



## Walla Walla County Fire District #4

2251 S. Howard St., Walla Walla, WA 99362  
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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: July 8, 2024

Contact: Chief Rocky Eastman | (509) 529-1282 | [reastman@wwfire4.com](mailto:reastman@wwfire4.com)

#### **Public meetings to learn more about fire levy lid lift**

*First lid lift in almost 40 years will appear on August 6, 2024, primary election ballot*

Walla Walla, WA. – Walla Walla County Fire District 4 is asking voters to consider a fire levy lid lift on the August 6, 2024, primary election ballot. The lid lift would fund up to three additional firefighter/paramedics to reduce response times, replace aging apparatus, and help renovate Station 41 to support the health and safety of firefighters.

Residents are encouraged to attend one of two public meetings to ask questions and learn more:

- Tuesday, July 23 at 7:00 p.m. at Station 41 (2251 Howard St.)
- Saturday, July 27 at 9:00 a.m. at Station 41 (2251 Howard St.)

The fire levy accounts for almost 60% of the fire department's budget. With higher call volumes—as much as a 30 percent increase—and 68 percent of those calls being EMS-related, the service Fire District 4 can provide the community is greatly impacted.

“We operate under a balanced budget to fund essential emergency services,” says Chief Eastman.

“Walla Walla County Fire District 4 has a history of good financial stewardship, having passed all independent and accountability audits and remaining debt free.”

A common misconception is that revenue for the fire district increases by the same amount as assessed property values. This is incorrect. State law limits fire districts to a one-percent revenue increase annually. Fire levy rates actually fall as property values rise to limit a fire district to roughly the same amount of revenue per year. The result is called “levy compression.”

In 2003, the fire levy rate was \$1.39 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. It has since dropped to \$0.88. This is insufficient to keep up with cost increases of 4 to 5 percent each year. “For the first time in almost 40 years,” says Chief Eastman, “we need to ask voters for a levy lid lift.”

Fire District 4 is asking voters to consider a \$0.38 lid lift on the August primary election ballot, which would raise the fire levy rate to \$1.26 per \$1,000. This would raise the needed revenue for the fire district and is still less than voters approved 20 years ago.

Please attend an upcoming information session, visit [www.wwfire4.com](http://www.wwfire4.com), or contact Chief Rocky Eastman at 509-529-1282 or [reastman@wwfire4.com](mailto:reastman@wwfire4.com) with questions.

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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.*