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Fire District Rejects Bids for Station Project

CLARKSTON, WASH. – The Board of Fire Commissioners for Asotin County Fire District 1 decided to reject all bids received for its station renovation project on Appleside Boulevard. The lowest bid came in at \$1.1 million higher than the fire district’s budget.

“Our voters already approved a fire levy lid lift to help fund the project,” said Fire Chief Noel Hardin. “The goal was to not ask them for more money.”

The fire district worked with an architect and an engineering firm to develop bid plans. A strong economy has led to a construction boom across the state, and many capital projects like the fire station are coming in over budget.

“It’s good to see the economy doing well, but it makes it more expensive to build,” said Chief Hardin. “Materials, labor, everything has gone up.”

Instead, the fire district plans to reduce the scope of work and rebid the project. It’s working with its architect and engineering firms to determine what features of the station renovation could be added at a later date.

Fire District 1 received a \$750,000 grant for the station project, but that was \$250,000 less than it originally applied for to finalize the new facility. Voters in Asotin County Fire District 1 approved a fire levy lid lift during the 2017 General Election. Part of the funding had been designated to finish the station project. This funding will be set aside until new bids are received.

Funding from the lid lift also will purchase items for live fire training, and replacement equipment and apparatus that is approaching the end of its usable life. For example, the fire district needs to replace all its self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBAs) that firefighters use when responding to calls as well as purchasing an air compressor to fill oxygen tanks.

“These were the commitments we made to our community,” said Chief Hardin. “We will move forward with what we can afford to do right now.”

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Asotin County Fire District 1 provides fire suppression and prevention, emergency medical service (EMS), river rescue, oil spill response and wildland fire protection to 14,000 people over 120 square miles of land and 35 miles of shoreline. Thirty-two volunteer firefighters, 28 emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and 35 paramedics (through a partnership with Lewiston) respond to an average of 2,600 calls per year. The fire district operates under a balanced budget and has passed all financial and accountability audits by the state. Learn more about Asotin County Fire District 1 by visiting their web site www.acfd1.org or Facebook page /asotincountyfd1.