



Walla Walla County Fire District #4

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Board of Fire Commissioners passes fire levy lid lift resolution

Proposition will appear on the August 6, 2024, primary election ballot

Walla Walla, Wash. – The Board of Fire Commissioners for Walla Walla County Fire District 4 passed a resolution to place a fire levy lid lift on the August 6, 2024, primary election ballot. The lid lift would help the district respond to higher call volumes and keep up with rising costs to provide emergency services.

Revenue from the district's current fire levy is not keeping up with annual costs to provide services. Daily costs increase 4 to 5 percent each year, but state law limits the fire district to just a 1 percent revenue increase per year.

Call volumes have increased 30 percent from 2018 to 2022. EMS calls are also increasing and now account for the majority of all calls – 68 percent. Higher demand for service requires additional personnel to respond to calls faster and more efficiently.

If approved by voters, the fire levy lid lift will fund:

- Up to three additional firefighters/paramedics to respond to higher call volumes and reduce response times
- Renovations to Station 41 (Howard Street) to add sleeping quarters and update the ventilation system to protect the health and safety of emergency personnel
- Replace aging apparatus to ensure service reliability when responding to calls

The fire district can meet its daily operational and capital needs through a basic fire levy lid lift and pay cash for these items instead of borrowing money through a bond, which costs taxpayers more in interest payments.

The fire district is asking voters to change the fire levy from \$0.88 to \$1.26 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. If approved by voters, this would be the first levy lid lift in almost 40 years.

The \$0.38 lid lift would cost an additional \$12.67 per month or \$152 per year for the owner of a \$400,000 home.

Learn more at www.wwfire4.com. Fire Chief Rocky Eastman also welcomes your questions at 509-529-1282 or reastman@wwfire4.com.

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Walla Walla County Fire District 4 provides fire suppression and emergency medical service (EMS) to 9,250 people over 125 square miles in the unincorporated areas west, south, and east of the cities of Walla Walla and College Place, and the Port of Walla Walla Regional Airport. Fire District 4 is a combination fire district that relies on volunteer, part-time and full-time emergency personnel who are highly trained to provide structural and wildland fire suppression, Basic and Advanced Life Support EMS, ambulance transport, vehicle accidents and extrication, and life safety programs. Fire District 4 is debt free, has passed all independent financial audits by the state, and works with neighboring agencies to share costs and improve emergency service levels.