



Citizens Approve Graham Fire & Rescue Maintenance & Operations Levy

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GRAHAM, WA – Fire Chief Ryan Baskett is pleased to announce the citizens of Graham have approved a 2.75 million dollar annual Maintenance and Operations levy to maintain and improve fire services. The November election levy received a supermajority approval rating of 60.47 percent. The levy was originally projected to cost the citizens an additional .60 cents per thousand dollars of assessed valuation, but will only be collected at a rate of .54 cents per thousand the first year. The funds will be used to stop a six-year service decline, bolster daily staffing and open closed stations.

Graham Fire has developed an aggressive hiring plan and will begin improving service January 1st, 2015, by increasing the minimum daily staffing from 9 to 11 people. The additional staffing will allow the District to fully open two part-time closed stations and on occasion open the fully-closed Thrift station.

Six new Paramedic/Firefighters from an established eligibility list have been offered positions and will begin training the first of the year. Four of them have previous fire experience and will be trained by the Department, making them available for shift work in early March. Two with no previous fire experience will attend a dedicated fire service academy and will be available for shift work in May of 2015. With the addition of each new hire the number of opportunities for the Thrift station to be open will improve.

The Department is currently advertising for four career Firefighter positions (See Department web page for hiring information). The application period closes January 15th with a tentative hire date of April 1st and shift assignments around June 1st. The Thrift station is scheduled to fully re-open on June 1st when the first 10 new hires are assigned to shift. An application and testing process to hire the final six Paramedic/Firefighters will take place in the fall of 2015 with a tentative hire date of January 2016.

In addition to adding response personnel, the District will purchase a new medic unit to replace one of two nine-year-old first line units, begin funding the deferred equipment replacement plan, improve Department training, support public education and begin replenishing the depleted reserve fund.

Chief Baskett stated, “I am thankful for the citizen support and am committed to increasing services in the most efficient way possible. I believe that if done appropriately the needed levy amount should decrease in future years.”

More Fire Department information is available at www.grahamfire.org or can be obtained by calling the Headquarters fire station at 253-847-8811.