



Poulsbo Fire Department

*Kitsap County Fire District #18
911 N.E. Liberty Rd. Poulsbo WA, 98370
James S. Gillard, Fire Chief, 360-779-3997*

For Immediate Release:

April 18th, 2024

RE: Poulsbo Fire Department Proposes Renewal of Emergency Medical Services Funding

[Poulsbo, Wash.] – The Board of Fire Commissioners for the Poulsbo Fire Department has approved a resolution to place an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Levy renewal on the August 6th Primary Election ballot. The resolution asks the community to renew the six-year EMS Levy, which will also restore the EMS Levy back to the rate of \$.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value as previously approved by the voters in 2019. The renewal of the EMS levy was recommended by the department’s citizens’ strategic advisory board, to provide adequate funding to maintain service levels for our growing community as detailed in the department’s strategic plan. As a temporary levy, the EMS Levy requires voter approval for renewal; without renewal, the EMS Levy will expire at the end of 2025.

The Poulsbo Fire Department is a separate agency from the City of Poulsbo and Kitsap County. It does not receive any funding from these agencies, nor does it receive any regular funding from the state of Washington. The fire department is primarily funded by two regular property tax levies, the Fire Levy and EMS Levy. The EMS levy accounts for 25% of the fire department's annual revenue. Renewal of the EMS levy is necessary to maintain current service levels and to provide for the ability to increase emergency response capabilities concurrent with growth in the community. The Poulsbo Fire Department provides basic and advanced levels of Emergency Medical Services, both through first response and medical transportation. Out of the 4,368 emergency incidents the department responded to in 2023, 71% were EMS-related. The EMS Levy provides dedicated funding for this service, which includes personnel costs, training, and medical equipment. The EMS Levy also funds the department's EMS prevention programs such as the Fire CARES program and CPR/AED public education.

While assessed values have increased in recent years, this does not mean that funding for local fire districts has increased at the same pace. Washington State law limits the annual increase in tax revenue for fire districts. The EMS Levy is limited to a 1% annual increase, which results in lower tax rates rather than a proportional increase in property taxes. For this reason, the EMS levy rate has fallen from the approved \$.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value to \$.37 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The renewal of the EMS Levy will return the levy rate to \$.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The impact of restoring the levy rate for taxpayers in 2025 will be an increase of \$13.00 per \$100,000 of assessed value or a total of \$64.46 for the average home in Poulsbo (based on the Kitsap Assessor’s 2023 average home sale price in 98370). The effects on individual property owners vary based on changes to their property’s assessed value in relation to the assessed value of the entire fire district. The department’s website, poulsbofire.org, provides additional information on how property taxes are calculated and updated information pertaining to this ballot measure.

The Poulsbo Fire Department is joining North Kitsap Fire & Rescue and the Bremerton Fire Department in placing an EMS Levy renewal on the August Primary Ballot. If you have any questions related to the EMS Levy renewal or the Poulsbo Fire Department in general, please contact your Fire Chief, Jim Gillard, at jgillard@poulsbofire.org.

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The Poulsbo Fire Department provides fire, rescue, and emergency medical services to the City of Poulsbo and unincorporated Kitsap County from Keyport to Port Gamble. Serving over 27,000 residents, the department currently responds to approximately 4,400 emergency calls per year, providing comprehensive fire and EMS prevention services to the community.