

The Pirate Log

Special Bond Edition 2023



Volume 22, Issue 1

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.PWSCHOOLS.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION

March 2023

BOND ELECTION SET FOR TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2023

P-W Community,

On behalf of the Board of Education, we are pleased to announce Pewamo-Westphalia Community Schools Board of Education approved a bond referendum election to be held Tuesday, May 2, 2023.

Our facilities committee, as part of our strategic plan, focused on how we can bring both our middle high school and elementary school buildings up to date and improve our current facilities. Our HVAC is our top priority with outdated heaters in the classrooms and boilers not adequately sized for the space. We worked with local and state agencies on audits and recommendations to improve our systems. At both the elementary school and middle high school during the past two years, we have updated flooring, removed asbestos, repaired roofs and painted, as well as purchased furniture and updated spaces. We are committed to creating a capital needs assessment that focuses on maintaining our facilities.



The bond is focusing on areas determined in consultation with feedback from our community and staff and other stakeholders, in addition to commercial consultants. We came up with a plan to improve our current facilities by renovating and refreshing some outdated spaces, adding on to support our growing capacity and redoing some outdated/problem areas while being fiscally responsible to our tax payers. Many of the areas for planned improvements are at least 25 years old. The locker room is 49 years old. Some features, including our HVAC and the cabinetry and fixtures in many middle high school classrooms, are original from 1961.

Last fall, we sent out a survey to P-W. The survey indicated a dollar amount for three different options and the school board approved the lowest increase option from the survey, a \$17.6 million bond referendum. P-W has a current millage rate of 7. If this bond referendum is approved, we will move to a 7.75 millage rate. After reviewing all the items and staying within the cost parameters, we added restroom updates to the elementary, updates to the auditorium, and turf to the football field.

While we have utilized different funding sources including our general fund and capital improvement fund to renovate and repair our facilities, we do not have the funds to replace our outdated HVAC system, renovate our buildings and fix issues with our current facilities. Pewamo-Westphalia Community Schools recently authorized a General Fund budget amendment for the 2022-2023 fiscal year that includes a budget deficit of \$542,031. This is a very substantial deficit for a school district with budgeted General Fund revenues of \$8,846,627 for 2022-2023. Our last bond was in 2014. Our facilities are in need of repair. We are committed to doing things right for our students, staff, and community.

We hope this Bond Edition Pirate Log provides you with valuable information about the bond referendum. We encourage you to join us for one of the informational sessions mentioned on page 11. Most importantly, we ask you to vote on May 2 at this special election. As always, you are welcome to contact me to ask questions or set up a time to meet with you and your family/friends. Thank you for your support of P-W Schools.

Jennifer Goodman, Superintendent

Phone: 989-587-5110

Email: jennifer.goodman@pwschools.org



VOTE May 2, 2023

FAST FACTS

The "Triple E" for our "Triple A"!

What is Proposed?

The P-W Board approved a bond referendum, not to exceed \$17.6 million, for the May 2, 2023 election. The bond will support Education, Exterior, and Efficiency for Academics, Arts and Athletics. The "Triple E" for our "Triple A"!

Why a Bond Referendum?

Our operating budget is \$8,846,000, with which 75% is consumed by wages and benefits. With our current General Fund budget challenges, our school district does not have enough available General Fund dollars to update the facilities for the future.

Why Now?

The MHS was built in 1961. A good portion of the MHS is over sixty years of age; additions were made in 2003 and a few more made in 2014. Classrooms were added in the elementary school in 1970 with additions made in 2000 and 2014. The majority of our HVAC systems are original and need replacement. The sections built in 1961 have maintenance needs that must be addressed now, to prolong its usefulness for years to come and bring it up to current learning environment standards. We are currently leasing a portable classroom at our elementary school, which is not a sustainable solution. Deferred maintenance and modernization needs have been identified, interest in construction costs are continuously rising and investing today will deliver future operational savings.

What is the Plan?

Education: The bond funds additions of a media center and classrooms at the elementary school, updating MHS science classrooms, new lockers, replacing casework in each classroom, improvements/updates in the auditorium, and weight room enhancements

Efficiency: The bond funds an addition to the MHS cafeteria, renovations of the existing cafeteria/kitchen, updating the heating and cooling systems in both buildings, new band student entrance, updating bathrooms, and replacing windows.

Exterior: The bond addresses deferred maintenance needs including: athletic fields/drainage, locker room, playground surface, sidewalks and parking lots at both buildings.

What will this cost me?

Our current millage rate is 7.00 and the proposed bond millage rate is 7.75. If the market value of your house is \$250,000 with a taxable value of \$125,000, then it would be an annual increase of \$93.75 or a monthly increase of \$7.81. More examples of the estimated tax bill difference and tax estimator can be found on our website.

Please visit pwschools.org for additional information on the "Triple E" for our "Triple A"!

BOND REFERENDUM ITEMS IN PRIORITY ORDER

- Install heating, ventilation, and air conditioning upgrades for both buildings
- Construct new media center and classroom additions and renovations of the existing media center at the elementary school
- Growth and overcrowding at the elementary school
- Expand and renovate the middle high school cafeteria
- Update bathrooms in both buildings/ADA compliance
- Middle high school science labs
- Update interior finishes and casework in both school buildings
- Update windows in both buildings
- Construct locker room building
- Replace lockers in middle high school
- Create new band room entrance in hallway
- Update auditorium with new finishes, improved lighting and sound system.
- Improve sidewalks and drainage at the elementary school
- Repair drainage issues with athletic field, including the option of turf
- Mill and resurface parking lot and playground updates
- Weight room renovations
- Resurface middle high school parking lot
- Demolish storage building at the elementary school

BOND REFERENDUM ESTIMATED TAX DIFFERENCE

Please see the chart below highlighting the estimated tax difference. The current millage is 7.0 and the proposed bond millage vote would be changed to 7.75. This would be an increase of .75 mills.

ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX BILL DIFFERENCE - MAY, 2023 BOND ELECTION

Market Value	Taxable Value [1]	Proposed		Present		Annual Difference	Per Month
		Bond Millage Rate	Annual Tax Bill Amount	Bond Millage Rate	Annual Tax Bill Amount		
50,000	25,000	7.75	\$193.75	7.00	\$175.00	\$18.75	\$1.56
75,000	37,500	7.75	290.63	7.00	262.50	28.13	2.34
100,000	50,000	7.75	387.50	7.00	350.00	37.50	3.13
125,000	62,500	7.75	484.38	7.00	437.50	46.88	3.91
150,000	75,000	7.75	581.25	7.00	525.00	56.25	4.69
175,000	87,500	7.75	678.13	7.00	612.50	65.63	5.47
200,000	100,000	7.75	775.00	7.00	700.00	75.00	6.25
225,000	112,500	7.75	871.88	7.00	787.50	84.38	7.03
250,000	125,000	7.75	968.75	7.00	875.00	93.75	7.81
275,000	137,500	7.75	1,065.63	7.00	962.50	103.13	8.59
300,000	150,000	7.75	1,162.50	7.00	1,050.00	112.50	9.38
325,000	162,500	7.75	1,259.38	7.00	1,137.50	121.88	10.16
350,000	175,000	7.75	1,356.25	7.00	1,225.00	131.25	10.94
375,000	187,500	7.75	1,453.13	7.00	1,312.50	140.63	11.72
400,000	200,000	7.75	1,550.00	7.00	1,400.00	150.00	12.50
425,000	212,500	7.75	1,646.88	7.00	1,487.50	159.38	13.28
450,000	225,000	7.75	1,743.75	7.00	1,575.00	168.75	14.06
475,000	237,500	7.75	1,840.63	7.00	1,662.50	178.13	14.84
500,000	250,000	7.75	1,937.50	7.00	1,750.00	187.50	15.63

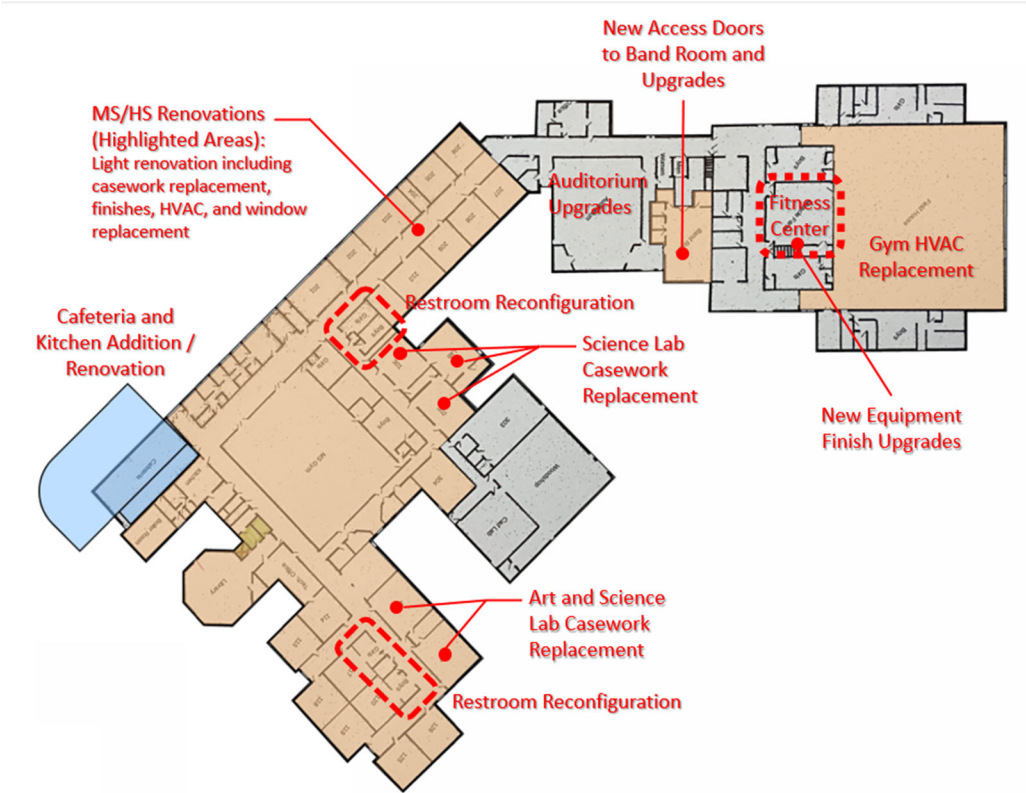
[1] Assumed to be half of estimated market value. See your most recent taxable value information for an exact figure.

PROPOSED SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS

P-W Elementary



P-W Middle High School



PROPOSED MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS





Why are we Talking Artificial Turf?

The bond referendum approved by the Board of Education is for the first option in the survey, yet the turf field was in the second option. Why are we considering adding turf?

The survey indicated a dollar amount for option 1. After reviewing all the items and staying within the cost parameters, we added restroom updates to the elementary, updates to the auditorium, and turf to the football field. The football stadium and surrounding areas have serious drainage issues especially during the fall and spring seasons after rainfall. After consultation from drainage experts, it was determined the tile under the football field is too deep and not effective. We have been advised to remove the dirt from the football field, remove the ineffective tiling and install a new drainage system to more efficiently disperse the water. As a committee, we established it would be a financially wise choice to spend the extra money to install a turf field instead of using funds to replace dirt, reseed and maintain the field. With an artificial turf field, we will have a cost savings in maintenance and other athletic/extra curricular programs will be able to use the field.

Isn't turf an expense of which only the football players benefit?

When people hear "turf," thoughts go to the football team. However, turf would benefit students in other extra curricular programs. Presently our high school band students practice daily on our parking lot, which is hot in the summer and fall, unsafe and not ideal. The band students could practice on the turf each school day and host band invitationals. The P.E. students could use the field for daily P.E. activities. The baseball, softball, and track students could practice on the turf each spring. The middle school Junior Pirate football team could transition to Wednesday evening games, which is when most middle school teams now compete. They are unable to play on the practice field in the evenings, as we do not have stadium lights on that field, and the grass stadium field has to be in the best condition for the JV and Varsity games. It is getting increasingly more difficult to find teams to play on Saturdays within a reasonable distance.



I spend most of my time coaching our students out at the track or the athletic field surrounding it. Most days...especially in the wet spring season...we are practicing or competing in "standing water." The drainage issues with our athletic fields are getting progressively worse each year. For track meets, we often use portable pumps to clear out water before meets so that we can host them. I believe we can improve this.

-P-W Cross Country/Track Coach Scott Werner

"Turf would allow us to use the field during the school day to prepare for games and performances. Our field becomes incredibly slippery after rainfall, which is dangerous for our students. Michigan's competing marching band organization allows only schools with artificial turf to host competitions; it really is much better to march on."

- Randy Voisinet, P-W Band Teacher

Did you Know?
Approximately 25%
of public high
schools have turf
fields (134 public
schools)

Why are we Talking Artificial Turf?

Is the drainage on the football field really an issue?

Here is a photo of our football field after a rainfall.

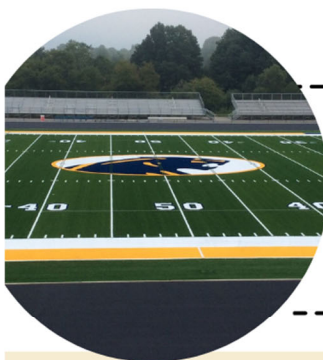


What are P-W's annual football field maintenance costs?

More than \$35,000 is spent on seed, fertilizer, paint, contractual services, plus manpower each year.



In 2022, our football field was used only 52 hours throughout the whole year. Two hours of football practice each Thursday, and one home game for varsity or JV football for three hours each week. With an artificial turf field, our P.E. classes, our band, and track, softball and baseball teams would use it. We anticipate the annual usage to be at a minimum of 1,000 hours.



How many years will an artificial turf last before replacement?

Artificial turf has made many advancements in recent years. The life expectancy of the turf is 12-15 years. Many high schools are able to either update with a partial replacement of the worn areas or replace after 20 years. Keeping a line item in our budget in the amount of the current maintenance costs, and setting those funds aside each year, will allow us to save funds to purchase future turf replacements.

"We have had artificial turf now for 11 years. It's the only way to go. Less cost to maintain, is available all year long to use, our P.E. classes are on it all day, our community rec programs use it, as does our band."

- Brian Zdanowski, Greenville High School Athletic Director

"Benefits are optimal field conditions during games played with inclement weather, and the ability for multiple teams to use the field without damage from over usage."

-Will McCoy, MHSAA Assistant Director

COMMUNITY QUESTIONS ABOUT BOND REFERENDUM

These questions were asked in person, at our informational meetings, emailed or by phone.

What is a Bond? Answer: A bond is a State-approved funding process that specifies a set scope of projects. When voters approve a bond, the money specified in the bond proposal is borrowed and the school district makes payments over a period of years, much like a homeowner pays a mortgage.

What is a millage rate? Answer: A millage rate is a numerical multiplier attached to the value of a property and is used to calculate the local property taxes. It represents a dollar per thousand of a property's assessed value.

When would the millage for this proposal first be levied? Answer: On the December 1, 2023 property tax bill.

What is a bond proposal? Answer: A bond proposal is how a public school district asks its community for authorization to borrow money to pay for capital expenditures. Voter-approved bond funds can be spent on new construction, additions, remodeling, site improvements, athletic facilities, playgrounds, furnishings, equipment, buses and technology. Funds raised cannot be used on operational expenses such as employee salaries and benefits, school supplies, and textbooks. Bond funds must be kept separate from operating funds and must be audited by an independent auditing firm.

Cafeteria - Why is an expansion needed? Answer: The Michigan merit curriculum (State of Michigan requirements to graduate) has many more requirements compared to those in the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's. We do not have a lot of flexibility to schedule courses for students with a small sized school as one teacher may only be able to offer a class one hour per day. Due to this, we are only able to offer one lunch hour for the middle school and one lunch for the high school, whereas in the past there were multiple lunch hours. Right now we have overflow cafeteria tables set up in the middle school gym where students eat.

Are there any public schools that do not use bonds? Answer: It is very rare as this is the only way to fund capital projects besides saving up over years. If a school does not have a bond then they utilize a sinking fund millage. A majority of districts have both a bond and a sinking fund. A sinking fund is a savings fund approved and generated by local voters that provides school districts with funds to pay cash for infrastructure maintenance and improvements as needed unless a substantial donation is made for such items.

How are public schools funded in Michigan? Answer: The bulk of the funding to operate Michigan's schools comes from a foundation allowance paid by the State of Michigan.

Is there any other way for schools to receive funds? Answer: Schools do not have access to subsidies/PPP loans. We utilize grants as much as possible and we used ESSER funds (one time funds) to pay for asbestos removal. The other ESSER funds we received were limited on how the funds were spent. Bonds or sinking funds are the only way schools can receive money in one amount to pay for capital improvements.

I was noticing on the school website that one of the ways the school can pay for repairs and renovations is by using the capital improvement fund. I was wondering if I or anyone else can donate money to that fund? Answer: Yes, if someone wants to donate specifically to the capital improvement fund, they can certainly do so. They would simply send us payment with specific instructions on where to apply their donation and we will make that happen. We ask that checks be made out to P-W Schools.

For the new restrooms and locker rooms proposal for the football field area, will the fence line be modified that separates the football field and softball/baseball fields so that they also have access to use them? In the past, porta-johns have been placed by the softball diamond. If there are new restrooms being added, these should be available for use by the other sports as well. Porta-johns would not be acceptable at that point. Answer: Yes, that is one of the reasons why we want to have the locker room building in that location. We want to have the public and players from softball /baseball to be able to utilize the bathrooms/space.

For the turf field proposal, what policy will be put in place to ensure that everyone has access to use the field when it is not the actual football season? This would be needed to ensure that a non-football activity is not denied usage of it when it is not the football season. Answer: Yes, right now we utilize google calendars for our shared spaces (elementary gym, middle school gym, field house, weight room etc). This has worked really well as we give access to all teachers/coaches/supervisors. They communicate well with each other and move things around when needed to accommodate last minute changes. We usually have events scheduled in those shared spaces from 3-9 each school night and during the day on Saturdays.

BOND REFERENDUM COMMUNITY QUESTIONS, CONT.

Are there any plans to upgrade the sound system in the fieldhouse? It can be difficult to hear at times. Answer: Yes, it stopped working last year and we got it fixed, but it is in need of a new system. We have it on our capital needs assessment.

The bond referendum approved by the Board of Education is for the first option in the survey, yet the turf field was in the second option. Why are we considering turf? Answer: The survey indicated a dollar amount for option one. After reviewing all the items and staying within the cost parameters, we added restroom updates to the elementary, updates to the auditorium, and turf to the football field. The football stadium and surrounding areas have serious drainage issues especially during the fall and spring seasons after rainfall. After consultation from drainage experts, it was determined the tile under the football field is too deep and not effective. We have been advised to remove the dirt from the football field, dig down to remove the ineffective tiling and install a new drainage system to more efficiently disperse the water. Since the football field will be torn up, consideration for adding turf was discussed for cost saving and to allow other athletic/extracurricular programs to use the field.

How would I know the bond funds would be spent the way they are supposed to be spent? Answer: Michigan law requires that expenditure of bond proceeds must be audited, and the proceeds cannot be used for repair or maintenance costs, teacher, administrator or employee salaries, or other operating expenses. An audit would be completed at the end of the project financed with each bond series to ensure compliance.

What are the checks and balances during the construction process? Who makes sure that the work is being done correctly? Answer: We have to abide by the Construction of School Buildings Act. This act has checks and balances to ensure that all work is done correctly.

When are the current bonds scheduled to be paid off? Answer: Our current bonds are scheduled to be paid off in 2028, 2029 and 2041.

How long will the artificial turf last? How would we pay to replace it when needed? Answer: Artificial turf has made many advancements in recent years. The life expectancy of the turf is 12-15 years. Many high schools are able to either update with a partial replacement of the worn areas or replace after 20 years or more. Keeping a line item in our budget will allow us to save the funds to purchase any replacements.

If the bond passes, what is the timeline for the turf? Answer: If the bond passes, we will then look at the availability of product and installation. We will pick a time that is the least disruptive to our programs.

What are the plans for the bus garage? Answer: The bus garage will continue to be a priority on our capital needs assessment. This assessment will list the physical needs of the property, useful life expectancy, replacement schedule, and cost.

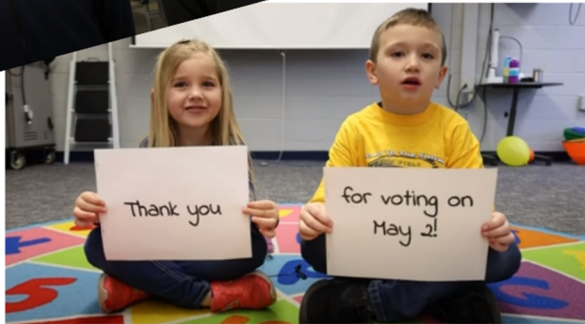
How much more will the artificial turf cost compared to reseeding the field after the drainage issue is resolved? Answer: Approximately \$450,000.

Who is responsible for checking the patching of the football field? Answer: Currently we have a part time grounds employee that will take this responsibility after receiving training along with our facilities director.

A yes vote usually means that you approve the bond proposal. Is that the case this time? Answer: Yes. A yes vote means that you are in favor of the bond proposal. A no vote means that you are opposed.

If the bond lasts for thirty years but there are things in the bond that won't last thirty years for example the turf or any electronics how does that work? Answer: A school district must demonstrate that the weighted average maturity of the qualified bond issue does not exceed 120% of the average reasonably expected useful life of the facilities, excluding land and site improvements, being financed with the proceeds of the qualified bonds. Purchases that do not have a lifespan of the loan are required to be amortized.

Be sure to watch our videos highlighting the proposed changes. Visit pwschools.org/our-district/bond-2023-information



Join our email list for updates from the Superintendent!

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/joinpwemailgroup> to join an email list to receive bond updates.

Please note: current P-W Elementary and Middle School parents already receive this information and need not enroll.

Video topics include:

HVAC, classroom casework, windows & bathrooms

New elementary media center & classroom additions

Expand MHS cafeteria

Locker rooms

Why are we talking turf?

Resurface parking lots & playground updates

And many more!

Did you know?

**P-W currently has the lowest millage rate
in Clinton County**



Pewamo-Westphalia, 7 mills

St. Johns, 7 mills

Fowler, 7.34 mills

Ovid-Elsie, 7.8 mills


Bath, 9 mills

DeWitt, 10 mills



2023 Bond Referendum Informational Sessions

We invite you to attend a meeting to become informed, ask questions and tour your schools. We hope to see you there!



**Monday
March 20
5:30 pm**

**P-W Middle
School/High
School Library**

**Wednesday
April 26
6 pm**

**P-W Elementary
School
Gymnasium**



Meet with Superintendent Jennifer Goodman and consultants from
Performance Services at either meeting.

**Pewamo-Westphalia
Community Schools**

5101 Clintonia Rd
Westphalia, MI 48894

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Non-Profit

Organization

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE.....989.587.5100.....FAX 989.587.5120
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.....989.593.3488.....FAX 989.593.4118
MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL.....989.587.5100.....FAX 989.587.3550

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Postal Customer

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS ARE HELD THE 3RD MONDAY OF EACH
MONTH IN THE MHS LIBRARY* AT 7 PM

*(OCTOBER MTG HELD IN THE P-W ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARY)

QR Codes for your Reference



**Bond information
on P-W's website**

pwschools.org



**Register to vote
in Michigan**

[mvic.sos.state.mi.us/
registervoter](http://mvic.sos.state.mi.us/registervoter)



**Apply for absentee
ballot online**

[mvic.sos.state.mi.us/
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**Sign up for email updates
from Superintendent:**

[https://tinyurl.com/joinpw
emailgroup](https://tinyurl.com/joinpwemailgroup)

Remember to VOTE on Tuesday, May 2, 2023 at these locations:

Clinton County Residents: Location to Vote:

Lebanon Township residents: Lebanon Township Office
Westphalia Township residents: Westphalia Township Office
All other Clinton County residents: Westphalia Township Office

Ionia County Residents:

All Lyons Township residents: Lyons Township Pewamo Precinct
North Plains Township residents: North Plains Township Hall
Portland Township, Precinct 2: Lyons Township Pewamo Precinct

*Your township clerk
will mail you a post-
card if your location to
vote for this special
election is different
than your usual voting
location.*