

# Fire Levy Lid Lift on November Ballot



In August, Grays Harbor Fire District 2 Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution to place a Proposition Establishing Property Tax Levy for Fire Protection and Emergency Services on the November 3, 2020 general election ballot. This proposition is not a new levy but is the existing regular fire property tax levy that pays for the operations of the Fire District.

Fire District 2's regular fire levy has continued to decrease since the last voter-approved measure ended. The last measure approved in 2011 set the rate at a \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Since then the rate has dropped to \$1.27 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

If approved by voters, the fire levy rate would return to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value (AV). This is called a fire levy "lid lift." It would last for one year and the levy rate would start to decrease again. The rate can never exceed the voter approved rate of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Funding from the fire levy supports Fire District operations on a day-to-day basis and maintains emergency service levels. This includes funding such things as personnel, training, apparatus (fire engines and ambulances), equipment and firefighting and medical supplies. Funding for these items is essential to delivering services and maintaining fire insurance rating levels.

Levy rates fall as property values increase limiting the Fire District to roughly the same amount of revenue

per year plus a 1% increase. The 1% increase has not kept up with increasing call volumes or the cost of inflation which is around 3.1% for the area. The fire levy provides most of the funding to provide fire and emergency services for residents and businesses in Fire District 2, which includes Central Park, Brady, the Wynoochee Valley, and unincorporated areas surrounding Montesano.

The Fire District maintains 24-hour a day staffing with 2 personnel on-duty. Each shift is staffed with Firefighter/Paramedic personnel and supported by volunteers that respond in or cover additional shifts.

Volunteer firefighter programs are 100 percent supported with funds from the Fire Levy and are an essential part of delivering firefighting and emergency medical services. Personnel respond on all types of calls including fires, EMS, rescues and entrapments, hazardous materials, and service calls. Fire levy funds support full-time staffing, stipends for volunteers, training programs, maintenance and operations of 4 fire stations, 6 fire engines, 3 ambulances, rescue truck and 3 water tenders.

"Without the combination of full-time and volunteer personnel, the Fire District would not be able to provide the high quality of fire and emergency services to our residents," said Leonard Johnson, Fire Chief. "Fire Levy funds are the primary source for supporting these services."

Last year the Fire District responded to 1,372 requests for service. This includes structure and wildland fires, emergency medical and trauma response, rescue/extrication and non-emergency medical assistance services such as lift assists and blood pressure checks.

Fire Commissioners and administration will be hosting an on-line Open House/Public Meetings to discuss and answer questions concerning the Fire Levy Lid Lift proposition and other programs. If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact Chief Leonard Johnson at 360-532-6050 or via email at [l.johnson@gfhd2.net](mailto:l.johnson@gfhd2.net). You can also visit [www.ghfd2.org](http://www.ghfd2.org) for more information.

## Virtual Townhall Public Meeting

**Monday  
October 26, 2020  
6:00 p.m.**

Visit  
**[www.ghfd2.org](http://www.ghfd2.org)**  
for meeting link.

# Fire Levy Lid Lift - Facts & Information

**What is on my November General Election Ballot?** Fire District 2 is asking voters to return the fire levy from \$1.27 back to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value for a single year. This is called a "fire levy lid lift."

**Why is my Fire District asking for a lid lift?** Fire District 2 currently funds all its daily operations and most of its capital needs through its regular operating levies for fire and emergency medical service (\$1.50 for fire and \$0.50 cents for EMS.) This means the fire district pays for apparatus, equipment, and career and volunteer staff through its operating budget. The regular operating levy is necessary to provide fire suppression, Advanced and Basic Life Support ambulance services, fire prevention and inspections and other essential services to the citizens in the Fire District.

**Have voters approved this before?** Yes, voters have approved fire levy lid lifts in 2011 and 2004. Since then the fire levy has fallen to \$1.27/\$1,000 of assessed property value.

**How much will the lid lift cost? How long does it last?** The 23-cent lid lift would cost the owner of a \$250,000 home \$68 per year (\$5.66 per month). The lid lift would last for one (1) year, and then the levy rate would start to fall again.

**What does it pay for?** The fire levy pays for daily operations, such as emergency personnel, equipment, apparatus, medical supplies, facilities, and repairs and maintenance. It supports

both volunteer and career firefighters that provide firefighting and emergency medical services 24-hours a day.

**Can the fire levy ever go above \$1.50 per \$1,000?** No. By state law, the fire levy can never exceed \$1.50 per \$1,000.

**Doesn't the fire district get more taxes because of increasing property value?** The fire district is limited to a one percent revenue increase per year by state law regardless of how much a home appreciates in value. In other words, we do not receive a 10 percent increase in revenue if your home value increases by that amount.

**Does the fire district receive money from the state or county?** No. Fire District 2 is separate from the county and state and receives no funding from them, including any sales tax. The fire levy is the primary funding source for fire and emergency services that are provided within the Fire District.

**What about taxes from "new growth"?** This tax revenue is used to make sure an emergency response (including adequate staffing levels, apparatus, facilities, equipment, and supplies) is available for new homes in the fire district.

**What is the fire district doing to make our tax dollars stretch further?** Fire District 2 has strong financial practices that enable it to fund operations and most capital needs through its two operating levies for fire and EMS.

**GRAYS HARBOR FIRE DISTRICT NO. 2**  
6317 Olympic Highway  
Aberdeen, WA 98520

STD MAIL  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Aberdeen, WA  
PERMIT NO. 10

**ON-LINE OPEN HOUSE / PUBLIC MEETING on October 26. See inside for details.**