**NEWMAN LAKE FIRE & RESCUE**

*Spokane County Fire District #13*

**November 7, 2023 Levy Lid Lift FAQ’s**

1. **What is the specific purpose of the fire levy that's needing to be passed?**
* Meet ongoing operating costs to continue providing adequate emergency services to the community.
* Overcome budgetary deficits which have resulted from inflationary costs exceeding the statutory 1% lid on the fire levy.
* Ultimately, our purpose and goal is to **maintain** the current level of emergency services to provide our community with professional, competent, and adequate response on all emergency calls.
1. **How much funding will be generated?  How will the funds be allocated?**
* $1.30/$1K AV will generate approximately $902,700. This will provide the department with approx. $356K more than the $546,600 projected under the 1% lid limit. However, we must keep in mind that not all property owners pay their taxes, so we will not collect the full $902,700.
* The department must have 5 months’ worth of reserves to carry over into the next year to cover expenses until the 1st half of property taxes come in. Due to high inflation since 2020, the department has had to dip into those carryover reserves every year to meet operating costs that exceed tax levy revenues. The $1.30/$1K AV is needed to **replenish** the depleted carryover reserves and assure adequate reserves for the next five years.
* The funds will enable the department to meet rising costs for basic day-to-day operations such as fuel, inspections, repairs, equipment/supplies, gear, apparatus, personnel, and training.
* To stay in operation, money must be set aside each year to save for future apparatus, equipment, gear, and major repair/replacement needs. Inflation has prevented the department from setting money aside for the past few years.
1. **What specific services will be supported by the levy?**
* Effective fire and medical emergency response to the community is our purpose and goal. This includes both **structure and wildland fires**, **motor vehicle accidents**, **hazmat incidents**, **trauma**, and **medical response**.
* Effective emergency response requires adequately trained and equipped responders as well as adequate and operational apparatus and equipment.

1. **What is the current state of the district's fire services and how will the levy address any existing gaps or limitations?**
* The district currently has 12 active, trained Community Volunteers. Only half of them are interior firefighters and only two of those 6 interior firefighters are under the age of 50.
* Two of the district’s tenders are over 30 years old. Both of the district’s fire engines as well as the two brush trucks are over 20 years old.
* Much of the district’s bunker gear is over 10 years old and out of compliance.
* At $1.30/$1K AV, the district will be able to maintain the Shift Volunteer Program and reinstate the Resident Firefighter Program to have emergency responders trained and ready at the station.
* Barring inflation rates higher than expected, the levy lid lift will enable the district to establish a gear replacement as well as an apparatus replacement plan. A percentage of the budget should be allotted toward purchasing a few sets of gear each year and saving toward future apparatus needs.
1. **What happens if the fire levy is not approved?  Are there alternative plans or contingency measures in place?**
* If the levy lid lift is not approved, the budget will cut out Shift Volunteers. Cuts will also be made in other areas, such as maintaining Station 2; replacing old gear and equipment; training and education; and saving for future apparatus needs. Unfortunately, most of the district’s operating costs are unable to be cut if we are to continue providing emergency response. For example - insurance, inspections, utilities, supplies, apparatus/equipment repair & maintenance, fuel, and most importantly, trained firefighters, are required to stay in operation.
* The district will continue to apply for federal and state grant assistance. Unfortunately, the district’s last three grant applications yielded no awards.