

East County Fire and Rescue



2026 Proposed District Budget

Integrity · Compassion · Professionalism · Equity

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Complete Adopted Budget & Long-Term Financial Plan

Access the complete proposed budget, long-term financial plan, and other detailed information on the district from our website: www.ecfr.us.

Mission, Vision, & Values

Mission

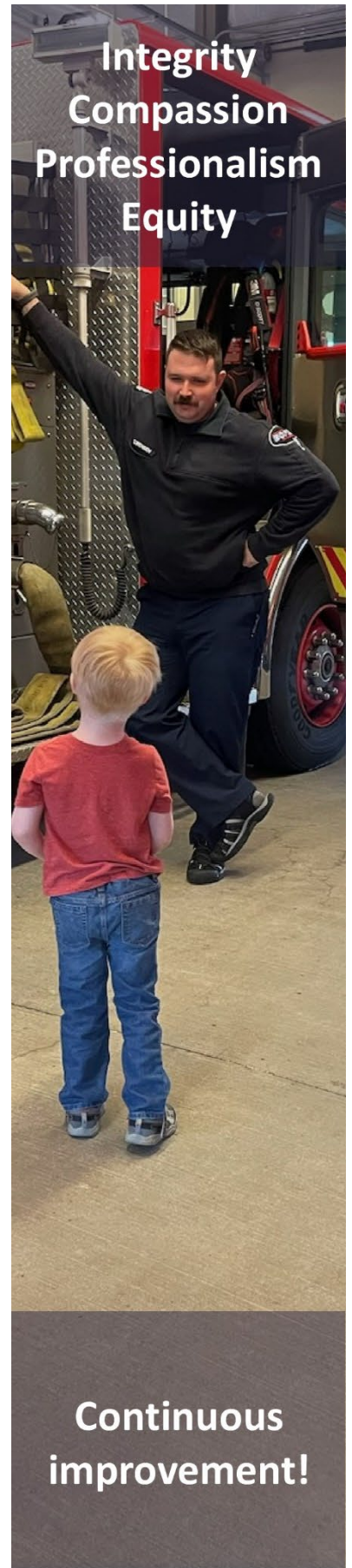
Improve community safety by reducing risk through prevention, education, and response.

Vision

Continuous improvement!

Values

The district’s governance, leadership, and operations are guided by our values of integrity, compassion, professionalism, and equity. These values have been woven throughout East County Fire and Rescue’s human resources and operational processes.



Budget Message

Thank you for supporting East County Fire and Rescue (ECFR). The district provides fire and rescue services and partners with Camas Washougal Fire Department in delivery of emergency medical service. We serve approximately 10,426 residents (WA OFM, 2025) in a service area of 60 square miles.

The district operates under a balanced budget, is debt free, has passed all independent financial and accountability audits, and maintains an AA- bond rating from Standard and Poor's.

In August of 2024, the district's voters restored the general levy rate to \$1.50/\$1,000 of assessed valuation. The restoration of the general levy rate allowed the hiring of a deputy chief and the replacement of the district's aging fleet. An Engine and Water Tender were ordered and should be delivered in 2026.

2025 Accomplishments

Guided by the 2024 strategic plan, the district made significant progress in 2025. Accomplishments included:

- A new water tender (tanker) was ordered to replace Tender 93, which reached its end of useful life and has been plagued with frequent breakdowns. The cost of fire apparatus has increased dramatically over the last several years and this replacement will cost the district \$693,072.07.
- A new fire engine (pumper) was ordered as all three current ECFR engines have reached or surpassed their useful life. The fire engine will cost the district \$948,384.51 but will greatly reduce maintenance cost, and out of service times for the other engines. A review of our operational deployment of apparatus will be conducted to determine a surplus strategy for at least one of the current engines.
- A new command vehicle (pick-up truck) was ordered, and delivered, as the remaining command rigs have met or exceeded their useful life. The command vehicle will cost the district \$63,802.07.
- Completed recruitment for a deputy chief who began work in July of 2025. The addition of this position brings depth to the command duty coverage rotation. The rotation will allow for higher percentage of command coverage at a chief level throughout the year while also helping to manage the fire department.

The 2026 District Budget

The district's 2026 general fund budget is 11.89% higher than in 2025. This increase is largely due:

- Compensation increases for firefighter wages agreed to in the IAFF Collective Bargaining Agreement adopted at the end of 2024.
- Increases to the cost of medical insurance for all employees.
- The additional of a Deputy Chief which is a new full-time position filled in July of 2025.
- The cost to maintain our facilities and the utility increases associated with operating out of our stations.

The Way Forward

While East County Fire and Rescue (ECFR) has made great strides in improvement, the district continues to face significant future challenges.

- The district is largely funded by property tax revenue. The difference between the constitutional 1% limitation in annual increases to the general levy and annual inflation rate presents an ongoing challenge.

- While restoration of the fire levy to \$1.50/\$1,000 of AV allows the district to meet its near-term fire apparatus and equipment replacement needs, the district’s capital projects fund remains underfunded to address longer term capital project needs, inclusive of apparatus, equipment, and facilities.

Fiscal Sustainability

The district is committed to fiscal sustainability. At the end of 2025, the district’s long-range financial plan will be reviewed and revision will be conducted to provide a clear and fiscally sustainable approach to maintain service delivery levels and providing the fire and rescue infrastructure needed by our community.

Chief’s Message

In January of 2025, I had the distinct honor of becoming the new fire chief for East County Fire and Rescue (ECFR). It is humbling to take over from Chief Ed Hartin, whose successful tenure laid a strong foundation for the district. As I step into this role, I am committed to continuing the high standards of service and leadership he established.

Since joining ECFR, I have been continuously impressed by the talent and dedication of our staff. One of the most notable examples of this excellence is our receipt of the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the second consecutive year, an achievement made possible by the hard work of everyone involved in the budget process, especially our Administrative Specialist, Pam Jensen, and Administrative Assistant, Debbie Macias.

I would also like to take a moment to express my gratitude to the East County Fire and Rescue Board of Fire Commissioners and all district members for their ongoing commitment to our mission of continuous improvement.

As we move forward, we remain open to feedback on our budget document and any other aspects of our work. Please feel free to reach out to us at (360) 834-4908 or visit our headquarters at 600 NE 267th Avenue, Camas.

Sincerely,

SBlack

Steven Black

Fire Chief

East County Fire and Rescue

sblack@ecfr.us



*Integrity*Compassion*Professionalism*Equity*

East County Fire and Rescue

East County Fire and Rescue (ECFR) operates as a legally organized fire protection district under the *Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Title 52* and is governed by a five-member board of fire commissioners, each serving a six-year term. The board establishes policy and provides direction to the fire chief who is responsible for the day-to-day operations and fiscal management of the district. As a fire protection district, ECFR is a municipal corporation that is independent from Clark County.



Service Area

East County Fire and Rescue (ECFR) serves an area of 60 square miles and a population of approximately 10,426. ECFR's response area is in the southeast corner of Clark County, east of Vancouver and north and east of Camas and Washougal.



Station 91-Staffed Station
600 NE 267th Avenue, Camas, WA 98607



Station 92-Silver Star Search and Rescue
4909 NE 292nd Avenue, Camas, WA 98607



Station 93-Partially Leased to Department of Natural Resources(DNR) and Reserve Apparatus
121 NE 312th Avenue, Washougal, WA 98671



Station 94-Staffed Station
1808 SE 352nd Avenue, Washougal, WA 98671

Services Provided

East County Fire and Rescue is an all-hazards service providing fire protection, emergency medical services, hazardous materials response, and rescue services. In addition, the district has established prevention at the core of our service to the community.



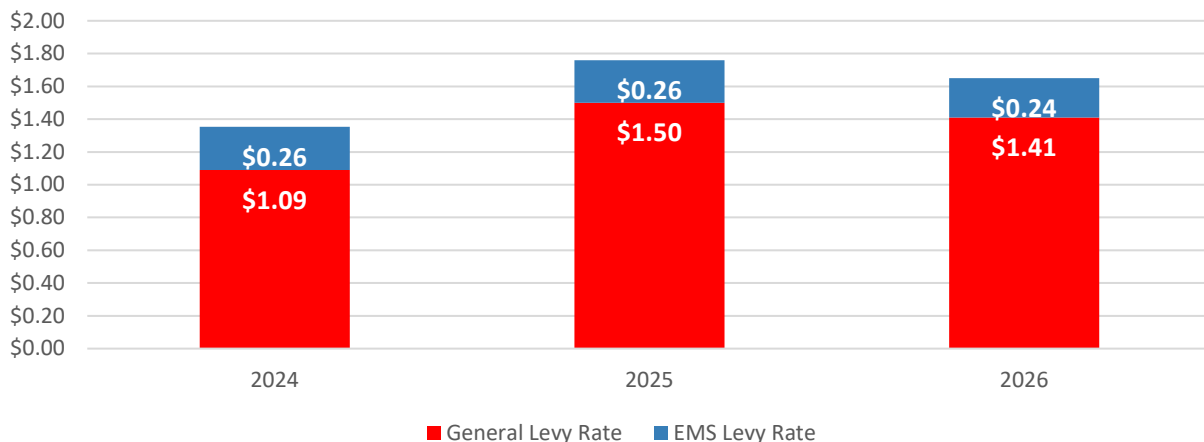
Revenue

In 2026, 98.00% of the district’s \$5,152,004 in revenue will come from property taxes, 84.25% from the general levy and 13.75% from the emergency medical services (EMS) levy.

| Revenue Stream | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2026 Distribution |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| General Levy Tax Revenue | \$3,013,945 | \$4,318,894 | \$4,340,816 | 84.25% |
| EMS Levy Tax Revenue | \$721,177 | \$736,669 | \$744,035 | 13.75% |
| Other Tax Revenue | \$20,951 | \$21,056 | \$1,266 | 0.02% |
| All Other Revenue | \$47,635 | \$78,419 | \$65,887 | 1.28% |
| Total Revenue | \$3,803,708 | \$5,133,998 | \$5,152,004 | 100.00% |

Property Taxes

The *Washington State Constitution* and related laws strictly limit the amount of property tax that local taxing districts can levy. There are two important property tax limitations for fire districts. Annual increases in property taxes levied to 1%, plus revenue from new construction and fire districts are limited to a maximum regular property tax rate of \$1.50/1,000 of Assessed Value (AV).



Other Revenues

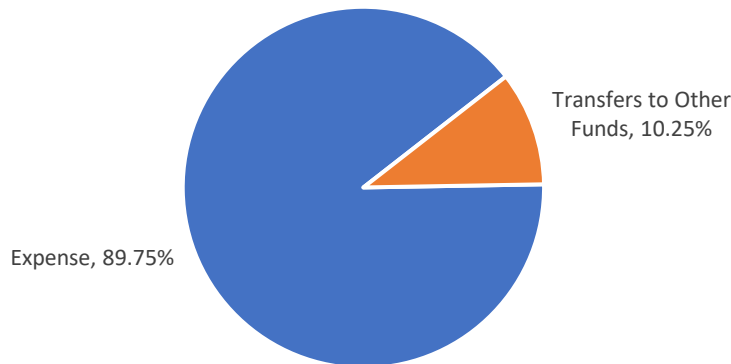
Other revenues include fees for service, grants, sale of surplus real or personal property, etc. In some cases, these are one-time revenues and in other cases they are ongoing but comprise a small proportion of the district’s total revenue.

Expenditures

ECFR’s budget is divided into multiple funds, each with a specific purpose. In 2026 the district’s budget is \$4,566,345 inclusive of both operating expenditures (general and grants management funds) and capital projects (capital projects fund).

General Fund

The general fund is the district’s principal operating fund. This fund accounts for all current expenditures (e.g., personal services and materials and services) not specifically accounted for in other funds as well as transfers to other funds. As all revenue with the exception of grants is deposited in the general fund, other funds such as the capital projects fund and leave accrual fund are funded through transfers from the general fund. ECFR’s general fund budget for 2026 is \$4,098,233 with 89.75% allocated to general fund expenses and 10.25% transferred to other funds.



Capital Projects Fund

Capital assets are items having a cost greater than \$5,000 and a service life of greater than one year (e.g., major equipment, fire apparatus, and fire stations). Effective capital planning makes sure key assets are repaired or replaced before their end of service life or critical failure. In addition, a sound capital projects plan allows us to engage our community in understanding the costs and benefits of maintaining capital infrastructure. The Capital Projects Plan may overlap multiple budget years, as large purchases—such as apparatus—often span several fiscal cycles due to extended manufacturing and delivery timelines. For 2026, the District is budgeted to cover the remaining balance on several major capital items, including:

Water Tender: Approximately \$528,700 remaining (following \$172,000 expended in 2025).

Engine: \$942,982 allocated for a new structural engine.

Command Vehicle: \$85,330 for a replacement command unit.

These planned expenditures align with the District’s long-term capital strategy and reflect the continued investment in safe, reliable emergency response apparatus.

Leave Accrual Fund

The leave accrual fund is used to manage the district’s liability for payout to employees for unused vacation upon retirement or other separation from employment. The district anticipates no retirements in 2026.

Emergency Medical Services Fund

Revenue for the emergency medical services fund is generated by the EMS levy and this fund serves as a pass through with all revenue transferred to the City of Camas for provision of advanced life support emergency medical services in East County Fire and Rescue’s service area.

Budget Summary

| General Fund | Actual 2024 | Amended 2025 | Proposed 2026 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Beginning Balance (Less Contingency) | \$2,321,995 | \$2,051,548 | \$1,942,399 |
| General Fund Contingency | \$155,431 | \$182,687 | \$221,127 |
| Taxes | \$3,034,896 | \$4,318,894 | \$4,340,816 |
| Intergovernmental Revenues | \$1,625 | \$1,625 | \$1,266 |
| Charges for Service | \$5,000 | \$13,870 | \$2,950 |
| Miscellaneous Revenues | \$13,000 | \$62,075 | \$54,062 |
| Other Revenues | \$19,635 | \$8,875 | \$8,875 |
| Appropriation from Contingency | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Transfer in from Capital Projects Fund | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total General Fund Revenue | \$6,990,940 | \$6,639,574 | \$6,550,812 |

| Expense | Actual 2024 | Amended 2025 | Proposed 2026 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Administration | \$566,244 | \$812,021 | \$871,161 |
| Operations | \$2,307,878 | \$2,522,192 | \$2,900,214 |
| Fire Prevention & Public Education | \$12,103 | \$11,496 | \$8,760 |
| Training | \$84,861 | \$113,407 | \$93,697 |
| Facilities | \$160,892 | \$118,581 | \$141,446 |
| Apparatus & Equipment Repair & Maintenance | \$87,766 | \$76,071 | \$82,955 |
| Subtotal Budgeted Expenditures | \$3,219,744 | \$3,653,768 | \$4,098,233 |
| Transfer to Capital Projects Fund | \$396,153 | \$413,081 | \$455,112 |
| Transfer to Leave Accrual Fund | \$13,000 | \$13,000 | \$13,000 |
| Transfer to Grants Management Fund | \$1,428 | \$1,428 | \$0 |
| Transfer to Debt Service Fund | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Subtotal Transfers from the General Fund | \$410,581 | \$427,509 | \$468,112 |
| Total General Fund Budget | \$3,630,325 | \$4,081,277 | \$4,566,345 |

| Expense | Actual 2024 | Amended 2025 | Proposed 2026 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Personal Services | \$2,491,979 | \$2,859,412 | \$3,300,710 |
| Materials & Services | \$727,765 | \$794,356 | \$797,523 |
| Subtotal Budgeted Expenditures | \$3,219,744 | \$3,653,768 | \$4,098,233 |
| Transfer to Capital Projects Fund | \$396,153 | \$413,081 | \$455,112 |
| Transfer to Leave Accrual Fund | \$13,000 | \$13,000 | \$13,000 |
| Transfer to Grants Management Fund | \$1,428 | \$1,428 | \$0 |
| Transfer to Debt Service Fund | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Subtotal Transfers from the General Fund | \$410,581 | \$427,509 | \$468,112 |
| Total General Fund Budget | \$3,630,325 | \$4,081,277 | \$4,566,345 |

