



GRAHAM FIRE & RESCUE

# NEWS FROM GRAHAM FIRE

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For Immediate Release

## Voters will decide future funding for Fire Services

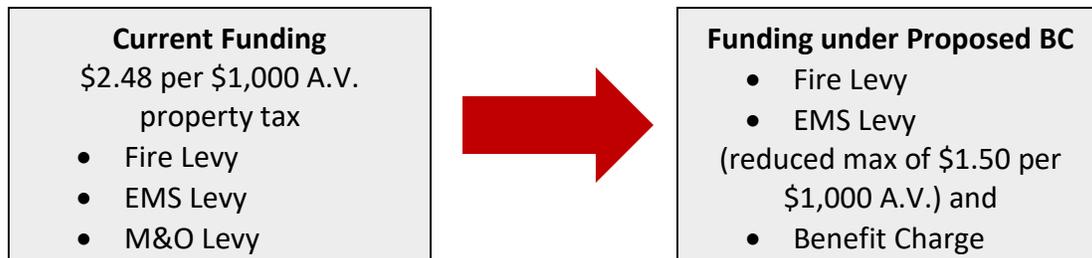
*Graham Fire & Rescue/Fire District 21 proposes a Benefit Charge on the Nov. 3 general election.*

**[Graham, WA]** — On July 22, 2020, the Board of Fire Commissioners for Graham Fire & Rescue (GF&R) voted unanimously to place a Benefit Charge (BC) on the November 3 election.

Currently, GF&R fire and medic one services are funded through three voter-approved levies paid through property taxes.

Fire Levy: \$1.45 per \$1,000 of assessed value (max rate = \$1.50)  
EMS Levy: \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value (max rate = \$0.50)  
M&O Levy: \$0.53 per \$1,000 of assessed value  
**Total: \$2.48 per \$1,000 of assessed value (A.V.)**

A BC will provide financial sustainability and stability especially in a recession or period of high inflation by diversifying revenues to include both property taxes and the BC. A BC will allow GF&R to maintain its existing level of service as the community and demand for service grows. Calls for service have increased by 40% since 2010.



If the BC ballot measure is approved, the maximum fire levy will be reduced from \$1.50 to \$1.00 per \$1,000 assessed value, and GF&R plans to abolish the current M&O Levy in 2021. The BC is an annual fee based on structure size, use, required firefighting resources and other risk factors. Larger structures, such as commercial and multi-family buildings, which require a more complex fire response will generally pay more than they do now, whereas smaller residential structures will generally pay less.

Nonprofits and public housing for seniors, low income residents and persons with disabilities will maintain any current exemptions they have through Pierce County. Religious facilities, public schools, publicly owned properties, vacant land and parcels with structures under 400 sq. ft. will also be exempt under a BC. Discounts will be provided for properties with sprinkler systems and to farms or agriculture.

A BC lasts six years, with annual public hearings required to set the charges for the upcoming year. If approved by voters, the BC will start Jan. 1, 2021 and will replace the final two years of the M&O levy.

If you have questions or would like more information on the Benefit Charge, please visit [www.GrahamFire.org/Benefit-Charge](http://www.GrahamFire.org/Benefit-Charge) or email [BenefitCharge@GrahamFire.org](mailto:BenefitCharge@GrahamFire.org).

YOUR SAFETY IS OUR PRIORITY

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