



Graham Fire & Rescue Will Ask Citizens to Permanently Fund Emergency Medical Services in August

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GRAHAM, WA – Graham Fire & Rescue has decided to ask voters to make their Emergency Medical Services (EMS) funding permanent. At a recent Commissioner's meeting the Board unanimously passed a resolution authorizing the placement of a permanent EMS Levy on the August 2nd ballot for citizen consideration.

This is not new funding and is a voter approved tax that presently gets renewed every four to six years. The current EMS Levy rate is 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation and is scheduled to expire in 2017. The citizens have overwhelmingly supported this funding since 2002 allowing Graham Fire & Rescue to build an emergency medical service delivery model based on this funding. The consistent support is what drove the interest to make this funding permanent to allow for a stable financial picture for future planning.

A permanent EMS Levy would allow the Department to better plan and forecast its needs to meet future growth in service delivery without the risk of significant revenue loss. A permanent levy is also considered a more efficient use of tax dollars because it reduces the number of elections required. The cost to a Fire District to place a measure on the general election ballot is \$30,000–\$40,000, with special elections being two to three times more expensive.

Chief Baskett stated that the Board felt the citizens' historical support of the EMS Levy justified asking them to consider making it a permanent funding mechanism. Chief Baskett said he is hopeful the measure will receive the 60% supermajority approval needed to pass, as these funds are considered a key component in the funding needed to sustain an effective emergency medical service model.

Graham Fire & Rescue works diligently to be fiscally responsible, accountable and provide the best service possible to the tax payers, as well as being transparent in all aspects of the organization. For additional information please call (253) 847-8811 or visit www.grahamfire.org.