



Clark County Fire District 5

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 1, 2022
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Board of Fire Commissioners Consider Levy Lid Lift for August Primary

Emergency Calls Are Up 20.8% in Three Years

VANCOUVER, WASH. – The Board of Fire Commissioners for Clark County Fire District 5 will consider a resolution to place a fire levy lid lift on the August 2, 2022 Primary Election ballot. Funding from the lid lift would be used to add additional firefighters, emergency response apparatus, and seismically retrofit aged fire department facilities.

The meeting will be held virtually via Zoom on Tuesday, March 15, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. The public is welcome to attend and provide public comment. The Zoom link can be found at www.ccf5.org under the meetings tab.

Daily operations at CCFD5 are funded by a fire levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Over time, the fire levy rate falls as property values rise to limit the Fire District to roughly the same amount of revenue per year (plus a 1% increase).

For example, CCFD5's fire levy rate has fallen to \$1.01 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Growth and an aging population have caused call volumes to increase 20.8% since 2019. More calls mean added costs, and those costs are higher due to inflation (6.5%). The end result is that revenue is not keeping up with the demand for and cost to provide service.

“Call volumes and population has increased significantly, but the number of firefighters serving Clark County Fire District 5 and the Vancouver community has not increased for 15 years,” said Vancouver Fire Chief Brennan Blue. “Additional emergency personnel are needed to respond to higher call volumes, and maintain emergency response times.”

If successful, this would be the first voter-approved funding increase in the history of CCFD5. The Fire District is asking voters to increase the fire levy from \$1.01 to \$1.25 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. (The maximum a fire district can request from voters is \$1.50 per \$1,000.) If approved by voters, the 24-cent “lid lift” would cost the owner of a \$400,000 home an additional \$8 per month (\$96 per year).

Residents in the city of Vancouver approved a \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value property tax increase in February. Property owners in CCFD5 would be asked for an increase of \$0.24 per \$1,000. If approved, the new amounts in both jurisdictions would start being collected in 2023.

Funding would be used to hire three additional firefighters, including a paramedic, at the new Fire Station 11 which will serve the Orchards-Sifton area beginning in the fall of 2022. These new positions will help improve the Vancouver Fire Department's response times district-wide.

Fire Department facilities also require improvements including seismic upgrades to ensure stations can continue to operate in the event of an earthquake. Staffing and facility improvements will help maintain CCFD5's risk rating, which is linked to what homeowners pay in insurance premiums.

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Clark County Fire District 5 contracts with the Vancouver Fire Department to provide fire and life safety services to approximately 94,000 people over 36 square miles. In 2021, firefighters responded to almost 7,000 calls for service in CCFD5, a 20.8% increase in just three years. CCFD5 has been a leader in the county for improving the quality of emergency services, and health and safety through its public education and training programs. More information on CCFD5 can be found on its website www.ccf5.com.