

## Levy Strategy

The Commissioners and Chief of Chelan County Fire District 5 have been working diligently on a long-term strategy in the Fire District for many months now. This strategy stems from a risk assessment done every 2 to 3 years assessing the risks the community faces on a matrix evaluating probability and impact. Wildland Fire threatening the Fire District homes is the highest risk. Commercial Structure fires are a close second. In each risk item the assessment looks at Training, Apparatus, Equipment, Pre-Fire Plans and Prevention to mitigate the risk.

The Fire District owns two structure engines, one at each station. The engine in the downtown station is a 1995. The engine at the Wapato Lake Rd station is a 2009. This fifteen-year-old engine being the newest in this class of apparatus. The twenty-nine-year-old truck has some good use left in it. The District had planned to replace at 30 years old. Now the plan is to get a new engine out of prudence and still keep the 1995 engine in the fleet as a backup. It will be at least 2026 before a new engine could arrive. The structure engine we have spec'd will do conventional residential and commercial structural firefighting, it is also designed to be highly efficient at protecting structures in wildfire.

Fire District 5 has 42 personnel on our roster, more than we have ever had. With this number of personnel, training is large undertaking. In October 2022, the Commissioners appointed a half-time training coordinator. A critical point in training volunteers, keep them interested and motivated at whatever their skills they possess. While keeping focus on essential structural, wildland, and EMS skills and certifications. We can do more by taking this position from the current half-time to full-time. The strategy had been to keep Manson as a volunteer fire department. With increased training requirements, increased WAC requirements, we can keep a volunteer-based department for years to come.

As stated, the increased training requirements take time away from our volunteer's families. The Fire District has an incentivized nominal compensation plan for our volunteers. The District pays each volunteer when they receive a certification. That certified volunteer also earns a higher point value than non-certified volunteers attending weekly training and responding on incidents. There is a camaraderie in the volunteers of being part of something larger. In this camaraderie is a culture of serving the community. Some nominal compensation is appreciated by the volunteers for the work they provide.

An additional Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) protection engine. The Fire District has sought to fund this engine on a Federal grant for the past 5 years, also submitted for the 6<sup>th</sup> year. As housing starts in the WUI area has been on the rise for many years, that comes as additional risk. Our last major wildfire to hit Manson was the Deer Point Fire in 2002. We are overdue for the next wildfire. With the increased risk properties, and with matured wildland fuels, the Fire District needs to be more efficient at protecting homes of risk from wildfire. A second

apparatus in the fleet that is designed with the specific strength to protect homes, and will also work well in other applications.

Fire District 5 is building a training center on its property on Wapato Lake Rd. This is partially funded through a grant received from Chelan County. It is intended to have this training center complete in 2024 with the funds we have and the grant funding.

The Fire District has submitted to the State Legislature's Local Community Project program to build a training classroom building with resident quarters. The District will resubmit in the 2025 long session to see if we can get that project funded. When funded and when built, it will be up to the Fire District to absorb the increased operational costs. Those increased costs are easily offset to make opportunity for volunteers to take resident shifts. The resident program will provide for faster response, and more responders when necessary. The training center will provide top level training skills here at home rather than traveling elsewhere to get good training. The future facilities funding is not in this year's levy request, although some District dollars could be used if grant funding falls short.

The resident program will need to be managed. The Fire District intends to do this with a full-time volunteer coordinator. Residents will have responsibilities; someone will need to manage the personnel performing those tasks. The volunteer coordinator will also take the lead in recruitment. The Fire District will always be recruiting for new members. It is important for the success in recruiting to keep the individual moving through required training. A critical component of the career positions in the District is that they serve a volunteer system. The career support of volunteers is essential to make the volunteer system thrive for years to come. We are seeing volunteer systems struggle throughout the State and Nation because of not having the support structure to meet the modern-day demands.

The Assistant Chief (volunteer position) intends to retire in 2024 with 40-years of service. The Chief (career position) intends to retire in 2026 with 40 years of service as well. An important part our officer corps is to intentionally pass on tools and experience to those that will replace chief positions. The chief position has many responsibilities. Not preparing for the succession is a loss for the next chief, the department, and the community. The District currently operates with an officer corps of seven. Preparing new leaders is essential to future success.

The District has been fortunate to see a stable fire call volume with increased prevention efforts. The call volume growth has happened in EMS calls. The majority of EMS calls are handled with the Hospital's EMS crew that are housed at our station on Wapato Lake Rd. The nature of the EMS call depicts how many resources to send. When the 911 Dispatcher determines the address and the nature of the call, the agencies are toned for the appropriate responders. Fire call types account for about 100 calls per year. EMS call types account for about 500 calls per year. Of the 500 EMS calls, our volunteers are requested for about 100 of them. The Fire District is being very intentional to keep the call volume for volunteers at a manageable volume. Volunteer systems fail when the call volume is more than they can handle.

In short, the Fire District needs to refurbish or replace 4 apparatus in the next three years; complete facility expansion in the next two years, if the grant funding is awarded; begin a resident program to respond faster with more personnel in the next three years; succession plan to replace chief positions; and continue to grow the volunteer system so adequate emergency responders are available for this growing community's needs. The levy request is designed to continue a volunteer-based program.

The levy proposal of \$0.75 per thousand of assessed value will generate an increase of \$540,000 over 2024 tax revenue.

Levy Rate Impacts- Home Value	2024 Tax	2025 Tax	Annual Increase	Monthly Increase
<b>\$300,000</b>	\$ 123.01	\$ 225.00	\$ 101.99	\$ 8.50
<b>\$500,000</b>	\$ 205.02	\$ 375.00	\$ 169.98	\$ 14.16
<b>\$750,000</b>	\$ 307.53	\$ 562.50	\$ 254.97	\$ 21.25
<b>\$1,000,000</b>	\$ 410.04	\$ 750.00	\$ 339.96	\$ 28.33
<b>\$1,500,000</b>	\$ 615.06	\$1,125.00	\$ 509.94	\$ 42.49