

**NOTICE OF REFERENDUM
PORTAGE COUNTY
NOVEMBER 8, 2016**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that at an election to be held in the County of Portage on November 8, 2016, the following proposed Resolution of the Portage County Board, will be submitted to a vote of the people:

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN ADVISORY REFERENDUM ELECTION QUESTION FOR THE FUNDING AND CREATION OF A NEW PORTAGE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

WHEREAS, multiple extensive and costly studies have highlighted the deficiencies of the present Portage County Jail facility, the chief factors include overcrowding, poor design and layout, and inefficient staff configurations; and

WHEREAS, the same studies highlight the projected growth of court and criminal cases in the years ahead, showcasing the requirement that any new facility be prudently designed to assure decades of efficient use; and

WHEREAS, the “cost of doing nothing” has had and will have a future significant and deleterious effect on county operations, the increased costs of transport of inmates, hazards, dangers of inmate transport and inefficiencies of the current operation; and

WHEREAS, Portage County through its Justice Coalition, Space and Properties Committee, other committees and county officials has affirmed the need to revise existing practices and the need for an integrated new approach to the local corrections activities, including services and support for rehabilitation, in addition to the need for punitive measures in the system; and

WHEREAS, Portage County has identified that additional space is needed for County services through three comprehensive space studies: DLR Group Study (2003-2004), Goldman & Associates Study (2005-2006), and Venture Architects Study (2008-2009); and

WHEREAS, on August 20, 2013, the Portage County Strategic Plan was adopted by the Portage County Board of Supervisors, establishing strategic goal number two, “Provide More Functional, Flexible County Facilities,” “Analyze Feasibility & Develop Recommendations for County Correctional Facility,” “Evaluate Needs for Other Facilities Related Actions,” and “Make it Easier for Citizens to Gain Access to Services in Facilities,” and

WHEREAS, by law, jail facilities and court operations must remain in the county seat, i.e. the City of Stevens Point;

WHEREAS, the County Board has already resolved the following concerning a potential Portage County Government Center:

Resolution No. 81-2000-2002, to keep the Jail and Courthouse co-located with a future jail facility being physically connected to the Courts; and

Resolution No. 186-2012-2014, resolving a new County Corrections Facility to be a priority for future planning and construction; and

Resolution No. 253-2012-2014, approved the purchase of property at 1039 Ellis Street to allow for necessary County expansion; and

Resolution No. 121-2014-2016, established the location for a new government building shall be in the “down town” location; and

Resolution No. 13-2016-2018, recommending government facility building option 1.1 as the preferred option in the Capital Improvement Plan and to update costs associated to all for next step decisions.

WHEREAS, the Space & Properties Committee recommended (and the county board approved) the conceptual drawing identified as Option 1.1 be labeled as the preferred option and moved forward to the Capital Improvement Plan at the approximate cost of \$78,500,000 as this option meets the necessary space needs of the County, including space needs of the Sheriff’s Office and Jail; and

WHEREAS, Option 1.1 includes construction of a new three-story 270,000 square foot building, with general government and Courthouse attached to the existing Annex, along with a two-pod jail with future expansion of another two-pods being possible in the future. Option 1.1 also includes demolition of the current 1039 Ellis Street building and demolition of Law Enforcement Center, where new parking would be located. There is a potential to repurpose the County/City Building, however, a number is not included in Option 1.1 for that repurposing; and

FISCAL NOTE: There are no addition fiscal obligations for the County immediately associated with this resolution establishing the referendum, nor does this resolution appropriate funds to conduct the public referendum.

WHEREAS, many changes in circumstances have occurred since the failure of two past similar referendums. An issue of such magnitude should be presented to the electors, studied, and reviewed to permit and encourage public input, in the form of the attached advisory referendum question.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Portage County Board of Supervisors hereby authorizes and approves the following advisory referendum question, incorporated herein by reference, for the official county ballot of November 8, 2016, and directs the Clerk to perform all necessary administrative functions to execute this resolution.

The question will appear on the ballot as follows:

Shall Portage County construct a new three story Portage County Government Center, with new court and law enforcement and jail facilities, in downtown Stevens Point adjacent to the existing Portage County Government Annex at a capital cost not to exceed seventy-eight million five hundred thousand dollars (\$78,500,000.00)?

Explanation:

A “YES” vote means that you are in favor of constructing a new three story Portage County Government Center, with new court and law enforcement and jail facilities in downtown Stevens Point adjacent to the existing Portage County Government Annex at a capital cost not to exceed seventy-eight million five hundred thousand dollars (\$78,500,000.00).

A “NO” vote means you do not favor building a new Portage County Government Center as set forth in the referendum question.

The referendum is advisory and non-binding in nature.

Done in the County of Portage on November 7, 2016.

SHIRLEY M. SIMONIS, Portage County Clerk