



## WHATCOM COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #4

4142 Britton Loop Rd | Bellingham, WA | 98226

[www.wcfd4.com](http://www.wcfd4.com)

360-318-9933

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: July 5, 2023  
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#### **Fire levy lid lift on the August primary ballot**

*Community invited to Q&A sessions to learn more*

Bellingham, Wash. – Whatcom County Fire District 4 invites the community to learn more about the fire levy lid lift that will be on the August 1, 2023, primary election ballot. The purpose of the lid lift is to keep Station 12 on Britton Loop Road responding to emergency calls 24 hours a day.

#### **Learn more at a question-and-answer session:**

- Wednesday, July 19, at 7 p.m. at the Rome Grange (2821 M. Baker Highway)
- Saturday, July 22, at 9 a.m. at Station 12 (4142 Britton Loop Road)

Fire Chief Jason Van Der Veen will be available to answer any questions.

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. The contract cannot be renewed at the current levy rate.

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.

The lid lift would maintain 24-hour staffing at Station 12 on Britton Loop Road. It 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.

If approved by voters, the lid lift will change the fire levy rate from \$0.63 to \$0.99 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The \$0.36 lid lift would cost the owner of a \$550,000 home an additional \$16.50 per month or \$198 per year.

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. 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.*