


K I T S A P
Daily News

 News Sports Life Business Opinion Letters to the Editor Obituaries Classifieds Newsletters

NEWS

Fire levy goes to SK voters for 2nd-straight year

By Elisha Meyer Port Orchard Independent • May 9, 2023 1:30 am



South Kitsap Fire and Rescue suffered a major defeat at the polls last November when voters denied a levy increase of 29 cents, which would have brought it to \$1.50 per \$1,000 assessed property value.

Roughly six months later, the stage has been set for round two as SK voters will now decide on whether to renew the levy at its original capped rate, this time in the primary election Aug. 1.

The SKFR fire commissioners voted April 27 to request a levy increase back to \$1.50 per \$1,000 as increasing property values have decreased the levy 41 cents to \$1.09. The levy would run through 2029 if passed.

Fire chief Jeff Faucett said the levy increase is needed due to rapid growth leading to increases in call volumes and incidents. The SKFR annual report shows the department responded to 12,708 calls in 2022, a 5.8% increase from 2021 for Kitsap County's largest fire district.

“We had more structure fires, more car accidents, more medical calls” too, he said. “I couldn't just pinpoint and say it was all fires or it was all medical calls. It was every category that we tracked.”

Staffing numbers remain strained as the number hasn't changed despite the increase in work. Faucett said the levy would allow for 21 new positions over the six-year levy. It would also allow for restaffing of Station 10 off Banner Road, whose staff was relocated to Station 11 off Bethel Road SE.

“That was not an easy decision for us, but we know that without this levy, that cannot happen,” Faucett said. “We cannot restaff Station 10.”

2022's levy measure fell short of passing by 996 votes, with those opposed alleging misuse of taxpayer money and increasing prices within a fragile economy