

Candidate Clark Manipulates Public Safety Crisis in Bid to Regain Control of Scio!

UNCONSCIONABLE? WELL, YES!

Scio Supervisor candidate Spaulding Clark says in the newspapers that "it is **unconscionable** to ask the voters for more money...while sitting on a **stockpile** of funds that could be used to address current public safety needs" (Ann Arbor News 7/7/08, Dexter Leader 7/17/08). Tonight we will discover how big this "stockpile" is, and how long it would last if we used it to meet our needs. Nobody could honestly say that spending our reserve funds is a proper strategy for putting our Police and Fire services on sustainable financial footing. Mr. Clark's "something for nothing" position on police and fire issues is what is "UNCONSCIONABLE".

SCIO CITIZENS HELD HOSTAGE?

Clark is willing to admit that "future needs will require more money" but "that day has not arrived". His candidates are willing to try to kill off even a small millage for Police and Fire funds in November. The Scio Public Safety Study Committee has decided that the day for new funds is here, but Mr. Clark has set himself up as "the decider". He will evidently try to prevent new funding for the underfunded Public Safety services for Scio residents - until the day that voters agree to make him Supervisor. That is like extortion - like saying "If I can't be Supervisor then I won't let Scio have decent public safety!". Now there is "Leadership for Scio"!

HISTORY - Public safety services have always been underfunded in Scio, but rising costs have forced the Scio Board to face up to the public safety funding crisis. After a public safety millage request for 1.9 mills failed on Aug. 8 2006 the Scio Board had to decide what to do. Supervisor Nielsen brilliantly assembled the Scio Public Safety Study Committee, a non-partisan fifteen member group of our township's finest citizens and business owners - to completely evaluate the Scio public safety situation. Included in this committee were the leaders of the effort to defeat our previous millage! This group has evolved into the best example of public service ever seen in Scio Township. Over a nearly two year period the committee held more than 35 meetings, exhaustively evaluating every option and detail. (Mr. Clark and his Republican candidates ignored the entire process). Following this comprehensive study our citizens Study Committee made its recommendations. I quote:

"It will require a millage of 1.2 by board action or 1.5 (mills) by voter approval to fund the changes recommended in this report. The Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees propose a voter initiated, dedicated Fire Department SAD (Special Assessment District) with a millage rate sufficient to fund the recommended changes in the service levels for the Scio Township Fire Department. The committee further recommends that the funds currently allocated to the fire service be allocated to fund the recommended changes in the police service".

This is clear language. Spaulding Clark and his candidates say they support the report, but refuse to follow its main conclusion. His strategy is to spend the small reserve funds (the "stockpile") that Scio has built up over the years. Any one of us can spend all of our savings - and then be bankrupt. Is that a level of thinking that shows leadership?

Scio Supervisor candidate Spaulding Clark says in the newspapers that "it is **unconscionable** to ask the voters for more money...while sitting on a **stockpile** of funds that could be used to address current public safety needs" (Ann Arbor News 7/7/08, Dexter Leader 7/17/08). Tonight we will discover how big this "stockpile" is, and how long it would last if we used it to meet our needs. Nobody could honestly say that spending our reserve funds is a proper strategy for putting our Police and Fire services on sustainable financial footing. Mr. Clark's "something for nothing" position on police and fire issues is what is "UNCONSCIONABLE".

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WHAT DO THE EXPERTS SAY?

Our accountant here in Scio explained to me last Monday that "To fully fund public safety without a millage would bankrupt this township in less than three years".

One of the main leaders of our Public Safety Committee said that Clark and his team are "holding public safety hostage to his political agenda".

The Township's auditors (Plante and Moran) make it very clear in their audit that it is very important for a unit of government to have reserve funds - and Scio's reserves are approximately at the recommended level.

WHY DOES THE BOARD WANT A .9 MILL LEVY?

The Scio Board is considering a .9 mill request because, no matter how great the need, that amount is the maximum that we think voters would approve. This tiny millage would NOT be enough to fund the basic adequate staffing levels recommended by the public Safety Study Committee. Even if this small millage PASSED we would still have to use some funds from our "stockpile" (but not enough to march us straight towards near-term bankruptcy).

WHY IS CLARK'S STRATEGY SO REPREHENSIBLE?

Candidates should not manipulate public safety issues for personal political gain. Clark's victory would bring a stop to Scio Township's patient and long-term effort to put funding for Public Safety on a sustainable footing. Clark's plan would provide us either low levels of police and fire service or leave Scio with dangerously low cash reserves. (Our older fire truck is 22 years old – if it gives out a new one could cost \$700,000.) Clark is also showing that his Republican candidates (stealth Democrats for this August primary election) have no ideas for Scio other than "something for nothing". **There is no reason to return Scio to the cronyism and stagnation that were the hallmarks of his former tenure in office.**

If Scio families suffer because of inadequate police or fire protection the responsibility, in the near future, will lie with Clark. It is fine to "play politics" with any issue other than public safety. The Township Board is trying to do its most basic duty – to protect our people's safety – by attempting to follow the recommendations of the Public Safety Study Committee. Playing political games with our citizen's safety is beyond reprehensible; it is a scandal.

WHAT NOW?

Any opposition can kill a new millage. If Scio Township puts any sort of millage to support our public safety needs on the ballot Spaulding Clark's candidates can kill it. Should we "throw in the towel" and give up the idea of getting funds for public safety? Should we let the Public Safety services of Scio continue to deteriorate? Must we spend all our reserve funds before we take any action?

Is that what Scio citizens want? Or do they want a board that will do the right thing and stick up for their safety and security? Should we let our citizens have a chance to vote on whether to have adequate public safety services? **What should we do tonight?**

When we walk through this township, going door to door, our "Preserve Scio" candidates find that most voters understand that you can't get something for nothing. If you vote for Supervisor Charles Nielsen, or our wonderful clerk candidate Mary Shindell (or our Trustee candidates Ream, Bulley, Douglas, and Warner) you will get capable government that won't "play shell games" or lie to you.

Mr. Clark was firmly defeated in 2004. Now he is trying to get Republicans back into power by using "stockpiles" of campaign funds and the old "something for nothing" lie. Scio voters must be mature enough not to fall into this trap, and not reward a politician who is willing to sacrifice the public safety progress we have made in Scio Township for his personal political gain. It's our future; let's make it a safe one!

Chuck Ream, Scio Trustee and defender of Scio Township since 1988.