

Statement about Precinct 4 and the 2024 August 6th Library Ballot

Thank you to all the citizens and patrons who have raised concerns over the programming error which effected Portage Township Precinct 4 Registered Voters during the August 6th election. Below is a statement clarifying the steps the Portage Lake District Library, Houghton County Clerk's Office, and Portage Township's Office took to communicate the error and provide opportunities for every voter from Precinct 4 who voted during August 6th's election to vote on the Library's Ballot Question.

On Friday, July 12th, 2024, the Portage Lake District Library Director Katrina Linde-Moriarty was notified by a library board member that the library ballot question was missing from an absentee ballot in Precinct 4. The library director contacted the Houghton County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly who began to investigate the matter. The county clerk certified that all documentation provided to her by PLDL and all documentation she provided to the election vendor were accurate and without error. Communication with the election vendor confirmed that a programming error occurred and only Precinct 4 was affected within PLDL's district area.

The county clerk contacted the Bureau of Elections at the State level requesting guidance on what our next steps should be. The county clerk was directed to continue with the election as the election was already active through absentee and early voting. When the clerk asked about placing the question on the ballot in November for Precinct 4, it could not be allowed by law since the election was already live with active absentee ballots in other precincts. For the same reason, the ballot question could not be withdrawn from all voters because the election for August 6th was already live and active. To appear on the November ballot, the library board would need to resubmit the ballot language to the county clerk before the August 13th, 2024 submission deadline. Since the library board did not have a scheduled meeting during this time period nor were there concerns raised to the library on this topic to warrant calling a special meeting, this action was not pursued within the timeline to meet the August 13th submission deadline.

Although the ballot question would not appear on pre-programmed ballots (absentee, early, or day of) for Precinct 4 voters, individuals who participated in the voting process would have an opportunity to vote on the library millage levy via mail-in ballot after August 6. This provision is supported through state law in the event of a programming error.

After the next steps forward were clarified by the state, the county clerk drafted a statement with review by the library director to be mailed out to all affected voters to communicate about the programming error.

To: Portage Township Precinct 4 Registered Voters

RE: Portage Lake District Library Operational Millage

On Friday, July 12, 2024, it was brought to my attention that the Portage Lake District Library millage was not programmed for Precinct 4. The millage will NOT be on your August 6, 2024 ballot. Precinct 2 is correct. All of the ballots have been printed and absentee ballots have been sent to voters. We will follow Election Law and NOT do a reprint & reprogramming. If the millage does not pass, the PLDL will have the right to have me do a "MAIL BALLOT" after the August 6, 2024 to anyone from Precinct 4 who voted. The Township Clerk will do the mailing.

We are sorry for this programming error, and if you have any questions, please contact me.

Jennifer Kelly-Houghton County Clerk/Register of Deeds
906-482-1150
Email:

After the statement was prepared and printed, volunteers and library staff diligently worked over the next week and a half to mail out the statement along with an Informational sheet about the ballot question to every registered voter within Portage Township. As letters began to arrive to voters within the township, the county and township clerks fielded clarifying questions around the programming error and voters right to have their votes counted during this election period.

On Monday, August 5th, 2024, Houghton County Clerk Jennifer Kelly put out a press release statement which also appeared on the doors of both clerks' offices and was posted at the library.

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release:

Attn: PORTAGE TOWNSHIP VOTERS IN PRECINCT 4

Monday, August 5, 2024 3:39 pm.

The Portage Lake District Library millage was not put on the Precinct 4 ballots due to a programming error by the Election vendor.

It was brought to my attention around 3:30 pm today that the Library's flyer with an attachment that was sent to all Portage Township voters does NOT state what happens if the millage passes. **It only says what happens if it does not pass.**

The answer is the same.

Only one person would need to notify me in writing and request a "Mail Ballot" after the August 6th election whether the Library millage passes or fails.

That mail ballot can only be sent to every voter who votes in the August 6, 2024 election.

Jennifer Kelly
Houghton County Register of Deeds
401 E. Houghton Avenue
Houghton, MI 49931
(906) 482-1150

The Library Director Katrina Linde-Moriarty also provided statements to local news outlets who were covering the election and the library's ballot question. The director also made themselves available for questions about the library's ballot question during three Informational Sessions:

At our information session, you'll have the opportunity to:

- Learn more about the library's ballot question and operational millage
- Ask questions about the library's ballot language and current services

AUGUST 6TH'S LIBRARY OPERATIONAL MILLAGE: INFO SESSIONS

At Portage Lake District Library

- Wednesday, July 17th at 6pm
- Tuesday, July 30th at 3:30pm

At The Bluffs

- Monday, July 29th at 11am

On August 8th, 2024, the Board of Canvassers for the County of Houghton, from an examination of the Statement of Votes Cast of Portage Lake District Library received by said Board of Canvassers, determined that at the Primary Election held on August 6th, 2024, the library millage did pass.

829 Yes

287 No

Although live voting for the August 6th election was concluded, there was still opportunity for those voters who cast their votes in Precinct 4 to have their voices be heard on the library's ballot question. By Friday, August 16th, all 185 voters from Precinct 4 who cast their vote during or prior to August 6th were issued a Mail Ballot with the library's millage question. On Monday, August 26th, the county clerk confirmed with the township clerk that of the 185 Mail Ballots sent out to Precinct 4 voters 98 Mail Ballots were returned with the following results.

54 Yes

39 No

With Precinct 4's votes, the total votes for the library's Ballot Question are:

883 Yes

326 No

At this time, votes from all areas within the library's district have been cast and counted towards the Library Ballot Question and the ballot question has passed.

- This statement was prepared by Library Director Katrina Linde-Moriarty on 8/27/24.
 - o Final section in yellow was written to the best of the director's knowledge on 8/27/24. It has since been brought to the director's attention that the Mail Ballots from Precinct 4 were not able to be included in the final count as they did not qualify under state regulations.