

**City of Missoula, Montana
New Business Item**

Item: Fire Department Levy Resolution

Council Meeting

Date: February 28, 2024

Sponsor(s): Gordy Hughes

Department or

Function: Fire Department

Prepared by: Cheryl Schatz

Ward(s) Affected:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ward 1 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ward 4 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ward 2 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ward 5 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ward 3 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ward 6 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |

Action Required:

Consider a resolution

Recommended Motion(s):

I move the City Council:

Adopt a resolution of the City Council of the City of Missoula, Montana, submitting to the qualified electors of the City of Missoula, at an election on June 4, 2024, the question of whether the City of Missoula shall be authorized to exceed the statutory mill levy provided for in Section 15-10-420, M.C.A. by permanently levying up to 34 mills per year, currently raising approximately \$7 million annually, for the purposes of providing additional funding or financing for Fire and Emergency Services including apparatus, vehicles, equipment, operations, personnel, facilities, and training.

Background and Alternatives Explored:

The Missoula Fire Department (MFD) seeks additional funding for the continuation and the needed expansion of fire and emergency operations. Additional tax revenues would provide the means to fund a fully staffed (24/7) sixth fire engine company, the continued operation of the Mobile Support Team, replacement of Fire Department apparatus as they reach their end of service life, and facilities maintenance and upgrades. The Fire Department currently uses one-time funding options in the form of grants and ARPA monies to operate its Mobile Support Team. This tax revenue would ensure the sustainability of this vital emergency response resource. MFD will be applying for a federal grant that would provide 100% funding for 20 additional firefighters. If the Department were successful in this award, these firefighters' wages and benefits would be covered for 3 years; after that the City would be required to pay. MFD has made previous requests through the budget process for funding of an additional engine company and firehouse without successful outcomes.

Council is requested to adopt a resolution to place the following language on the city's June 4, 2024, ballot in substantially the following form with such revisions as are necessary or appropriate:

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS: Completely fill in the oval using a blue or black ink pen before the

words “Fire and Emergency Services – Yes” if you wish to vote for the mill levy; if you are opposed to the mill levy, completely fill in the oval using a blue or black ink pen before the words “Fire and Emergency Services – No”.

For the purpose of providing additional funding or financing for Fire and Emergency Services including apparatus, vehicles, equipment, operations, personnel, facilities, and training shall the City Council of the City of Missoula be authorized to exceed the statutory mill levy provided for in Section 15-10-420, M.C.A. by permanently levying 34 mills, which would raise approximately \$7 million in 2024.

If this mill levy proposition is passed, it is estimated that, using current assessed values of taxable property, it would increase property taxes on a home valued at \$100,000 by \$46 annually, on a home valued at \$300,000 by \$138 annually, and on a home valued at \$600,000 by \$276 annually. An increase in property taxes may lead to an increase in rental costs.

Fire and Emergency Services levy - Yes
Fire and Emergency Services levy - No

Financial Implications:

If approved, this ballot measure will provide funding for ongoing fire services in Missoula.

Links to external websites:

n/a