

# Questions about the fire referendum

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## 1. What's this all about?

The Fox River & Countryside Fire Rescue District wants to provide information to their residents regarding the current lack of sustainable funding for vehicles, equipment and staffing. On March 20<sup>th</sup>, the residents will be asked to vote regarding an increase in the fire and rescue tax rate.

## 2. Why is this necessary?

The fire district has never had an increase in their tax levy. The vehicles and equipment are aging and in need of replacement. Due to their extremely low tax rate, there is currently no money in the annual budget to fund necessary vehicle and equipment replacements. In addition, in 2015 the fire district reduced its staffing by 9 people to make ends meet. This leaves the fire district unable to meet the recommend NFPA standard for on-duty personnel.

## 3. What are they asking for?

The request is to increase their rate from 27 cents per \$100 dollar of assessed value up to 43 cents per \$100 dollars of the assessed value of your home. This additional 16 cents will adequately fund the fire department operations and provide a sustainable future for vehicles, equipment and personnel. The average home with a market value of \$400,000 will see an increase of about \$218 per year. That amounts to about 60 cents per day.

## 4. My taxes are too high already.

Fox River and Countryside Fire District has the lowest rate in the entire county, of all operating fire departments. Neighboring fire district rates are nearly 3 times that of the current tax rate for Fox River. The increase to 43 cents would mean the fire district is still at the lowest rate in the county and remain nearly half of the rate charged by neighboring fire districts.

## 5. What if this request is not approved?

The fire district has looked at all other options, and there are no other viable alternatives. The likely result would be that staffing would be reduced and coverage would drop from two stations down to one station and one crew covering the entire 38 square mile district. Also, residents would likely see an increase in their homeowner's insurance due any staffing cutbacks. This premium increase would be more per year than the proposed amount for the fire rescue tax levy.

## 6. Call to Action.

In our business we know that *Minutes Matter!* Closing a fire station would increase the time it would take for on-the duty crew to respond to emergencies with fewer personnel to address the emergency. Both fire and ambulance service would be affected. This essential information is presented to our residents to give you the facts about the upcoming referendum.