



## WENATCHEE VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

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[www.wenatcheevalleyfire.org](http://www.wenatcheevalleyfire.org)

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 27, 2024  
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#### **Board of Fire Commissioners to meet on fire benefit charge resolution.**

*Community invited to learn more and provide comment*

Wenatchee, Wash. – The Board of Fire Commissioners will meet Wednesday, April 10 to discuss a resolution to place a fire benefit charge on the August 6, 2024, primary election ballot. The community is encouraged to attend the meeting at 2 p.m. at Fire Station 10, 731 N. Wenatchee Ave., in Wenatchee.

The Wenatchee Valley Fire Department is considering establishing a fire benefit charge as a fairer and more balanced approach to fund emergency services. Currently, funding for emergency services comes from a fire levy paid through property taxes. The fire levy is based on a property's assessed value *only*. This means two houses of the same size can pay very different amounts depending on their location within the department's service area, while the cost to put out a fire at both is the same.

A fire benefit charge is based on a building's size, risks, and hazards of the property. Under a fire benefit charge funding model, two houses of equal size would pay the same fire benefit charge. Smaller structures, such as single-family homes, are charged less than larger commercial or industrial buildings because it takes fewer firefighters and fire engines to put out a fire in a home.

#### **What are the advantages of a fire benefit charge?**

A fire benefit charge is more equitable for taxpayers. Two houses of equal size would pay the same fire benefit charge. And the fire levy rate would then be reduced from \$1.50 to \$1.00. The fire benefit charge is then set each year by the elected Board of Fire Commissioners at a public hearing.

In most cases, homeowners will pay the same or less under a fire benefit charge and a reduced fire levy rate funding model. For example, in 2023, the owner of a 2,000-square-foot home in Douglas County appraised at \$500,000 paid a fire levy of \$750. Under a fire benefit charge, the owner would pay a fire levy of \$500 and a fire benefit charge of \$218 for a total of \$718.

Voters in more than 20 fire districts in the state have approved a fire benefit charge in their communities.

Learn more at [www.wenatcheevalleyfire.org](http://www.wenatcheevalleyfire.org). Fire Chief Brian Brett welcomes your questions at [bbrett@wvfire.org](mailto:bbrett@wvfire.org) or 509-662-4734.

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*The Wenatchee Valley Fire Department is a fire authority providing fire and life safety services to 81,000 people over 211 square miles in the Wenatchee Valley. We were established in 2022 when voters approved combining Chelan County Fire District 1 and Douglas County Fire District 2 into the Wenatchee Valley Fire Department. We serve Colockum, East Wenatchee, Malaga, Rock Island, Squilchuck Valley, Stemilt Basin, Sunnyslope, Trinidad area of Crescent Bar, Wenatchee Heights, and Wenatchee #1 and #2 Canyon.*