



NORTH WHIDBEY FIRE AND RESCUE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Board of Fire Commissioners Passes Lid Lift Resolution

Measure Scheduled for November 3 General Election Ballot

OAK HARBOR, WASH. — The Board of Fire Commissioners for North Whidbey Fire and Rescue unanimously passed a resolution asking voters to consider a 15-cent Fire Levy lid lift during the November General Election. Funding would be used to replace two fire engines, emergency radios, and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus for firefighters.

NWFR serves 18,000 people over 55 square miles. Its service area includes the unincorporated area west of the City of Oak Harbor from Deception Pass Bridge (to the north) and Libbey Road in Coupeville (to the south). The Fire District is debt free, operates under a balanced budget, and has the lowest Fire Levy rate in Island County at 62 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

The Fire Levy is the primary source of funding for emergency services for the NWFR community. Part-time paid and volunteer firefighters respond to an average of 2,400 calls per year. Call volumes have increased 45 percent in 10 years for the agency.

More calls have meant added wear and tear on emergency apparatus and equipment. Two fire engines are at the end of their usable lives, and at risk of being unreliable to respond to calls. Likewise, the Fire District needs to replace emergency radios and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus for the safety of the community and its firefighters. The Fire District plans to pay cash for these capital items instead of financing the purchases, which would cost taxpayers more due to interest payments.

The proposed 15-cent/\$1,000 lid lift would cost the owner of a \$370,000 home (an average for the area) approximately \$4.63 per month (\$55.50 per year). Replacing these items also will maintain the community's insurance rating, which is linked to the amount some home and business owners pay in premiums.

"North Whidbey Fire and Rescue runs a tight ship," said new Fire Chief John Clark. "We have a 'pay as you go' philosophy, which means just asking for what is needed at the time. These capital items will improve public safety. We appreciate our community considering this request."

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North Whidbey Fire and Rescue provides an emergency response to fires, medical calls, water and high angle rescue, and auto accidents. The agency serves 18,000 people over 55 square miles, which includes the unincorporated area west of the City of Oak Harbor from Deception Pass Bridge (to the north) and Libbey Road in Coupeville (to the south). Highly-trained part-time paid and volunteer firefighters respond to an average of 2,400 calls per year.