



SNOHOMISH REGIONAL FIRE & RESCUE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 25, 2023
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Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue identifies needs to improve emergency response

Revenue is not keeping up with increasing costs to provide service

Monroe, Wash. – Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue (SRFR) has identified improvements for stations, staffing and equipment that are needed to maintain the quality and level of emergency services important to the community. Revenue, however, is not keeping up with increasing costs to provide fire and emergency medical service (EMS).

The Board of Fire Commissioners is meeting at 5:30 p.m. on May 30 to discuss placing a fire levy lid lift on the November general election ballot. The meeting will be held at Station 31, 163 Village Court in Monroe. The public is invited to attend and learn more.

“Our community requires additional personnel and station improvements to continue providing the level and quality of emergency services residents want,” Fire Chief Kevin O’Brien said. “We’ve done our homework and identified the emergency service needs of our community.”

How SRFR funds emergency services

Daily operations are funded by a fire levy and EMS levy paid through property taxes. The fire levy rate is capped at \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value, and the EMS levy rate is capped at \$0.50. Voters last approved a fire levy rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 in 2021. Since then, the rate has dropped to \$1.14.

Why did the levy rate drop?

Levy rates fall as property values rise to limit a fire district to approximately the same amount of revenue each year plus a one percent increase allowed by state law or any other voter-approved increase.

This is called “levy compression” and is why fire districts must regularly ask voters for a “lid lift” to restore funding for emergency services. This means the funding a fire district receives does not equate to assessed property value increases.

SRFR is considering asking voters for a fire levy lid lift of \$0.36 per \$1,000 of assessed property value later this year. This would return the fire levy rate to \$1.50 per \$1,000 and cost an additional \$180 per year or \$15 per month for the owner of a \$500,00 home (considered average).

These improvements include:

- Filling open positions for emergency personnel to improve service reliability across the district



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- Rebuilding Station 81 in Lake Stevens and relocating Station 32 in Monroe to allow for quicker response times in the area
- Replacing lost funding due to changes in how the federal government reimburses fire districts for Medicare and Medicaid patients

SRFR has completed a Capital Facilities Plan, a Community Risk Assessment, and a Standards of Coverage report that outline where improvements are needed to maintain the quality and level of emergency services the community requires.

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Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue serves 160,000 residents in the cities of Lake Stevens, Monroe, and unincorporated southeast Snohomish County. SRFR responds to an average of 16,000 emergency calls a year with highly trained personnel and state-of-the-art rescue programs. SRFR became the first accredited agency in Snohomish County by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International, which is the highest level of achievement possible for a fire agency. More information about SRFR can be found at www.srfr.org.

