



# GIG HARBOR FIRE & MEDIC ONE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 13, 2022  
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### **Board of Fire Commissioners Passes Resolution for Facilities Bond Measure On the August 2 Primary Election Ballot**

[Gig Harbor, Wash.] – The Board of Fire Commissioners for Gig Harbor Fire & Medic One (GHFMO) unanimously passed a resolution to place a facilities bond on the August 2, 2022 Primary Election ballot. The purpose of the facility improvements is to improve community safety, and improve the health and safety of emergency personnel.

Stations 53 (Fox Island), 57 (Crescent Valley), 58 (Swede Hill), and 59 (Artondale) are scheduled for improvements. Some stations do not meet ADA requirements, or current seismic standards. They also lack living quarters to accommodate current and projected staffing levels, and a diverse work force.

“Call volumes have increased to the point where we need more space for personnel. The Gig Harbor community has grown that much,” said Fire Chief Dennis Doan. “Adding space for current and future staffing will improve our ability to respond district-wide to emergencies.”

The Fire District recently completed a Standards of Cover report that identifies staffing needs based on the quantity and location of emergency calls. The Gig Harbor community has grown by more than 16% since 2010. Call volumes have increased 37% in the same time period.

Just as important for GHFMO is providing a healthier work environment for emergency personnel. Cancer is known to be a leading cause of death among firefighters. Some of stations lack decontamination areas to remove soot, hydrocarbons and smoke from firefighting gear. There is also a need for space to decontaminate medical equipment used at EMS calls.

“I may be a fire chief now, but I was a firefighter for most of my professional career. I’ve lost colleagues to work-related illnesses,” said Chief Doan. “We know so much more now about preventing this loss of life compared to when I started. I feel so strongly about this issue. I hope the community will recognize the importance of providing a safer work environment for the women and men who serve our community.”

Other bond projects include building a facility for regular live fire trainings. Currently, firefighters may only train on live fire once every three years and must leave the area to perfect these life and property-saving skills. The training facility would be constructed on land owned by the Fire District adjacent to Station 58 (Swede Hill).

“When you call 911 for a fire? It’s ‘go time’ for you and our people,” said Chief Doan. “We want our firefighters to have as much live fire training as possible. It’s not something you can simulate with a computer program.”

Station 51 in Gig Harbor is also slated for replacement. It’s the Fire District’s busiest station, and requires replacement to continue serving the heaviest call volume, including additional personnel and modern emergency apparatus that won’t fit into the current bays.

The bond would last for 20-years and is projected to cost \$9.90 per month for the owner of a \$500,000 home. The assessed value of a home is less than its market value. Interest rates are still low, and the financial health of the Fire District helps ensure a favorable finance rate.

The Board of Fire Commissioners unanimously approved a Capital Facilities Plan in December of 2021 to identify needed facility improvements, and apparatus and equipment purchases. The Fire District recognized that it could not fund all items at the same time, and prioritized the project list.

More information on the facilities bond can be found at [www.gigharborfire.org/about/bond](http://www.gigharborfire.org/about/bond). Fire Chief Dennis Doan also welcomes your questions at [DDoan@gigharborfire.org](mailto:DDoan@gigharborfire.org).

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*Pierce County Fire Protection District No. 5 (known as Gig Harbor Fire & Medic One) provides fire and life safety services to 53,000 people over 54 square miles. The Fire District responded to a high of 6,685 calls in 2019. Emergency medical service accounts for 78% of all calls. Through community support, Gig Harbor Fire & Medic One has built one of the most advanced emergency response systems in Pierce County with highly-trained personnel and rescue programs.*