

CLEARANCES	Initial	Date	Date Received in Council Office	Agenda Date	Assigned to:
Originator:	twh	05/06/16	<p>RECEIVED</p> <p>MAY 10 2016</p> <p>WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL</p>	05/17/16	Finance
Division Head:				05/17/16	Intro
Dept. Head:				5/31/16	Council
Prosecutor:	LL	05/11/16			
Purchasing/Budget:					
Executive:	TK	05.10.16			

TITLE OF DOCUMENT: EMS Levy Ordinance

ATTACHMENTS: Memo and Ordinance

SEPA review required? () Yes () NO Should Clerk schedule a hearing? () Yes () NO
 SEPA review completed? () Yes () NO Requested Date:

SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE: (If this item is an ordinance or requires a public hearing, you must provide the language for use in the required public notice. Be specific and cite RCW or WCC as appropriate. Be clear in explaining the intent of the action.)

Per request of the Council on May 3rd Executive Louws has submitted a proposed EMS Levy Ordinance for introduction and Council consideration of placement on the November 8 ballot. Executive Louws is available for discussion of the EMS Levy Ordinance.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

5/17/2016: Discussed

COUNCIL ACTION:

5/17/2016: Substitute Introduced 7-0

5/31/2016: Adopted 7-0 Ordinance 2016-019

Related County Contract #:

Related File Numbers:

Ordinance or Resolution Number:

Ord#2016-019

Please Note: Once adopted and signed, ordinances and resolutions are available for viewing and printing on the County's website at: www.co.whatcom.wa.us/council.

PROPOSED BY: Consent
INTRODUCTION DATE: MAY 17, 2016

ORDINANCE NO. 2016-019

PROVIDING FOR SUBMISSION TO THE QUALIFIED VOTERS OF WHATCOM COUNTY A PROPOSITION IMPOSING THE LEVY OF A REGULAR PROPERTY TAX EACH YEAR FOR SIX YEARS, COLLECTION BEGINNING IN 2017, AT A RATE OF \$.295 OR LESS PER \$1000 OF ASSESSED VALUATION TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES, IN THE GENERAL ELECTION TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 8, 2016

WHEREAS, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is a complex, coordinated response and emergency medical care system, that requires people and agencies, to perform an essential role as part of a coordinated, tiered, and seamless system of emergency medical care; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County's EMS system has evolved over 40 years, and has transitioned into a tiered level of service; and

WHEREAS, fire districts and agencies provide first responder services and Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulance service and Bellingham Fire Department and Fire District 7 provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance service; and

WHEREAS, the Countywide Emergency Medical Service system serves all of Whatcom County including Bellingham, Ferndale, Lynden, Blaine, Everson, Nooksack, and Sumas; and

WHEREAS, the existing funding sources dedicated to EMS are not sufficient and revenue has decreased due to changes in the Federal Medical reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, due to the impact of increased costs, limited dedicated funds and decreased revenue, the current funding for the countywide EMS system will not sustain the present EMS service levels; and

WHEREAS, emergency medical services are essential to the people in our community and stable funding is a practical solution to continue providing EMS services at current levels of service, meet future demands and sustain the system into the future; and

WHEREAS, the EMS system also includes regional support programs and services that provide administration, medical oversight and direction, citizen and emergency personnel training, planning, education of the public, and other support programs and services; and

WHEREAS, The EMS Funding Work Group confirmed by the Whatcom County Emergency Medical System Oversight Board (EOB) recommended a funding strategy and levy rate that will support and sustain a countywide EMS system; and

WHEREAS, the state legislature, through RCW 84.52.069, has recognized the needs and concerns described above, and has provided the mechanism for achieving a stable funding source for the provision of such emergency medical services through a voter approved levy; and

WHEREAS, the EMS Funding Work Group and EMS Oversight Board recommends instituting an emergency medical services levy to provide a stable funding source that will sustain the system for the next 6 years; and

WHEREAS, in order to assure such a provision of services, it is both necessary and appropriate that an additional regular property tax of \$.295 or less per \$1000 of assessed valuation be levied as provided for in this ordinance;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF WHATCOM COUNTY DOES ORDAIN:

Section 1. Approval of cities over 50,000 population. Pursuant to RCW 84.52.069, approval to place this county-wide levy proposal on the ballot has been obtained from the legislative body of the City of Bellingham through Resolution 2016-14, which is presently the only city in the county having a population over 50,000, before it is submitted to the electorate of Whatcom County for an election.

Section 2. Deposit of levy proceeds and eligible expenditures. All levy proceeds shall be deposited into the county Emergency Medical Services Fund. If approved by the qualified electors of the county, all levy proceeds authorized in the ordinance shall be used in accordance with RCW 84.52.069.

Section 3. Type of Levy. Pursuant to the authorization in RCW 84.52.069, this levy is a regular property tax levy on all taxable property located in Whatcom County and is in addition to the statutory tax rate limit of RCW 84.52.043.

Section 4. Levy Rate. The rate at which this proposed levy shall be submitted to the voters shall be the rate of \$.295 or less per \$1000 of assessed valuation each year, for six consecutive years, beginning in 2017. The collection of the taxes will begin in 2017. Taxes will be based upon the previous year's assessment.

Section 5. Ratification by the Electorate. The proposal for this levy shall be submitted to and approved by the voters in accordance with RCW 84.52.069.

Section 6. Call for Election. A ballot measure shall be submitted to the qualified voters of Whatcom County at the general election to be held on November 8, 2016, of a proposition authorizing the previously described six-year levy for emergency medical services. The Whatcom County Auditor shall cause notice to be given of this ordinance in accordance with the state constitution and general law and to submit to the registered voters of the county, at the said special county election, the proposition hereinafter set forth. The County Executive is hereby authorized and requested to initiate the appropriate action necessary to ensure a proposition in substantially the following form shall be submitted to the voters of Whatcom County::

Whatcom County, Washington

Proposition _____: Regular Property Tax
Levy for Emergency Medical Services

The Whatcom County Council passed Ordinance 2016-_____ concerning funding for the countywide Emergency Medical Services system. Will Whatcom County be authorized to impose regular property tax levies of \$ 0.295 or less per thousand dollars of assessed valuation for each of six consecutive years, with collection beginning in 2017, for the continued provision of emergency medical services?

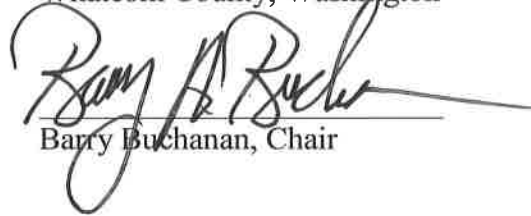
Yes

No

Section 7. Authorization for Interlocal Agreements. The County Executive is hereby authorized and requested to negotiate interlocal agreements: 1) with the City of Bellingham and Fire District #7 for EMS services consistent with the recommendations of the EMS Funding Work Group and the EMS Oversight Board; 2) with Fire Districts #4, #11, and #16, where current levy collections may be reduced consistent with RCW 84.52.069 (6); and 3) with the fire agencies that provide first response, for Council approval relating to the provision of emergency medical services over the length of time the levy is imposed.

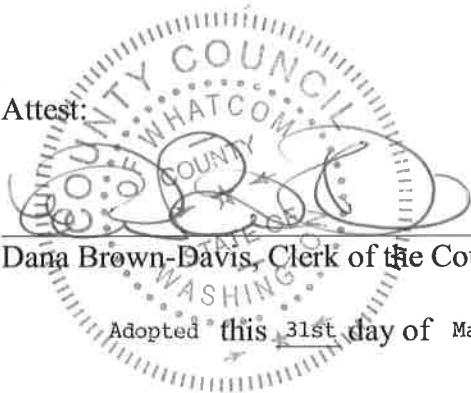
Section 8. Severability. If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

Whatcom County Council
Whatcom County, Washington



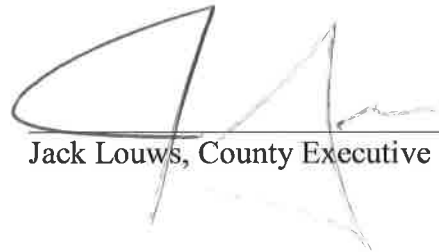
Barry Buchanan, Chair

Attest:



Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

Adopted this 31st day of May 2016.



Jack Louws, County Executive

Approved as to form:



Daniel L. Gibson
Whatcom County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney