



MESSAGE FROM CHIEF BERG

As our long, wet damp winter continues into the spring, people are still needing to heat their homes. We have already had five structure fires this year, many of them homes, due to alternate heating sources. I always caution people who are running a small electric heater around the clock or in some cases, even just leaving it plugged in. You should only use these heaters when you are present. They are called temporary heaters for a reason.

At our pancake feed last month, we had a demonstration on wall heaters. Our demonstration showed what happens when your wall heaters are not cleaned properly. For maintenance, you need to take the cover off and vacuum them out (while they are turned off), or even take an air compressor if you have one available and blow out the fan motor every six months. All the dust in your home clings to the motor and coils. If this is something you don't feel you're capable of, please contact a professional heating contractor to make sure all your wall heaters are clean and clear.

During all of these fires, our fire trucks pumped thousands of gallons of water while our firefighters were interior (inside the structure), fighting the fire. Our fire trucks are

their lifeline. If our truck(s) shut off or have a water pumping issue during these events, our firefighters' lives could be at risk. This message is not to scare anyone, this message is to help you understand why our trucks are so important. Our current fleet of trucks are at the end of their life or even past their life and it's important to all of us at the fire department that we are able to rescue you as homeowners and also protect our fire fighters. Your safety and our safety is something Big Lake Fire has never taken lightly. Time after time, in my 30 plus years, I've seen the Big Lake Firefighters put their life on the line for somebody they do not know. You are our top priority.

Chief Berg

2023 FIREFIGHTER STAIRCLIMB

On March 12th, two of our firefighters, Kris Stewart and Ryan Berg, participated in the 32nd Annual LLS Firefighter Stairclimb. They each climbed 1,356 steps / 69 floors in full structural turnout gear while on air. Between the two of them, they raised over \$1,600 to help fund blood cancer research. Congratulations to both of them on a job well done!



DISTRICT AUDIT

The District recently completed its audit from the State Auditor for years 2019, 2020 and 2021. The District had no findings, no exit items and no recommendations. To see the complete report, please see State Auditor's website or use the link below.

[https://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch/Home/ViewReportFile?
isFinding=false&arn=1032219](https://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch/Home/ViewReportFile?isFinding=false&arn=1032219)

FIREFIGHTER RETIREMENT

Phill Zimmerman wore many hats in his 10 years helping out our Big Lake Community. At the fire department, he kept our building maintenance up, he met subcontractors for various inspections, oversaw our air pack and equipment maintenance and was really a jack of all trades. There was nothing he couldn't figure out or find cheaper on the internet to save us money. Phill was a part of our rehab group which supports the fire fighters. He shuttled thousands of gallons of water to house fires in at least three counties. You would see him on the end of a traffic accident blocking the road or just helping with traffic. He also ran our rehab van that carries extra air bottles, food and water to rehab the firefighters during a structure fire. In his ten years, he took on CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), volunteered for DEM (Department of Emergency Management) in Skagit County and was active with HAMS radio. He is a skilled woodworker who came up with unbelievable plaques and different items for retirements in the department. Phill gave 10 selfless years to the Big Lake community making many things around our department a whole lot better, always with a smile on his face. He was always willing to take on anything we threw at him. He leaves a huge whole in the Big Lake Fire Department. Thank you PHILL!



PANCAKE FEED

The pancake feed was a huge success after taking three years off. We fed over 650 people and grossed just over \$12,000. Special thanks to Mr. T's Café for sponsoring the event and also coming out and helping at the event! We would also like to thank all the people that donated to our raffle and of course all of you that came out and enjoyed our pancakes!

Thank you to everyone that donated:

Amber Keith

Anita McIntyre

Big Lake Bar and Grill

Big Lake Grocery

Bruce Green Snap On Tools

Dana Bucke

Dunlap

E & E

Fidalgo Coffee
Jamie Martin
Jody Clemo
Kelli Baier
Lauren King
LG Isaacson
Mark & Nancy Redis - American Dream Realty
Megan King / Lulurose
Melody's Flowers
Melody Snyder
Mr. T's Cafe
Napa Auto Parts
Oliver Hammer
Pat and Cindy McKeon
Peter Roth
Pye Barker
Riverstone Wellness
Shannon Thomson
Sharon Stafford
Sheila Stafford-Roberts
Stefanie Stewart
Walker Valley ATV Rental and Repair
Whidbey Coffee
Wild Food / Kathy LaMonte
Woods Logging

MESSAGE FROM DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

Last November, the Fire Commissioners placed on the ballot a tax levy increase to go before the voters. This levy was to help pay for a new fire engine and future needed replacements of apparatus. While the vote was close, it was not successful. We have heard from many of you wishing you had more information on the process. While we did provide outreach, it was not enough as some have said.

A little background. In June 2022, the Fire Commissioners formed an advisory committee of 13 members to listen to why we need and how to pay for our future needs. There were several open public meetings during the committees' meetings. Some of you attended as guests to observe. At the end of the meetings, the committee unanimously agreed to go to the voters to raise the levy. The committee also suggested the amount to raise, based on the information they received in the meetings of the need, how the fire district was using its current money and what the impacts to homeowners would be. They recommended to raise the rate to 0.79

dollars per thousand from the then rate of 0.48.

The Fire Commissioners thanked the advisory committee for their service to the community. They then met and approved a slightly lesser amount of levy to go to the voters in November 2022.

We provided information on our website and on our Facebook account. A tax calculator was made and placed on the fire districts website for all to use to see the difference the increase would be on each property owner.

The Big Lake Firefighters Association sent out a mailer to residents about the need and many firefighters knocked on doors to educate many of the residents.

The Fire Commissioners failed to ensure that the voter's pamphlet statement was submitted. This has been a problem with some voters and we are responsible for that failure. Some of you have said since it was blank, they felt they did not have the needed information to make a decision to vote yes. We do understand and we hear you.

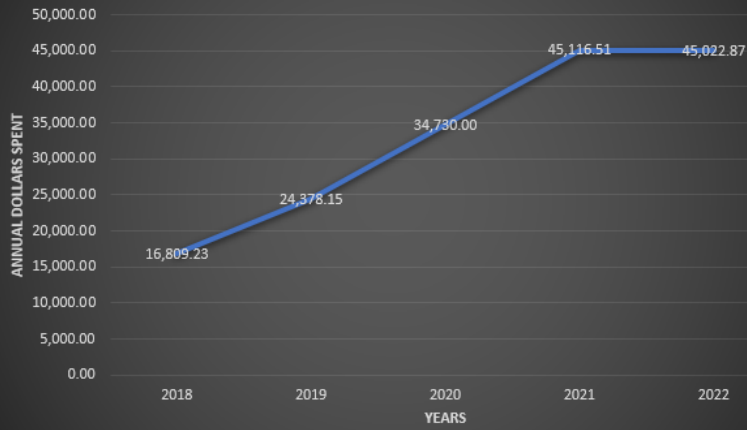
As the vote was close (800 for and 850 against), and we were ineffective in conveying our message, we are working on forming a citizens committee to ask if we should go back to the voters again. Even though the levy request failed, the need did not. We are at a critical junction in terms of needed apparatus to effectively and efficiently deliver professional service from our highly trained volunteer firefighters. They need the equipment to do the job properly, and this takes money to do.

We are asking you to participate with us and let us know how you best think we move forward from here.

APPARATUS REPAIR COSTS

We created this graph to show you the cost of maintaining our aging fleet from the last five years, so you can be better informed.

Apparatus Repair Costs



2018		2019		2020		2021		2022	
5226040 - Apparatus Repair		5226040 - Apparatus Repair		5226040 - Apparatus Repair		5226040 - Apparatus Repair		5226040 - Apparatus Repair	
A919 - Ambulance	3,135.97	A919 - Ambulance	1,512.39	A919 - Ambulance	2,045.28	A919 - Ambulance	602.43	A919 - Ambulance	1,526.79
B9 - Battalion 9	1,097.92	B9 - Battalion 9	2,416.00	B9 - Battalion 9	125.89	B9 - Battalion 9	700.32	B9 - Battalion 9	870.27
C916 - Command	1,133.30	C916 - Command	1,383.15	C916 - Command	6,194.01	C916 - Command	605.94	C916 - Command	525.96
E911 - 2006 Pierce Contender	886.42	E911 - 2006 Pierce Contender	3,983.96	E911 - 2006 Pierce Contender	2,946.66	E911 - 2006 Pierce Contender	2,619.43	E911 - 2006 Pierce Cont	10,194.96
E921 - Engine 921	22.79	E921 - Engine 921	0.00	E921 - Engine 921	4,296.71	E921 - Engine 921	3,050.69	E921 - Engine 921	3,468.42
E931 - 1984 Ford	0.00	E931 - 1984 Ford	0.00	E931 - 1984 Ford	1,513.52	E931 - 1984 Ford	642.17	E931 - 1984 Ford	0.00
E914 - Brush Truck	2,075.23	E914 - Brush Truck	1,626.87	E914 - Brush Truck	2,888.40	E914 - Brush Truck	2,412.92	E914 - Brush Truck	20,944.99
L915 Ladder Truck	4,168.96	L915 Ladder Truck	2,594.34	L915 Ladder Truck	2,709.57	L915 Ladder Truck	2,539.49	L915 Ladder Truck	1,253.88
R917 - Rehab	1,217.20	R917 - Rehab	342.50	R917 - Rehab	681.97	R917 - Rehab	385.11	R917 - Rehab	347.96
B924 - Brush Truck - Station Two	580.27	B924 - Brush Truck - Station Two	2,841.57	B924 - Brush Truck - Station Two	7,722.39	B924 - Brush Truck (Green)	18,477.67	B924 - Brush Truck (Gr)	347.19
T916 - Tender	0.00	T916 - Tender	5,642.06	T916 - Tender	2,281.97	T916 - Tender	5,497.42	T916 - Tender	1,930.81
Apparatus Repair - Other	2,491.17	Apparatus Repair - Other	2,035.23	Apparatus Repair - Other	1,182.83	Apparatus Repair - Other	7,582.92	Apparatus Repair - Oth	3,811.64
Total Repairs 2018	16,809.23	Total Repairs 2019	24,378.15	Total Repairs 2020	34,730.00	Total Repairs 2021	45,116.51	Total Repairs 2022	45,022.87

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