



Frequently Asked Questions About the Local Option Levy Renewal and Increase

Lane Fire Authority provides fire suppression, emergency medical, and life safety services to 31,000 people over 282 square miles in the heart of the Willamette Valley. EMS accounts for approximately 80% of emergency calls. Each year, career and volunteer emergency personnel respond to approximately 7,400 calls for service throughout the district.

What is a local option levy and why is this measure on the May 19, 2026 ballot?

A local option levy is a temporary property tax approved by voters for a specific purpose and duration. It is separate from a district's permanent tax rate.

The Lane Fire Authority Board of Directors voted to place this measure on the upcoming ballot. The measure would renew the existing local option levy of \$0.35 per \$1,000 of assessed property value and increase the rate by \$0.20, for a total proposed rate of \$0.55 per \$1,000 of assessed property value if approved by voters.

What would the levy fund?

If approved by voters, the measure is intended to support several operational needs including:

- Staffing for two full-time firefighter positions
- A modular building to provide staffing quarters at Station 109 on Spencer Creek Road
- Ongoing operational costs associated with providing fire and emergency medical services

How much would the levy cost property owners?

The proposed local option levy rate is \$0.55 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. A home with an assessed value of \$250,000 would pay approximately \$137.50 per year or about \$11.46 per month. This is \$4.16 more per month than the current rate paid over the past five years.

Assessed value is determined by the Lane County Assessor's Office and is typically lower than a property's market value.

Why is this measure on the ballot?

Call volumes have increased nearly 20% since the last local option levy was approved in 2021, and operating costs associated with providing emergency services have also increased. These costs are out of the fire authority's control but must be paid to continue providing emergency services. Current revenues have not kept pace with these costs and reserve funds have been exhausted in recent years to support operations such as replacing two ambulances used to provide transport services.

How has Lane Fire Authority worked to manage costs?

Lane Fire Authority has taken several steps to manage costs, including:

- Applying for available grants
- Sharing resources with neighboring fire agencies
- Utilizing volunteer firefighters to assist with response

Grant funding is typically temporary and competitive. Many programs require the agency to provide matching funds, which can range from 5% to 50% of the project cost.

Have there been changes to service levels or operations?

Operational adjustments have been made to align services with current available staffing and funding, including:

- Six currently vacant firefighter positions
- Elimination of dedicated training positions
- Changes to response protocols for certain types of calls

The Board of Directors will evaluate staffing levels and service delivery as part of future budget decisions.

How have costs increased?

Since the last local option levy passed in 2021:

- Ambulance licensing fees have gone up 220%
- Overtime increased 72% (This is necessary so there are enough firefighters to respond to calls.)
- Maintenance and repair costs for fire and EMS equipment went up 79%
- Federal and state mandates (FICA, Workers Compensation, PERS, Paid Leave Oregon) increased 60%
- Insurance costs up 48%
- Health care costs up 27%
- 911 Dispatch services increased 19%

What happens if the measure does not pass?

If the measure is not approved, Lane Fire Authority will operate with only its permanent tax rate and lose the existing \$0.35 local option levy. The Board of Directors would determine adjustments to personnel, services, and operations based on remaining funding.

Who can I contact if I have additional questions?

Fire Chief Dale Borland welcomes your questions at 541-935-2226 ext. 203 or daleborland@lanefire.org.