

Hello, my name is Charles Ream.

I am a long time county resident and a 5 term Scio township trustee. It is my goal to be able to help Washtenaw County get additional voted millage for improving its jail, court, mental health, and substance abuse treatment facilities.

The current, huge, .75 mill 20 year proposal, however, is dead on arrival.

Yesterday I registered the "NO GIANT JAIL COMMITTEE" with the clerks office. I will work with many other groups in our community to insure that this jail proposal is defeated on Feb. 22. It is upsetting that the amount of negativity about this jail proposal that exists in our community is not being reported in the news media.

I can't even get an answer to the question about whether it is normal practice for a Michigan county to ask voters for separate millage money to build and maintain jails. Judge Shelton explained that maintaining a jail was one of the three statutory duties of a county, mandated by Michigan law. Michigan counties must also protect the court and remove people who have drowned from bodies of water.

County voters already pay over 5 and a half mills to the county. Now we are told that the court is not being adequately protected under current conditions out on Hogback Rd.

Many townships contribute zero people per year to the jail population – and they are now being asked to pay for the county deputies in their communities on top of county taxes.

Many voters would be ready to put up the \$48 million to pay for all of the new jail and court construction, but can't see passing a 20 year \$312 million tax on themselves. Let's look at this - \$48 million for all building – but you want to get \$264 million more than that to **operate** the jail which is a **basic** county function mandated by law – a function which most of us thought was included in the 5.5 mills we already pay.

My main issue, however, concerns the radical disconnect between our county board and our citizens in relation to substance abuse policy. Washtenaw county citizens would like to drop out of the drug war, just like the citizens of just about every other nation in the world.

Our citizens believe that **privacy** is an American moral value; they would like to see **harm reduction based policies** rather than having their taxes spent on criminalizing private behavior.

I want to strongly emphasize that I strongly believe in law and order. I have a zero tolerance policy toward drug abuse and am disgusted by any form of personal self

indulgence that hurts others. I want plenty of money to be available in the budget to investigate and solve real crimes, like when a citizen is attacked or stolen from.

Since the Drug War began in 1971 the percentage of murders, rapists, and robbers who have been caught and convicted has significantly dropped. The safety of taxpayers is compromised when massive police resources are diverted into fighting an insane cultural war against people who use non state approved substances. Honest police would like drug abuse to be handled by medical and public health personnel. Many fewer police would die, and the police would not be seen as the enemy by a significant portion of the population.

Washtenaw County should build a new jail only after they truly determine whether there is a need for one. How can Canada jail 103 per 100,000 and we jail 668 per 100,000? Are Americans fundamentally worse people than those in other countries?

I doubt it. It is more likely that something is wrong here that we should take the time to analyze.

Some cities in the USA have the guts and are willing to put in the effort to find peaceful alternatives to the drug war. Two of them are Seattle, (that is in King County) Washington, and Syracuse NY. I have created a packet of the very best of this new thinking, from Washington State, for each of you – if I may give it to you.