



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: October 5, 2021
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Questions About the Fire Levy Lid Lift?

Monroe, Wash. – Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue (SRFR) is hosting three public meetings to answer questions about a fire levy lid lift that is on the November 2 General Election ballot. The reason for the lid lift request is that call volumes and inflationary costs are outpacing the property tax revenue available to maintain emergency service levels.

Community members can choose to attend the meetings virtually or in person:

- Tuesday, October 19 at 6:30 p.m. – Access the virtual meeting through the Community Calendar of SRFR's website at www.srfr.org/public_information/community_calendar.
- Thursday, October 21 at 12 noon – Bring your lunch and join Fire Chief Kevin O'Brien at Headquarters (Station 31), 163 Village Court, Monroe, WA 98272. *(Please note that masks are required unless one is eating.)*
- Saturday, October 23 at 10:00 a.m. – Access the virtual meeting through the Community Calendar of SRFR's website at www.srfr.org/public_information/community_calendar.

Call volumes for SRFR in 2021 are 11.2% higher than the same period last year. At the same time, inflation is 5.1% for the area. More calls mean added costs, and those costs are higher than normal because of inflation.

SRFR has cut \$1.5 million for 2021 to maintain a balanced budget. These cuts include its Community Resource Paramedic program, firefighter training, fire and life safety prevention programs, and some apparatus replacement.

If the lid lift is approved, SRFR would use the funding to maintain staffing levels, restore firefighter training and fire and life safety prevention programs, replace aging fire engines and ambulances; and, fund fire station projects in the district. SRFR currently funds capital items like stations and apparatus out of its operating levies. The agency has no voter-approved bonds, which saves taxpayers money in interest payments.

The \$0.23 lid lift would return the fire levy from \$1.27 to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. It would cost the owner of a \$500,000 home an additional \$9.58 per month (\$115 per year). (The assessed value of a property is lower than its market value.)

Voters last approved a fire levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 in 2017. More information on the fire levy lid lift can be found on the agency's website at www.srfr.org. Fire Chief Kevin O'Brien also is available to answer questions at kevin.obrien@srfr.org or (360) 794-7666.

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In 2019, voters approved a merger between Lake Stevens Fire and Snohomish County Fire District 7. Today, Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue serves 175,000 residents in the cities of Lake Stevens, Monroe, and unincorporated southeast Snohomish County. SRFR responds to an average of 17,000 emergency calls a year with highly-trained personnel and state-of-the-art rescue programs. It operates under a balanced budget and has passed all its independent audits by the state. More information about SRFR can be found at www.srfr.org.