



## **Graham Fire & Rescue Forced to Close Stations and Begin Service Delivery Cuts**

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GRAHAM, WA – Fire Chief Ryan Baskett announced today Graham Fire & Rescue will immediately begin reducing service delivery to the citizens.

Graham Fire has seen a decrease in assessed valuation of property in excess of 20% and an increase in call volume of over 14% since 2008. This equates to a 20% decline in tax revenue used to operate and manage the District. The failure to pass a four-year, \$2.75 million per year maintenance and operations levy in August dictates the need to continue reducing cost.

Chief Baskett stated, “The organization has cut everything possible to reduce cost without impacting service delivery and can no longer sustain the current level of service.”

The following operational changes were approved by the Board of Commissioners at a September 10<sup>th</sup> Special Board Meeting.

- Reduction of staffing from 11 to 9 responders daily
- Full-time closure of Fire Station 6 (Thrift)
- Part-time closures of two additional Station 5 (Fredrickson) and Station 3 (Benston)
- Reduction of (Paramedic) advanced life support transport units from 3 to 2 daily
- Single unit response to all basic life support calls
- Non-priority calls will wait for an available unit
- Elimination of school and public event support impacting daily staffing
- Elimination of response to burn complaints and non-hazardous call types

These and other changes are necessary until the Fire District can adequately cover priority emergency calls. The Fire District responds to 6,000 emergency calls a year and protects 61,000 citizens. “We are tasked with protecting 61,000 citizens and running over 16 calls a day with very limited resources,” Chief Baskett said.

The Board of Commissioners has decided to place the maintenance and operations levy measure back on the ballot for citizen consideration in November due to the narrow margin of failure and low voter turnout. The August measure failed with a 58.5% approval rating and needed 60% approval to pass. If the measure is approved, the Fire District will hire additional firefighters and paramedics to allow 24/7 staffing at all stations.

Facts about the levy are available at [www.grahamfire.org](http://www.grahamfire.org) or can be obtained by calling the headquarters fire station at 253-847-8811.