

First of all before I cast my vote on the tax levy I would like to say a few things.

This past week I have been going over the numbers to see if it is possible to get out of this deficit without cutting personnel. I clearly cannot see anyway to do this. The funds are just not there. The cuts would be mostly being to Police officers. In no way do I want this to happen as I feel that no one in the Village wants this either. We have one of the best police departments in the metro east. I am proud of them. Our Village is one of the safest around. Just look at the crime statistics that says a lot for the department. To cut back would hamper this force tremendously. The second would be the ordinance officer. We have needed an ordinance officer for years, to get our village cleaned up and prosecute violators. We need this. To delete that position would be a step backwards. Our inspectors do not have the time and neither do our officers. I am willing to pay extra for these services. Now has the village always tried to do the right thing? Yes. Has it always worked out? No. Not always but I can assure you that everything this administration has done, has been in the interest of the residents of Pontoon Beach. That was always our intensions. Right or wrong we have always tried to do right. This tax increase has been on the table for awhile now. The Village has struggled over the past years. If it wasn't the excellent work of Officer John Simmons in bringing in the drug fund money we would be faced with having to purchase new police cruisers. Our old cars were trash. That would have come out of Gen. Fund along with other items. The drug fund has helped out tremendously. These board members have never had a raise since 1999 nor do they seek one. With the rise of fuel, health insurance, and the fact that the Village is in a small hull with new business not coming in we are in a small deficit. If this tax levy is passed tonight I will ask the mayor to appoint a committee to work on more ways to bring in revenue along with new business and ways to save money. At this time the board is already working on this matter. We will get new business. It will come along with the sales tax. In a year or so when the Village gets back on their feet I will ask this board to revisit this tax levy and recede it back to where it was, if all possible. Some say what will the extra money do for us. Well here's one thing it will do. It will help us tear down all of these derelict buildings we have condemned. WE have spent money on attorney fees to get these old buildings tore down and now that we have them there is no money to demo them. That's one thing I am looking forward to. I have full confidence in our congressman Jerry Costello and Alan Dunstan. They are working hard on this FEMA issue and I am confident they will get it done. So we do not have to buy flood insurance. No matter how this vote goes tonight, I respect

all of these members' votes whether yes or no. We have to move forward.
Having said this I vote Yes