

Hughson Fire Protection District

Measure W – Frequently Asked Questions

Where does the Hughson Fire Protection District (HFPD) revenue come from?

The primary source of revenues comes from the property taxes of the residents within our 35 square miles of coverage. There are also the anonymous donations and the fund-raising events (Chicken BBQ) held by the volunteers.

What is required for Measure W to pass (win)?

At least 66.7% of the voters who cast their ballots on Measure W in the November 3, 2020 Election must vote in favor of the measure for it to be approved.

How much is the proposed Special tax for Measure W?

The proposed Special Tax for each property for fiscal year 2021-2022 will be printed on the election materials to be mailed to registered voters prior to the November election. For single-family homes, the annual Special Tax is proposed to be \$39.75/year, or \$3.32 per month.

Why is Measure W needed?

Fire District operations are funded from local property taxes, awarded grants, donations and fund raising efforts by the volunteers. The current funding for fire protection and emergency response services has not kept pace with the increases in demand for these services, as well as higher and more costly standards of care, maintenance costs and training requirements. This Special Tax would provide funding for modernization of the fire station, lifesaving equipment and emergency vehicles.

Who can I talk to on the phone or in person to learn more about Measure W?

Please contact the Hughson Fire Protection District office at (209) 883-2863 and leave your name and phone number as well as the best time to contact you, and a Measure W committee member will contact you to provide you any additional information or answer any questions.

Why don't you have more fundraising events like the annual Chicken BBQ?

The volunteers are very proud to hold this event annually, but it does take a lot of time and preparation to prepare for it. Our volunteers already give up a significant amount of time from their families and careers for the training and services they provide, adding additional fundraising events would just be too much to ask of the volunteer's time.

We have always heard the Chicken BBQ fundraiser goes toward the purchase of fire and rescue equipment only. With the BBQ and the standard property tax revenues, that is still not enough to meet the needs of the HFPD?

The main reason why the volunteers started the Chicken BBQ fundraiser 33 years ago was to help supplement the HFPD by purchasing and donating to the fire and rescue equipment the HFPD could not afford. This started as small, but important, items and has grown significantly over the years. The latest example of that would be the purchase of engine 25 about 6 years ago. The cost of engine 25 was \$525,000. When engine 25 is paid off in about three years, the volunteers will have donated to the district from the Chicken BBQ and anonymous donations over **40%** of the cost of engine 25.

Don't I already pay enough to the City of Hughson with my utility bills?

The City of Hughson (formed in 1972) and The HFPD (formed in 1915) are two totally different agencies. The HFPD is a special fire district within Stanislaus County. The HFPD provides fire suppression and emergency services within the city limits and the surrounding 35 square miles, but is not part of the City of Hughson.

What happens if Measure W does not pass?

The HFPD and the volunteers will continue to do the best they can with the fiscal resources currently available and continue to do the best they can to provide fire suppression and emergency services.

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Can't the HFPD apply for state and federal grants?

The HFPD has applied for numerous grants over the years, some have been successful, and some have not. Since 2002, HFPD has applied for 15 federal grants to only be awarded 3 times; as with all grants the HFPD is expected to pay a portion of the full funds needed.

I did not know the HFPD was 94% volunteer, is that common for a department to be so dependent on volunteers?

About 70 percent of America's firefighters are volunteers, and 85 percent of the nation's fire departments are all or mostly volunteer, according to NFPA. The smallest communities — those with fewer than 10,000 residents — are almost always served by volunteer departments, also, according to NFPA, June 29, 2017

Why are so many fire departments dependent on volunteers?

As noted above, smaller cities, towns, rural areas etc. just do not have the fiscal resources to staff the stations and equipment with 24/7/365 paid personal. Therefore, with the limited fiscal resources, the smaller special districts and departments must manage their revenues for the various equipment, maintenance, training, supplies, etc. Thus, they must rely on the volunteer system.

How can we be assured that the revenues from Measure W will only go towards the stated purposes on the ballot and informational?

When the district is asking for the community to pay a special tax, the revenues must be allocated specifically for the stated verbiage in the ballot measure and is subject to annual audits.

How long will this special tax be in place, and is it subject to an annual increase, and if so, who makes that decision?

Measure W is for only 12 years. The increase cannot exceed 1% and must be approved by the board of directors during public board meetings for each year an increase is deemed necessary to meet the funding need as outline in the special tax purposes.

Has the HFPD had other special tax measure up for public vote, and if so, when and what were the results of those efforts

2018 Measure U **failed**

2007 Fire Suppression Assessment **failed**

1992 Special Assessment **passed**

- It has been almost 30 years since the district has asked and approved by the voters for additional funding beyond the standard property taxes

Didn't the HFPD get a new fire station a few years ago?

Yes, the building on 3rd street and the alley was acquired 15 years ago and is used for our administrative offices, classroom training and sleeping quarters for our volunteers that do not live within the city limits

Why does the HFPD need a new station for the fire apparatus, equipment, supplies etc.?

The 3 adjoining buildings that house all the apparatus etc. **range from 48 to 74 years old**. We are not only housing costly apparatus and equipment in outdated facilities; we are also not meeting standard structural, safety, health & disaster codes. HFPD needs to improve the safety & health hazards that are currently causing exposures to the equipment, PPE's in the apparatus bays, but most importantly, our volunteers.