

AUGUST 1, 2023 PRIMARY BALLOT

Whatcom County Fire District 4 is asking voters to consider a fire levy lid lift to keep Station 12 on Britton Loop Road responding to emergency calls 24 hours a day.

www.wcfd4.com

Check our website for upcoming Q&A meetings!



Whatcom County Fire District #4

PO Box 286

Lynden, WA 98264

(360) 318-9933

www.wcfd4.com

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**Important communication from
your fire district. Please open!**



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Dear Neighbor,

If you are receiving this letter, you live or own property in Whatcom County Fire District 4. Whatcom 4 has communicated with all residents about the challenges it is facing to provide emergency services. With multiple meetings and community input, the Board of Fire Commissioners made the decision to place a fire levy lid lift on the August 1 primary election ballot.

There will be two additional public meetings to answer questions you may have. Please check the website (www.wcfd4.com) for dates and locations. In the meantime, we are including some frequently asked questions.

We want to thank everyone who helped develop a plan to protect the level and quality of emergency services our community requires. This has been a difficult issue made easier with your involvement.

Sincerely,



**Commissioner
Mark Lann**



**Commissioner
Steve Cooley,
Chair**



**Commissioner
Tim Johnson**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do we receive emergency services?

Whatcom County Fire District 4 contracts with North Whatcom Fire & Rescue (NWFR) for emergency services. The contract with NWFR provides a higher level of emergency service at less cost for taxpayers.

What is the issue?

Since 2019, call volumes have increased 63 percent. More calls mean higher costs to provide service and Whatcom 4 does not collect enough revenue to pay for the contract. 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 contract is set to end December 31, 2023 and Whatcom 4 cannot afford to renew it at our current levy rate.

Why don't we find another provider?

Whatcom 4 has considered all options and found that NWFR continues to be the lowest cost provider of emergency services.

What is Whatcom 4 proposing?

Whatcom 4 is asking voters to increase 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 property an additional \$16.50 per month/\$198 per year.

What are the benefits?

The levy lid lift would maintain full-time 24-hour staffing at the Britton Loop Road Station 12. Funding would also pay for long-deferred station repairs and replace a fire engine that is past its usable life and starting to fail.

What happens if the lid lift fails?

If the lid lift fails, the Britton Loop Road Station would no longer be staffed 24 hours a day and residents would have to rely on mutual aid. This could increase response times up to 30 minutes or more.

Fire Chief Jason Van Der Veen welcomes your questions at jvanderveen@nwfrs.com.