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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of Fire Commissioners will consider EMS levy lid lift
Call volumes up 35% in six years

LAKE STEVENS, WA – Lake Stevens Fire will consider asking voters to approve a levy lid lift for emergency medical service (EMS). At a recent meeting, the Board of Fire Commissioners discussed the public process they will hold before making a final decision. Two public meetings in early summer will be scheduled to take input from community members about the idea.

“We want to make sure the community is aware of the challenges we are facing,” said Commissioner Paul Gagnon. “Call volumes for EMS alone have increased 35 percent in six years. Revenue isn’t keeping up with the demand for service.”

The fire district is limited to a one percent revenue increase per year. However, the demand for and cost to provide service is higher than that.

“Costs for medical supplies, equipment, maintenance, personnel, utilities – you name it – increase by more than that one percent cap,” said Chief Kevin O’Brien. “We want to get ahead of this issue before it becomes a problem.”

In addition, the levy funding the EMS program that voters approved in 2000 has fallen from 50 cents to 32 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value. An 18-cent “lid lift” would restore funding to 50 cents per \$1,000 and cost the owner of a \$300,000 home an additional \$54 per year (\$4.50 per month).

In 2016, Lake Stevens Fire responded to 5,655 calls, and 76 percent were EMS-related. The EMS lid lift would continue to fund Basic and Advanced Life Support with 14 full-time and part-time firefighters and paramedics responding 24 hours a day. In addition to emergency personnel, funding is used to replace ambulances, maintain existing apparatus, training and certifications, medical equipment, and first aid supplies.

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Lake Stevens Fire provides fire suppression and emergency medical service to 44,000 people over 42 square miles. During 2016 our highly-skilled firefighters and paramedics responded to more than 5,600 calls, 76 percent of which were for emergency medical service (EMS). Lake Stevens Fire is proud to be debt free, operate under a balanced budget and has a long history of passing independent audits by the state. More information about the fire district can be found at www.lsfire.org.

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FIRE

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