



## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We are having a hard time getting our message out to the residents! Please visit our website and sign up for our newsletter. (Under District Information, click "Sign Up To Receive Emails").

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## PROPOSITION 1 INFORMATION

Our last informational meeting will be on **October 17th at 6pm** at the fire hall.

History – Skagit County Fire District 9 (FD9) aka The Big Lake Fire Department is and has been experiencing a critical budget shortfall. This has been the uppermost concern of the elected Fire Commissioners for the past several years. Part of this is due to the reluctance of the Board to increase the financial burden on our taxpayers. The other and more important component has to do with the system set up by the State Legislature regarding our funding. By law, we are allowed only a 1% increase in the budget per year, UNLESS there is a vote of the people. In 2019, FD9 proposed an increase to raise the rate back up to \$1.00 per thousand of property value. There were many misunderstandings and misinformation about the process and our need. Subsequently the ballot measure failed. The financial need did not disappear.

Solution - Several months ago, the Board of Commissioners put together the chart below and approved a capital replacement plan. That plan put useful life on apparatus for planning purposes as well as eliminated the replacement of 4 current apparatus. The Fire Commissioners sought volunteers to form an advisory committee and assembled 11 citizens from various parts of the Big Lake Community to seek a resolution to our funding crisis. They held three open public meetings to learn about the problem and come up with recommendations. There are two funding mechanisms: A voter approved bond for a specific use, such as a truck - or a voter approved levy rate increase (lid lift) that can be used for expenses. The advisory committee's recommendation from those meetings was that the District should seek from the voters a levy rate increase. The amount of suggested increases varied but averaged out to \$0.79 per thousand of assessed valuation of property value. After consideration, the Board decided that the needs could be met with a slightly lower increase. At the August Commissioner's business meeting (which are open to the public), the Commissioners passed a unanimous resolution to put the proposition on the ballot to increase the levy rate to \$0.77, which is an increase of \$0.2837 per thousand over our current rate of \$0.4863 per thousand.

The most critical need is a new fire engine, to replace a current 38-year-old fire engine, which is well past its useful life. The chart below shows the projected needs and the cost estimates in today's dollars. Fire apparatus is predicted to increase 9 to 12 % annually and does not include financing costs associated with the purchase.

Our 2022 budget is \$333,755. *Without the levy lid lift our budget for 2023 will be roughly \$337,093.*

\*This is exclusive of the bond for the station which is fixed and dedicated.

The Fire Commissioners have set up an easy calculator for you to see the impact of a proposed levy increase and how it may affect you. You can find this calculator on our website: <http://www.biglakefire.org/home.html> . For example, a \$600,000 property would have an increase of \$170.22 per year.

For more information, please visit our website or contact any one of your commissioners via email below:

Mike Gubrud [commissionergubrud@biglakefire.org](mailto:commissionergubrud@biglakefire.org)

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Dept. ID	Vehicle		Type	Price	Year		Due to be replaced	Due/Overdue	Notes	Estimated Replacement Cost in 2022 dollars
	Year	Make			Purchased	Cycle				
L915	1994	Pierce Ladder	Quint	36,500	2019	XX	Will not be replaced	N/A	BLFFA purchased and will not be replaced as a ladder	N/A
B9	2001	Ford F-350	Support	28,403	2001	XX	Will not be replaced	N/A	Will be rotated when C910 is replaced	N/A
B924	1987	International	Tender	217,297	1987	XX	Will not be replaced	N/A	Brush Tender will not be replaced, surplus through DNR	N/A
S917	1999	Ford Ecoline	Support	1	2006	XX	Will not be replaced	N/A	Purchased for \$1 and will not be replaced	N/A
B914	2012	Ford F-350	Brush	1	2012	20	2032	10	Loaned from DNR, will need to be replaced in 2032	146,000
E921	2001	Pierce Contender	Pumper	189,742	2001	25	2026	4	To be replaced in 2026	650,000
T916	2003	Kenworth	Tender	120,791	2003	25	2028	6	To be replaced in 2028	275,000
E911	2006	Pierce Contender	Pumper	249,558	2001	25	2031	9	To be replaced in 2031	650,000
A919	2007	GMC	Ambulance	57,500	2017	20	2027	5	To be replaced in 2027, Purchased Used	260,000
C910	2012	Ford F-350	Support	46,963	2012	15	2027	5	To be replaced in 2027	60,000
E931	1984	Ford	Pumper	129,398	1984	25	2009	-13	Should have been replaced in 2009	650,000
Sub Total - Does not include interest if borrowed money										2,691,000
Dollars needed within next 6 years if not borrowed money										1,895,000
NOTE: All options do not include interest. Interest costs will need to be added to any purchase option.										
Money need each year for 6 consecutive years without interest										315,833



## FIREFIGHTER RETIREMENT

Assistant Chief Rob Miner, retired from the Big Lake Fire Department on September 30, 2022. He served the department and the community for over 28 years. Rob held many helmets at BLFD but finished as Assistant Chief. He was instrumental in training new recruits, implementing new hose loads, building response plans, implementing a new medical records system, electronic report writing and so much more. Rob showed stellar leadership skills at all times, always wanting the best out of everyone on every call. We wish him the best on his retirement but he will definitely be missed!

## FIRE SAFETY WEEK

Fire Safety Week is October 9th through October 15th. This year's theme is "Fire Won't Wait. Plan Your Escape." The theme reinforces the importance of having a home escape plan for all members of your household and practicing it regularly. If you'd like more information about fire safety week, please visit the National Fire Protection Association at [www.nfpa.org/fpw](http://www.nfpa.org/fpw). They have various activities for kids of all ages and many other resources. During fire safety week, Big Lake firefighters will be teaching over 250 kids from the elementary school about fire safety and many will

also be learning how to use a fire extinguisher. Many thanks to the firefighters who take time off work to come help that week!

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## **SMOKE ALARMS**

With the end of daylight savings on November 6th, the American Red Cross encourages everyone to check their smoke alarm batteries. By having working smoke alarms, you can cut the risk of dying in a home fire by half!

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## **FIRE ACADEMY**

This fall, we have three recruits attending the South Skagit County Recruit Academy: Tove Schweizer, Troy Peterson and Israel Villalon. The fire academy is four months long, two nights a week and Saturdays. The recruits say the studying takes more time than actually attending the academy.

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## **COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS**

After our last few meetings to discuss the levy increase, we had many people state they want to help out in ways other than firefighting. So, we are now creating a list of people that would like to help out with things around the station. Things that might need to be done include; weeding flower beds, painting fire hydrants, various janitorial duties, fundraising, door knocking (to inform your neighbors) along with any other things we come up with. If you are interested in being put on the list, please email [secretary@biglakefire.org](mailto:secretary@biglakefire.org) your name and phone number.

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