



600 NE 267th Ave.
Camas, WA 98607
360-834-4908
www.ecfr.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: June 21, 2018
Contact: Deputy Chief Mike Carnes (360) 834-4908 mcarnes@ecfr.us

Board of Fire Commissioners to Consider Fire Levy Lid Lift
Call volumes have increased 52 percent

CAMAS, WASH. – The Board of Fire Commissioners for East County Fire and Rescue will consider a resolution asking voters to approve a fire levy lid lift to maintain emergency service levels. The meetings will take place on July 3 and 17 at 6:30 p.m at 600 NE 267th Avenue in Camas (98607). The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.

East County Fire and Rescue serves 10,000 people over 60 square miles in the unincorporated areas of Vancouver, Camas and Washougal. Call volumes for the agency have increased 52 percent since 2007. More calls mean added costs for personnel, apparatus, equipment and supplies. In contrast, the agency is allowed a one percent revenue increase per year by law. That amount is not keeping up with the cost of inflation which is currently 3-4 percent per year.

The fire district is proposing a lid lift to restore funding and maintain emergency service levels for the community. Voters may be asked to return the fire levy to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The proposal would be on the November 6 General Election ballot and cost 21 cents per \$1,000 (or \$7.87 per month for the owner of a \$450,000 home).

Voters in East County Fire and Rescue approved a fire levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2008. That levy rate has since fallen to \$1.29/\$1,000 in 2018. Emergency services are funded through two levies (one for fire and another for EMS) paid through property taxes. Over time, these levy rates fall as property values rise to limit the fire district to roughly the same amount of revenue per year (plus a one percent increase as allowed by law).

Funding would be used to maintain emergency service levels, improve firefighter training and repair equipment and apparatus. These items are also necessary to maintain the community's insurance rating, which affects the premiums that home and business owners pay.

Community members with questions about the lid lift are encouraged to contact Chief Carnes at 360-834-4908 or mcarnes@ecfr.us or visit the fire district's web site at www.ecfr.us.

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East County Fire and Rescue (ECFR) serves 10,000 people over 60 square miles in the unincorporated areas of Vancouver, Camas and Washougal. The fire district operates under a balanced budget and has passed all its independent audits by the state. The level of service provided by ECFR has improved the community's insurance rating, which reduced premiums for home and business owners. More information on East County Fire and Rescue can be found on its web site www.ecfr.us.