

▶ Elkhorn Area Fire Department
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**PUBLIC
SAFETY
REFERENDUM**



Public Safety Referendum

Vote November 3



For 135 years, the Elkhorn Area Fire Department has faithfully responded to calls for emergency services in the Elkhorn community including the City of Elkhorn, Town of Geneva, Town of LaFayette, and Town of Sugar Creek. Changing times have forced the department to make changes in how they meet daily requests for Emergency Services.

On the November 3, 2020 general election ballot, voters will be asked to allow the City and Towns to exceed levy limits to provide additional funding for the Fire Department. The question on the City ballot (*actual dollar amounts and percentages will be different for each Town*) will be:

"Under State law, the increase in the levy of the City of Elkhorn for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2021, is limited to 2.51%, which results in a levy of \$5,758,109. Shall the City of Elkhorn be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year, 2021, for the purpose of enhanced Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) by a total of 28.22%, which results in a levy of \$7,384,011, and on an ongoing basis, include the increase of \$1,625,902 for each fiscal year going forward?" YES _____
NO _____

The question will also be asked of voters in the Towns of Geneva, LaFayette, and Sugar Creek, either by referendum or resolution. Additional funding will allow the Fire Department to continue to provide essential services to the communities they serve.

The total anticipated expense to provide these necessary services is \$2,475,902, an increase of \$1,625,902 from the current budgeted amount of \$850,000. In addition to the annual budgeted amount, each municipality will be asked to assume a portion of that funding increase.

The issues facing Elkhorn Area Fire Department include:

- o Call volume and requests for emergency services has increased 82% since 2010
- o Declining applicants for Paid on Call (POC) positions resulting in decrease in POC staff to cover calls; POC staff has decreased by 50% since 2010
- o Declining availability of current POC staff due to other jobs/family commitments, etc.
- o 11 full-time (Paid on Premise (POP)) staff are currently "leased" from a private vendor and continued availability is not guaranteed
- o Increased reliance on mutual aid from neighboring departments to cover certain calls
- o Lack of legal authority by Wisconsin law to increase funding without a referendum

Additional sustainable funding will allow the department to:

- o Increase staffing levels necessary to meet the current and anticipated increase in calls for service
- o Provide Paramedic level EMS care 24/7/365
- o Employ all staff, both Paid on Call and Paid on Premise

The changes that have caused the need for this additional funding are not unique to the Elkhorn community and are being faced by communities throughout Wisconsin and our country.

LEVY IMPACT ON TAX BILL

City of Elkhorn: If the \$1,625,902 is paid entirely by the City, the tax bill impact would be \$182.62 per year (\$15.21 per month) on a property assessed at \$100,000. If all three Towns continue their contracts with the City to provide Fire/EMS services, the tax impact in the City would be reduced to \$106.83 per year (\$8.90 per month) on a property assessed at \$100,000.

Town of Geneva: The Town's share of the additional funding is \$260,144. The tax bill impact will be \$28.90 per year (\$2.41 per month) on a property assessed at \$100,000.

Town of LaFayette: Voters in the Town will not see the question on their ballot; it will be asked of voters at the Town's Special Meeting of the Town Electors in the form of a Resolution. The Town will be asking for additional funding for LaFayette's share of Elkhorn Fire and Rescue needs as well as for Town Road maintenance and repair. The tax impact per \$100,000 assessment for the total amount requested will be \$99.17 per year (\$8.26 per month).

Town of Sugar Creek: The Town's share of the additional funding is \$61,000.00. The tax bill impact will be \$16.64 per year (\$1.38 per month) on a property assessed at \$100,000.

LEARN MORE

The four municipalities and Fire Department are co-hosting a series of informational sessions. All interested individuals are encouraged to attend. To allow for the greatest attendance while allowing for physical distancing, all sessions will occur at the James A. Wehner Auditorium at Elkhorn Area High School.

Tuesday, October 13 | 6:30 pm
Saturday, October 24 | 9:00 am
Wednesday, October 28 | 6:30 pm

Physical distancing AND face masks will be required at each session. If you have specific questions you would like answered during one of those sessions, please e-mail your question(s) to Chief Rod Smith at rsmith@cityofelkhorn.org. If you are not able to attend one of the informational sessions and would like to discuss this matter further, please feel free to contact one of your local elected officials.