down in the April 28th primary election this year. In that election, concerns were raised about the duration of the tax, phrased as “for a continuing period of time.” Fredericktown EMS and concerned community members responded to these concerns through creation of a Facebook page “Friends of Fredericktown EMS” on which they tried to clear up some of the confusion. According to Fredericktown EMS Chief Rick Lanuzza, the ultimate goal of the Fredericktown EMS department is to combine three separate levies that the public sees every three out of five years into three continual levies that are each voted on once, for the sake of simplicity (unless additional funding is needed in the future). Currently, Fredericktown EMS fulfills its 2 mill need through 1 mill, 0.6 mill, and 0.4 mill levies collected in different years. According to Lanuzza, the issue on the ballot this year seeks to replace the 0.4 mill levy with a 1.0 mill continual levy, resulting in a total tax increase of 0.6 mills. The “Friends of Fredericktown EMS,” of which Chief Lanuzza is a member, argue the tax increase is needed to keep up with the rising costs of EMS equipment. They also argue that the “continuing” nature of the tax is needed to stabilize funding for the department and is preferable to voting on several different levies three times every five years.**



# WHAT ARE THE BALLOT ISSUES IN OTHER COMMUNITIES OF KNOX COUNTY?

## Liberty Township\*\*\*

Proposal to replace and decrease existing levy by 0.1 mills to a final rate of 4.4 mills for five years, beginning in 2021. The levy will provide fire protection and emergency medical services.

The estimated tax revenue for this levy over five years is \$249,670. This revenue would be spent on “providing and maintaining fire apparatus, mechanical resuscitators, underwater rescue and recovery equipment, or other fire equipment and appliances, buildings and sites therefor, or sources of water supply and materials therefor, for the establishment and maintenance of lines of fire-alarm communications, for the payment of firefighting companies or permanent, part-time, or volunteer firefighting, emergency medical service, administrative, or communications personnel to operate the same, including the payment of any employer contributions required for such personnel under section 145.48 or 742.34 of the Revised Code, for the purchase of ambulance equipment, for the provision of ambulance, paramedic, or other emergency medical services operated by a fire department or firefighting company, or for the payment of other related costs.”

## Morgan Township\*\*\*\*

There are two proposals. The first is to renew a 1.75 mill levy for 3 years, beginning in 2020 to provide ambulance and emergency medical services. The second is to renew a 1.5 mill levy for 5 years, beginning in 2020 to provide fire protection and emergency medical services.

The specific expenses covered by the levies include “providing and maintaining fire apparatus, appliances, buildings, or sites therefor, or sources of water supply and materials therefor, or the establishment and maintenance of lines of fire alarm telegraph, or the payment of permanent, part-time, or volunteer fire fighters or firefighting companies to operate the same, including the payment of the firefighter employers’ contribution required under section 742.34 of the Revised Code, or the purchase of ambulance equipment, or the provision of ambulance, paramedic, or other emergency medical services operated by a fire department or firefighting company, as authorized by Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.19(I).”

# SOURCES

**SOME CANDIDATES DID NOT OPT TO GIVE A RESPONSE. WE USED PUBLIC INFORMATION FROM INTERVIEWS, CAMPAIGN WEBSITES, AND/OR PUBLIC RECORDS DENOTED IN THEIR SECTION.**

**ALL IMAGES AND LIKENESSES OF CANDIDATES ARE CREDITED BELOW OR TAKEN FROM HEADSHOTS ON THE COUNTY WEBSITE.**

**[HTTPS://OFBF.ORG/2015/04/03/AN-EXPLANATION-OF-OHIOS-TAX-RATES-MILLAGE/](https://ofbf.org/2015/04/03/an-explanation-of-ohios-tax-rates-millage/)**

**[HTTPS://WWW.LAW.CORNELL.EDU/WEX/MILLAGE](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/millage)**

**[HTTPS://TAX.OHIO.GOV/STATIC/COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLICATIONS/PROPERTY\\_TAX\\_REAL\\_PROPERTY.PDF](https://tax.ohio.gov/static/communications/publications/property_tax_real_property.pdf)**

**\* INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT THE COLLEGE TOWNSHIP WEBSITE, INTERVIEWS WITH TRUSTEE DOUG MCCLARNAN, GAMBIER MAYOR LEEMAN KESSLER, AND DEPARTMENT CHIEF BILL SMITH, AND MINUTES FROM GAMBIER VILLAGE COUNCIL.**

**[HTTPS://WWW.KNOXPAGES.COM/NEWS/ELECTIONS/CLEAN-SWEEP-INCUMBENTS-SHINE-IN-KNOX-COUNTY-PRIMARY-ELECTION/ARTICLE\\_7B81359C-8998-11EA-BC46-CFF2B832BBC4.HTML](https://www.knoxpages.com/news/elections/clean-sweep-incumbents-shine-in-knox-county-primary-election/article_7b81359c-8998-11ea-bc46-cff2b832bbc4.html)**

**SAMPLE BALLOTS FROM 2020 APRIL PRIMARY AND NOVEMBER GENERAL ELECTION OF BRINKHAVEN VILLAGE, SUPPLIED BY THE KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS.**

**[HTTP://WWW.COJFD.ORG/ABOUT.HTML](http://www.cojfd.org/about.html)**

**\*\*2020-13 RESOLUTION TO PROCEED FROM JUNE 1ST VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING**

**[HTTPS://MOUNTVERNONNEWS.COM/STORIES/553420531-2020-PRIMARY-ELECTION-RESULTS](https://mountvernonnews.com/stories/553420531-2020-primary-election-results)**

**SAMPLE 2012 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT OF PRECINCT FREDERICKTOWN A,**

**[HTTPS://LOOKUP.BOE.OHIO.GOV/VTRAPP/KNOX/GETBALLOT.ASPX?ELECT=20121106G&PRSID=056\\_\\_\\_1&BPTY=X](https://lookup.boe.ohio.gov/vtrapp/knox/getballot.aspx?elect=20121106G&prsid=056___1&bpty=X)**

**SAMPLE 2015 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT OF PRECINCT FREDERICKTOWN A,**

**[HTTPS://LOOKUP.BOE.OHIO.GOV/VTRAPP/KNOX/GETBALLOT.ASPX?ELECT=20151103G&PRSID=049\\_\\_\\_1&BPTY=X](https://lookup.boe.ohio.gov/vtrapp/knox/getballot.aspx?elect=20151103G&prsid=049___1&bpty=X)**

**SAMPLE 2017 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT OF PRECINCT FREDERICKTOWN A,**

**[HTTPS://LOOKUP.BOE.OHIO.GOV/VTRAPP/KNOX/GETBALLOT.ASPX?ELECT=20171107G&PRSID=049\\_\\_\\_1&BPTY=X](https://lookup.boe.ohio.gov/vtrapp/knox/getballot.aspx?elect=20171107G&prsid=049___1&bpty=X)**

**[HTTP://WWW.FREDERICKTOWNFIRE.NET/ABOUT/](http://www.fredericktownfire.net/about/)**

**[HTTP://WWW.FREDERICKTOWNFIRE.NET/2020/10/06/FCFD-ASKING-TO-RENEW-EXISTING-LEVY/](http://www.fredericktownfire.net/2020/10/06/fcfd-asking-to-renew-existing-levy/)**

**\*\*\*CERTIFICATE OF REVENUE FROM COUNTY AUDITOR OF KNOX COUNTY**

**\*\*\*\*FROM THE MORGAN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES FROM MAY 19, 2020**

**[HTTPS://WWW.MYLIFE.COM/JOHN-LYBARGER/E494103641250](https://www.mylife.com/john-lybarger/e494103641250)**

**[HTTPS://BLOGS.UAKRON.EDU/JUDICIALVOTESCOUNT/JEFF-FURR/](https://blogs.uakron.edu/judicialvotescount/jeff-furr/)**