

WHATCOM COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #21

Resolution 2022-08

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF WHATCOM COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #21 SUPPORTING THE COUNTYWIDE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) LEVY, PURSUANT TO RCW 84.52.069.

WHEREAS, EMS is a complex, coordinated response and emergency medical care system, that requires people and agencies, to perform an essential role as part of a coordinated, tiered, and seamless system of emergency medical care; and

WHEREAS, the EMS system has evolved over 40 years, and has transitioned into a tiered level of service; and

WHEREAS, Fire districts and agencies provide first responder services and Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulance service and Bellingham Fire Department, and Fire District 7 provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance service; and

WHEREAS, the Countywide Emergency Medical Service system serves all of Whatcom County including Bellingham, Ferndale, Lynden, Blaine, Everson, Nooksack, and Sumas; and

WHEREAS, the Countywide Emergency Medical Service system has become increasingly stressed in response to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic and multiple local and catastrophic flood emergencies that have resulted in a significantly increased call volume; and

WHEREAS, the fire districts have seen decreased volunteerism in the recruiting of firefighter/EMTs and part-time personnel; and

WHEREAS, it is assumed that the trends will continue, and strategies must be developed to meet the increased demands for service; and

WHEREAS, emergency medical services are essential to the people in our community and stable funding is a practical solution to continue providing EMS services at current levels of service, meet future demands and sustain the system into the future; and

WHEREAS, the Technical Advisor Board (TAB) and Finance Committee confirmed by the Whatcom County Emergency Medical System Oversight Board (EOB) recommended a funding strategy and levy rate that will support and sustain a countywide EMS system; and

WHEREAS, the Technical Advisor Board (TAB) and Finance Committee formally endorsed a proposed 6-year, 29.5 cent EMS Levy that will;

Maintain the current level of service and continues the programs currently in place through 2023-2028 levy span:

- Advanced Life Support and Basic Life Support services for local fire and emergency response departments through dispatch costs.
- Programs that support functions and services across the entire EMS system.
- Maintain sustainable reserves.

Allows the system to meet future demand and plans for growth in service needs:

- Continue using the Standard Unit Allocation model to determine annual costs with considerations for inflation and projected increases to help ensure sufficient funding.
- Continue to support the Medical Service Officer (MSO) positions at Whatcom Fire District 7 and Bellingham Fire Department.
- Continue to support the EMS 1 Field Supervisor Position for Bellingham. Consider monitoring the need for expansion of the EMS Supervisor Position during the Levy Period.
- Continue to support the ALS360 program through the Stryker Contract which includes the technology and patient movement system for the ALS agencies.
- Continue to support the Image Trend Electronic Patient Care Reports (EPCR) system for ALS which includes ongoing development of integrated technologies with the CAD systems, Julota, Life Net CPR Feedback systems, AED data downloads, and bi-directional information sharing technologies with the hospital.
- BLS Cost Allocation providing a minimum of \$1.5 million per year that offers equity in funding that further supports BLS operations, administration, and transportation to offset local jurisdictions' BLS costs. These funds can be increased later if the end fund balances continue to grow.
- Continue to support the Equipment Exchange Program that provides interoperability for both BLS and ALS for equipment that includes the ALS360 program as part of this shared equipment program.
- Continue to support the centralized Electronic Patient Care Records (EPCR) system Image Trend for all agencies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Whatcom County Fire Protection District #21 Board of Fire Commissioners is in agreement and supports the recommendations in the 2022 EMS Levy Plan Committee and will be cooperative in seeking long term, stable and dedicated funding for countywide Emergency Medical Services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Board of Fire Commissioners supports placing a ballot proposition on the November 2022 general election ballot before the qualified voters of the County an EMS property tax levy, pursuant to RCW 84.52.069, of not more than 29.5 cents per thousand dollars assessed valuation each year for a period of six consecutive years to provide stable and long-term funding for countywide Emergency Medical Services.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 18TH DAY OF AUGUST OF 2022 BY THE BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS OF WHATCOM COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #21

ATTEST:

Bruce Ansell, Chairman

John Crawford, Vice-Chairman

Scott Fischer, Commissioner

Kimberly McMurray, Commissioner

Jason Van der Veen, Fire Chief

Jennie Sand, Board Secretary

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