

Description:

File a Formal Complaint - Scott Henden
[Scott Henden reported \(Tue, 21 Aug at 12:26 PM\)](#)

Mail Flyer

What impact does the alleged violation(s) have on the public?

I believe it is wrong to use money that should go to the fire service to support a tax increase. They have asked for one in the past and will in the future. They may claim it is information but it is use to support public perceptions while they pick the data points that suite there view point.

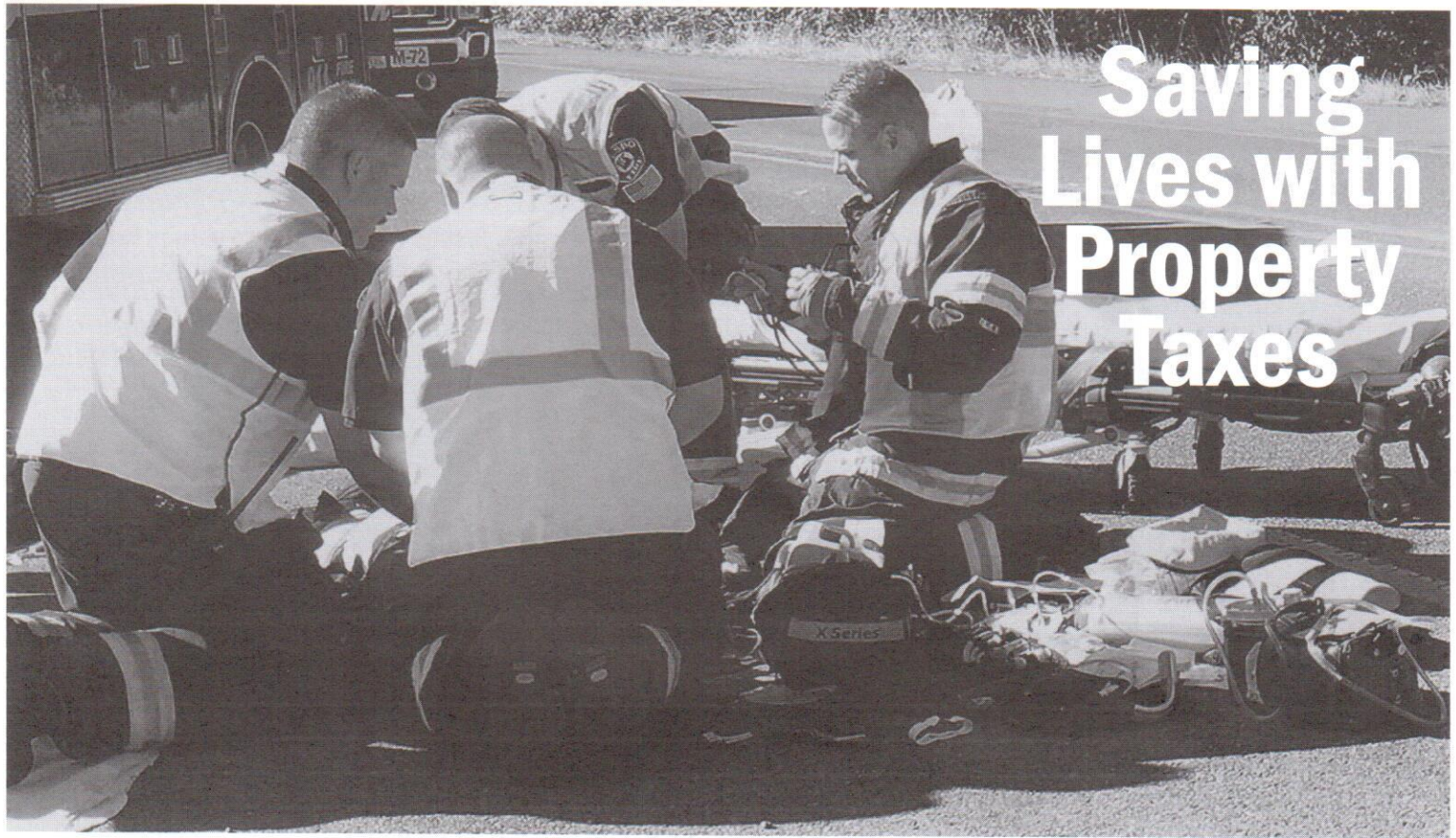
List of Attached Evidence:

Public Mailer to north Kitsap Residents.

List of Potential Witnesses:

All mailing addresses .

ThePulse



Saving Lives with Property Taxes

We know that no one likes property taxes. But Washington state law leaves very few other options for funding the services provided by fire protection districts such as North Kitsap Fire & Rescue and Poulsbo Fire Department. Not only are property taxes unpopular,

they're volatile and the rules for establishing rates are difficult to understand. When property values are in decline for an extended time, tax revenues fall as well. However, when property values are recovering, initiative-imposed caps prevent tax revenues from recovering

at the same pace. The complexity and instability of property taxes continue to challenge fire district leaders' efforts to maintain levels of service; we are still working to recover from the real estate crash that started a decade ago. Why?

Continued inside

Inside:

- Emergency Medical Information Card
- How to Fit a Helmet
- Much More

The Pulse, published jointly at least once every year, is one of many cooperative efforts between your two local fire departments.

NORTH KITSAP FIRE & RESCUE

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(360)297-3619

www.nkfr.org
@nkfandr facebook/nkfire



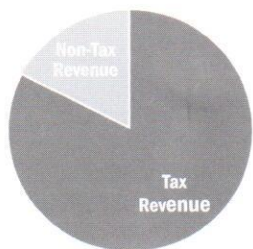
911 NE Liberty Rd Poulsbo, WA 98370
(360)779-3997

www.poulsbofire.org
@poulsbofire facebook/poulsbofire

Property Taxes

Continued from front

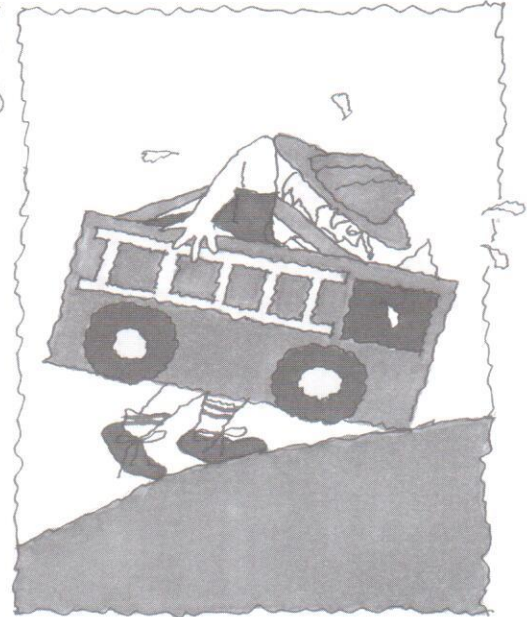
Poulsbo Fire Department and North Kitsap Fire & Rescue receive no on-going funding from federal, state or county governments. While other governments like those of cities and counties have access to other forms of taxation such as the sales tax, fire protection districts do not. As independent agencies governed by locally-elected fire commissioners, the majority of the districts' funding comes from local property taxes. User fees for ambulance transports and contracts-for-service are examples of the very limited range of non-tax revenue sources.



Fire districts depend on the property tax for 80 - 85% of their operating revenues.

Under state law, fire districts are authorized to collect property taxes of up to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. With voter approval, agencies can levy up to \$0.50 more to provide emergency medical response. The community has enthusiastically supported emergency medical services (EMS) levies since they were first introduced in the mid-1980s. Due to voter-approved initiatives, the total amount collected from the fire and EMS levies cannot exceed 101% of the highest amount collected previously on existing properties except under certain narrow circumstances. These caps are applied to each levy's total collection but each property owner experiences different increases or decreases due to variations in individual properties' assessed valuations and other factors.

During normal economic conditions, the total assessed valuation of properties in the fire districts rises annually. Levy rates



There are no brakes on revenue losses when property values fall but, when property values recover, caps keep revenue from recovering at the same rate.

are adjusted downward to keep a district's total collections on existing properties within the 101% limitation. In the first year that a property comes onto the tax rolls, it is referred to as "new construction." The revenue from new construction isn't subject to the 101% limitation, and is calculated separately at the previous year's levy rate(s).

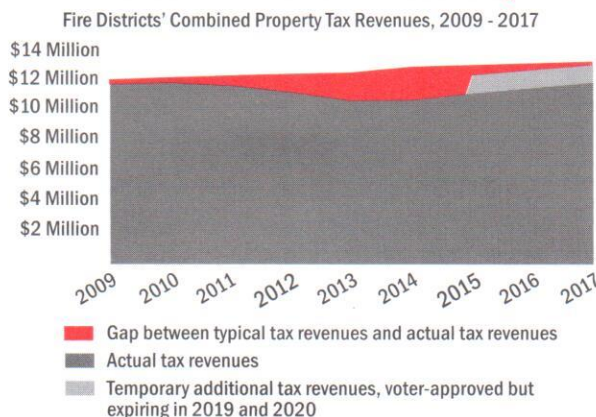
But during the real estate downturn that started in 2008, property values plummeted along with the amount of new construction. As the districts' assessed valuations fell and expenses continued to increase, levy rates were raised to provide 101% of the previous year's total levy necessary to help meet rising costs. When the levy rates reached their respective statutory limits

and property values continued to drop, districts took in less in tax revenue, too. Between 2009 and 2014, North Kitsap Fire & Rescue and Poulsbo Fire Department received a combined \$6.1 million less in tax revenues than they would have received in a normal economy. Most property owners saw flat or declining fire tax bills. At the same time, expenses were increasing. To continue providing the same levels of service under these circumstances, the districts implemented broad austerity measures that included wage freezes, deferred apparatus replacement, aggressive pursuit of federal grants, use of reserve accounts and deferral of many of the capital investments necessary to protect the public's facilities.

We don't like asking for taxes but, to continue current levels of service, it's what we've had to do. In 2014, the districts received the approval of voters for additional temporary funding to help with the recovery. As the graph to the left shows, these funds didn't restore what was lost and many of the deferred needs remain unresolved. In 2019 and 2020, the temporary funds will end and the districts are preparing new proposals for voters' consideration in the fall of 2018.

If you have questions, please ask; we have much more information than there's room to share here.

When real estate values plummeted, so did fire district revenues; between 2009 - 2014, the districts collected \$6.1 million less in taxes than in a normal economy.



Weather Service.

But if it seems like the smoke hasn't ever been this bad, you're mostly right. Kitsap's summer air quality for the last two years is the worst on record in over a decade.

Worst air quality on record

Between June and September 2017, a monitoring station in Bremerton recorded six days where air quality was considered "unhealthy for sensitive groups," and five days when levels were unhealthy for everyone, according to data from the Department of Ecology. So far in 2018, there have been already four days where air quality broached "unhealthy" levels.

See **AIR QUALITY**, Page 4A



3 fire agencies seek property tax levies

Nathan Pilling Kitsap Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

Three of Kitsap County's six fire departments will ask voters to approve property tax increases on ballots this fall, citing expenses that have outpaced revenues and a need for more funding to help their ongoing recoveries from recession-era drops in revenue.

Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue, the Poulsbo Fire Department and North Kitsap Fire and Rescue will each ask for the funding in November.

Poulsbo Fire's proposed six-year levy lid lift would set its collection rate at \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value, which would cost the average homeowner (assessed valuation of \$340,000) in Poulsbo an additional \$7.37 per month in 2019. The noted that a 2014 capital bond will expire after 2019, offsetting a large portion of the lid lift's impacts.

The measure would mean restoring about \$1 million of revenue each year for the district beginning next year, Fire Chief James Gillard said.



Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue firefighter Jeff Rye back the new Ladder 51 into the bay at Station 51 in Silverdale. MEEGAN M. REID/KITSAP SUN

State law prohibits taxing districts from increasing their budgets from property taxes by more than 1 percent a year, along with collections from new construction, which means districts lag behind in their recovery from the 2008 recession. Expenses for the department have grown faster than that 1-percent cap, according to Gillard.

See **TAX**, Page 4A

USA TODAY

Cohen, Manafort fallout could have consequences for Trump. **3A**

Astros beat Mariners, 10-7

Mariners fall 5.5 games back in the American League West standings. **1B**

Weather

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North Kitsap Fire and Rescue firefighter/paramedic Craig Barnard takes 1-year-old Eleanor from her mom Lakeisha Rogers at North Kitsap Fire & Rescue Headquarters Station 81 in Kingston. Barnard delivered Eleanor a year earlier in the back of the medic unit. MEEGAN M. REID/KITSAP SUN

Tax

Continued from Page 1A

"It's about sustainability for us," Gillard said. "With the 1 percent cap on our annual growth and with the wages and costs of everything going up 3, 4 percent, we just can't keep up with that."

As property values jump, districts reduce their fire levy rates to keep from collecting more than that 1-percent cap. For Poulsbo, that levy rate was previously set at \$1.50 per thousand, but has fallen to \$1.35 and is projected to fall to \$1.24 next year, according to the district.

If voters approved the measure, the levy rate would return to \$1.50 per thousand. The measure would also replace that 1-percent cap on growth with a limit based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index for six years, Gillard said.

Those with questions about the measure should contact Gillard at 360-779-3997 or jgillard@poulsbo-fire.

North Kitsap Fire and Rescue

North Kitsap's proposal would allow the district to collect about \$1.6 million in revenue annually for four years, beginning in 2019. The estimated 2019 tax rate for the new levy would be about 48 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property valuation, the agency said.

The new levy will replace an expiring maintenance and operations levy from 2014 that applies throughout the fire district. Homes in Kingston, Indianola, Suquamish and Gamblewood will also lose an expiring 1999 bond off their tax bills this year (homes elsewhere in the district - Hansville, Driftwood Key, Felon

According to estimates from NKF&R, if the measure were approved, a median home in district (estimated at about \$403,000 in 2019) would pay about \$6 per month more in the southern part of the district, while homes in the northern areas would pay about \$11 more per month, which accounts for projected increases in home values.

The funds would allow NKF&R to cover those increases in expenses and catch up on some deferred maintenance and repairs on the district's facilities and allow it to replace some of its engines and ambulances, NKF&R spokeswoman Michèle Laboda said.

"We have a very competent and well-trained mechanic shop and they do a great job of keeping those rigs on the road, but at a certain point all their skill and talent won't be enough to keep our aging apparatus reliable for the purposes we use it for," she said.

Fire Chief Dan Smith said the district has identified roughly \$2.2 million in equipment and apparatus - three ambulances, a water tender and a fire engine - for replacement and about \$3.5 million in facility work that will need to be done over the next four years.

Watch nkfr.org for information about a series of public meetings NKF&R will host to give information about its levy.

Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue

Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue's proposal would also restore its levy rate to \$1.50 per thousand, from its current rate of \$1.32. For the owner of a \$300,000 home, the property tax increase would amount to about \$4 per month.

Central Kitsap plans to use funds to maintain its level of service and also pay for some capital improvements, including the purchase of two ambulances, a water tender and a fire engine.