

FIRE BENEFIT CHARGE Meeting

Snoqualmie Pass Fire Department

Dave Harvey and Kevin Wolcott represented ACC
2/17/14

BENEFITS of the Fire Benefit Charge

- Increased volunteers
- Safer conditions
- Overnight sleeping
- 24-hour staffing
- Protection of Apparatus
- Expanded multi-jurisdictional operations
- Emergency operation center capabilities
- Emergency shelter for the community
- Community building
- Improved insurance rates
- Better response times

DISCUSSION Notes:

- Expenses are up by about \$27K
- Assessed values of homes has dropped by \$24M over the past 3 years
- FBC (fire benefit charge) requires a 60% super-majority approval
- The FBC will run for a max of 6 years.
- Public hearings are required
- Funds are run through Kittitas County
- Alternatively, a fire levy is limited to a 1% increase annually regardless of property value increases.
- A fire levy is permanent.
- FBC is based on emergency services needs/risks. So FAR fewer place are exempt (compared to a Levy).
- FBC is only on structures.
- Levies are not sustainable
- An FBC is a more appropriate funding mechanism
- Commissioner resolution on capping the FBC
- They are seeking long-term sustainability

CHALLENGES:

- I-90, not-tax paying exempt parcels

SOLUTIONS:

- Bill for BLS transports
- Motor vehicle collision fee
- Motor vehicle fire billing
- Multi-year lid lift
- Impact mitigation fee
- Fire Benefit charge (FBC)

AUDIENCE INPUT

- Concern over whether this FBC could escalate
- Could it be for a reduced time-period (less than 6 years)?
- The firemen provide details of how this will impact individual properties.
- Show of hands (only about 12 voters) was about 50-50 for approval.

- Clearly some need to think about it further.
- The Board can push and get it on the April ballot (would need to submit by March 7) or on the general ballot in November.
- They were not inclined to push it for April after the meeting's lukewarm reception.
- The risk of the November ballot is that if it fails then the Department will really be behind the 8-ball financially.
- Putting it on a separate ballot can cost up to \$35K.