



GIG HARBOR FIRE & MEDIC ONE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: June 21, 2022
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Call Volumes Continue to Increase for Gig Harbor Fire & Medic One

Bond Measure on August 2 Primary Election Ballot

[Gig Harbor, Wash.] – Gig Harbor Fire & Medic One (GHFMO) reports that call volumes have increased 13.1% from January through May of 2022 compared to the same period last year. GHFMO attributes the increase to growth and an aging population in its service territory.

“Our community requires additional emergency personnel, but we have no place to put them,” said Fire Chief Dennis Doan. “The purpose of the bond is to create more space for emergency personnel, and improve community safety and the health and safety of our firefighters.”

The bond also will help shelter modern apparatus, which is too large to fit in the current fire station bays. Emergency apparatus, such as fire engines, can cost as much as \$700,000. It’s important to keep them sheltered from extreme weather to extend their usable lives.

The bond would fund needed improvements at Station 53 (Fox Island), 57 (Crescent Valley), 58 (Swede Hill), and 59 (Artondale). 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. Renovations to stations will improve the Fire District’s ability to respond to emergencies, and ensure fire stations can withstand an earthquake.

Cancer is known to be a leading cause of death among firefighters. Some stations lack decontamination areas to remove soot, hydrocarbons and toxic chemicals from firefighting gear. There is also a need for space to decontaminate medical equipment after EMS calls.

The bond also would construct a live fire training facility. Currently, firefighters may only train with live fire once every three years and must leave the area to do so. A local fire training facility would ensure firefighters train more often to perfect these life and property-saving skills.

The bond would last for 20-years and is projected to cost the owner of a \$500,000 home (considered the average for the Gig Harbor community) \$9.90 per month, or \$118.80 per year. (The calculation rate is \$0.238 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.) Please note that the assessed value of your property is lower than its market value. The financial health of GHFMO helps ensure a favorable bond rate, as well.

More information on the facilities bond can be found at www.gigharborfire.org/about/bond. Fire Chief Dennis Doan also welcomes your questions at 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.