

Homeowners should be allowed to vote on assessment

The first of four meetings concerning the proposed Bedford Township Special Assessment for Roads was held Sept. 9. If approved, all property owners would pay \$75 annually to generate \$925,000. The first of two legal notices concerning the meetings has been mailed out to all 12,316 property owners at an estimated cost of almost \$14,000.

Bedford Township roads are in very sad shape but I agree with Trustee Nancy Tienverer's comment at the Aug. 12 meeting that the proposed assessment of \$75 on all property owners is not necessary at this time. Presently, Bedford Township has almost \$4

million (\$3,888,364) in the general fund balance, sometimes referred to as the "Rainy Day Fund." If township board members can vote to spend this money on any item, why not on the roads in Bedford Township? The Michigan Townships Association, which Bedford Township is a member, recommends that townships ideally keep a six month reserve in this fund balance for emergencies. Based on the 2014 fiscal year budget, Bedford Township should keep about \$2 million in reserve. That leaves almost \$2 million that could be spent on roads over the next two years. Why not use these funds and delay consid-

ering assessing (a fancy word for "taxing") the property owners \$75 per year for the next 5 years?

I further agree with Trustee Paul Pirrone's comment at the Aug. 12 board meeting that this matter should be put up for a vote of the taxpayers in Bedford Township rather than assessing them \$75 per parcel. He pointed out that many of the over 30,000 residents will not attend the "town hall" or "public hearing" meetings.

Using the excess funds in the general fund balance for special projects would be nothing new for the Bedford Township Board. In 2007, Bedford Township Trustees approved transferring \$1 million from the general

fund balance to be used to construct the new Bedford Township Hall. Many residents felt the construction of the new township hall should have been voted on and approved by taxpayers, but instead the township trustees took \$1 million out of its general fund balance and borrowed \$2 million more that is being paid off through 20 annual payments of \$130,000.

I am glad to see that the Bedford Township Board has taken a proactive approach in repairing our roads, but in my opinion a special assessment is not necessary at this time.

**Gene Stock
Temperance**