

# News Article

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## Referendum passage triggers mental health board appointment process in Naperville, Lisle township, Will County

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The clock has started for Naperville and Lisle townships and Will County to appoint people to new community mental health boards following voter approval Tuesday of referendums in all three jurisdictions.

By approving the measures, voters also authorized the levy of property taxes — up .15% in the two townships and up to .05% in Will County — to fund services that address mental health, substance abuse and developmental disability issues in their areas.

Unofficial election results show 60% of Naperville Township voters and 59% of Lisle Township voters agreed to add an annual tax to the township levy to fund programs recommended by the board, which is sometimes referred to as a 708 board for the name of the legislation that allows them to be created.

In Will County, unofficial results have 53% of voters approving forming a board and accompanying tax.

Under to state law, Naperville Township Supervisor Eddie Bedford, Lisle Township Supervisor Diane Hewitt and Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant must appoint a board within 60-day timeframe.

Bedford said he's trying to determine if the clock starts on Election Day or the day when votes are officially canvassed and certified later this month.

According to the law, appointees must be residents of the government unit they will serve and represent interested community groups, such as professionals in medical and mental health fields and lay associations concerned with mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse issues.

One member of the board can be an elected township or county board member.

Board members cannot authorize the expenditures of tax money on their own. Recommendations for spending and tax

levies are presented to the governing body — township or county board — for final approval.

Bedford said he has a shortlist of seven community appointees from Naperville Township, and he would like to add two nonvoting, advisory members — the township assessor and a lawyer not affiliated with the township — who can offer logistical guidance.

Hewitt said she plans to model Lisle Township's 708 board after the one set up in Milton Township, which includes a trustee liaison and six community members.

She opened the board application process this week and said she's looking for professionals with a passion for one of three areas: improving mental health, assisting people with substance addiction or aiding those with developmental disabilities.

Bedford said mental health boards are needed more than ever to address the rising demand for services for children and adults.

"What COVID has done to people is mind-boggling," he said. "How we work through this is working with local organizations."

Bertino-Tarrant did not respond to requests for a comment.

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