



## WHATCOM COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #4

4142 Britton Loop Rd | Bellingham, WA | 98226  
[www.wcfd4.com](http://www.wcfd4.com)  
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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **Board of Fire Commissioners to meet on fire levy lid lift** *Community invited to learn more and provide comment*

Bellingham, Wash. – Whatcom County Fire District 4 Board of Fire Commissioners will meet May 1 to discuss a resolution to place a fire levy lid lift on the August 1, 2023, primary election ballot. If approved by voters, it would keep Station 12 on Britton Loop Road responding to emergency calls 24 hours a day.

The meeting will held at 7 p.m. at Station 12, 4142 Britton Loop Road. You can also attend via Zoom Webinar at [www.nwfrs.net](http://www.nwfrs.net).

Whatcom 4 contracts with North Whatcom Fire & Rescue (NWFR) for emergency services. The contract requires Whatcom 4 to pay 25 percent of NWFR's operating costs. Whatcom 4 does not collect enough revenue to meet the terms of the contract, and the contract is set to expire on December 31, 2023.

"We must find a sustainable path forward to maintain quality emergency services for our residents," Board Chair Steve Cooley said. "The contract with NWFR provides a higher level of emergency service at less cost than operating a standalone department. But right now, we do not collect enough revenue to maintain fire district services."

Since 2019, call volumes have increased by 63 percent. More calls mean higher costs to provide service and Whatcom 4 does not collect enough revenue to pay for the service it provides. This is due to the district's low fire levy rate and annexations by the city of Bellingham, both of which reduce Whatcom 4 revenue.

Whatcom 4 property owners pay \$0.63 per \$1,000 of assessed property value for fire district services, while NWFR property owners pay \$0.84. Whatcom 4 is considering asking voters to increase the levy rate, which is still under discussion by the board. The lid lift is necessary to maintain full-time 24-hour staffing at Station 12 on Britton Loop Road.

If the lid lift fails, the station would no longer be staffed 24 hours a day and residents would have to rely on mutual aid, which could increase response times up to 30 minutes or more. Lid lift funding would also pay for long-deferred station repairs and replace a fire engine that is past its usable life and starting to break down more frequently.

More expensive options include forming a standalone fire department or contracting with the city of Bellingham at a levy rate of \$1.30 per \$1,000.

More information can be found at [www.wcfd4.com](http://www.wcfd4.com) or [nwfrs.net](http://nwfrs.net).

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*Whatcom County Fire District 4 (Whatcom 4) provides fire and emergency medical service (EMS) to 10,000 people over 40 square miles in the communities of Van Wyck, East Smith Road and Northshore. Whatcom 4 contracts with North Whatcom Fire & Rescue for emergency services. The contract provides a higher level of emergency service for Whatcom 4 residents at less cost than a standalone fire department.*