

# CENTRAL WHIDBEY ISLAND FIRE & RESCUE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**Contact:** Jerry Helm, Fire Chief

**Office:** 360-678-3602

**E-Mail:** [jhelm@cwfire.org](mailto:jhelm@cwfire.org)

### **Board of Fire Commissioners to meet on fire levy resolution; community invited to learn more and provide comment**

The Central Whidbey Island Fire & Rescue Board of Fire Commissioners will meet Thursday, June 8 to discuss a resolution to place a fire levy lid lift on the November 7, 2023, general election ballot. The community is invited to attend the meeting at 5 p.m. at Station 54, 3253 Day Road in Greenbank.

Call volumes have increased by 50 percent since 2012, but the district's staffing levels have not kept up with the community's growing demand for emergency services. Central Whidbey responded to an average of 1,700 calls in the last two years – of which 60 percent of all calls are for emergency medical service (EMS).

"This is a safety issue for our community," Fire Chief Jerry Helm said. "We are seeing longer response times that can seriously affect survival rates. We require additional personnel to keep up with higher call volumes and overlapping calls."

If approved by voters, the fire levy lid lift will fund four additional firefighters/EMTs to meet state requirements to allow for interior search and rescue operations to begin without having to wait for another fire engine to arrive on scene. The additional personnel will also allow the fire district to put both a fire engine and medic unit in service at the same time, which will reduce response times and improve service reliability across the district.

Central Whidbey Fire is asking voters to change the fire levy from \$0.86 per \$1,000 of assessed property value to \$1.18. The \$0.32 lid lift would cost an additional \$13.33 per month or \$160 per year for the owner of a \$500,000 home.

More information about Central Whidbey Island Fire & Rescue can be found at [www.cwfire.org](http://www.cwfire.org). Fire Chief Jerry Helm also welcomes your questions at [jhelm@cwfire.org](mailto:jhelm@cwfire.org) and 360-678-3602.

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*Central Whidbey Island Fire & Rescue provides fire and life safety services to 9,000 people over 50 square miles north of Mutiny Bay and south of Libbey Road. The fire district relies on full-time, part-time, and volunteer emergency personnel who responded to more than 1,700 calls in the last two years, of which 60 percent are for emergency medical service (EMS). Firefighters are highly trained to provide services for fire suppression and prevention, EMS, technical rescues, hazardous material spills, auto extrication, and life safety programs. Central Whidbey Island Fire & Rescue operates under a balanced budget and has passed all its financial and accountability audits by the state. [www.cwfire.org](http://www.cwfire.org)*