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PROPOSED BY: _____
INTRODUCTION DATE: JULY 12, 2022

ORDINANCE NO. 2022-055

**PROVIDING FOR SUBMISSION TO THE QUALIFIED VOTERS OF WHATCOM COUNTY
A PROPOSITION RENEWIING THE LEVY OF A REGULAR PROPERTY TAX EACH YEAR
FOR SIX YEARS, COLLECTION BEGINNING IN 2023, 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 NOVEMBER 3, 2022**

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 integrated emergency medical care; and

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

WHEREAS, Whatcom County's EMS system has evolved over 48 years, and has transitioned into a tiered level of services supported by the countywide EMS Levy; and

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

WHEREAS, the EMS system responds to a broad range of people who will benefit from responders reflecting the diverse communities of Whatcom County; and

WHEREAS, Emergency Medical Services are essential and necessary for the protection and health and life of Whatcom County residents, and stable funding through the countywide Levy is a practical solution to continue providing EMS services at the current level as described in the 2023 to 2028 EMS Levy Strategic Plan in order to sustain the system into the future and to meet increased demands for service.

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

WHEREAS, investing in programs and services to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace, including training and dedicated personnel to improve and track progress on recruitment and retention, hiring practices, and a workplace culture of inclusion may enhance EMS service delivery and better assist those in need; and

WHEREAS, The EMS Levy Planning Committee confirmed by the Emergency Medical Services Oversight Board (EOB) recommended a funding strategy and levy rate that will support and sustain the countywide EMS system; and

1 **WHEREAS**, the state legislature, through RCW 84.52.069, has recognized the needs
2 and concerns described above, and has provided the mechanism for achieving a stable
3 funding source for the provision of such Emergency Medical Services through a voter
4 approved levy, and

5
6 **WHEREAS**, supporting the EMS Levy, as a primary funding mechanism for
7 countywide EMS, is key to advancing Whatcom County’s diversity, equity, and inclusion
8 priorities; and

9
10 **WHEREAS**, The EMS Levy Planning Committee and EMS Oversight Board
11 recommends the continuation/renewal of the countywide EMS Levy to provide a stable
12 funding source that will sustain the system for the next 6 years; and

13
14 **WHEREAS**, in order to assure the continued provision of services, it is both
15 necessary and appropriate to renew the regular property tax levy of \$.295 or less per \$1000
16 of assessed valuation as provided for in this ordinance;

17
18 **WHEREAS**, if the voters approve the proposed renewal of the EMS levy, for the tax
19 year 2023, the property tax levy rate would be set at \$0.295 per \$1,000 of assessed
20 valuation; and

21
22 **WHEREAS**, beginning in the 2024 tax year and for the remaining tax years of the
23 levy, the County Council would have the opportunity to review and potentially reduce the
24 EMS property tax levy in its annual EMS property tax levy ordinance, if the Council
25 determines that EMS needs can be fully met with a lower levy;

26
27 **NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF WHATCOM COUNTY DOES ORDAIN AS**
28 **FOLLOWS:**

29
30 **Section 1. Approval of cities over 50,000 population.** Pursuant to RCW 84.52.069,
31 approval to place this county-wide levy proposal on the ballot has been obtained from the
32 legislative body of the City of Bellingham through Resolutions 2022-15. The City of
33 Bellingham is presently the only city in Whatcom County having a population over 50,000.

34
35 **Section 2. Deposit of levy proceeds and eligible expenditures.** All levy proceeds shall
36 be deposited into the County Emergency Medical Services Fund. If approved by the
37 qualified electors of the County, all levy proceeds authorized in the ordinance shall be used
38 only for the provision of emergency medical services, including related personnel costs,
39 training for such personnel and related equipment, supplies, vehicles, and structures needed
40 for the provision of emergency medical services, and as may otherwise be provided under
41 RCW 84.52.043. Where permissible by law, personnel costs and training should also include
42 essential diversity, equity and inclusion components of recruitment, hiring, retention, and
43 training of personnel.

44
45 **Section 3. Type of Levy.** Pursuant to the authorization in RCW 84.52.069, this levy is a
46 regular property tax levy on all taxable property located in Whatcom County and is in
47 addition to the statutory tax rate limit of RCW 84.52.043.

48
49 **Section 4. Levy Rate.** The proposed levy rate submitted to the voters shall be \$.295 or
50 less per \$1000 of assessed valuation each year, for six consecutive years, beginning in
51 2023. The collections of the taxes will begin in 2023. Taxes will be based on the previous
52 year’s assessment.

53

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

3
4 **Section 6. Call for Election.** A ballot measure for a proposition authorizing the levy
5 described herein shall be submitted to the qualified voters of Whatcom County at the
6 general election to be held on November 8, 2022. The Whatcom County Auditor is hereby
7 authorized, directed, and empowered to cause notices of this ordinance and such election in
8 accordance with the state constitution and general law and to submit to the registered
9 voters of the County, at the special county election, the proposition hereinafter set forth.
10 Furthermore, the County Executive is hereby authorized and requested to initiate the
11 appropriate action necessary to ensure a proposition in substantially the following form shall
12 be submitted to the voters of Whatcom County:

13
14 Whatcom County, Washington

15
16 Proposition _____: Regular Property Tax
17 Levy for Emergency Medical Services

18
19 The Whatcom County Council passed Ordinance 2022-055 concerning the
20 renewed funding for the countywide Emergency Medical Services system. Will Whatcom
21 County be authorized to continue to impose a regular property tax levy of \$0.295 or less
22 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation for each of the six consecutive years, with
23 collection beginning in 2023, for the continued provision of emergency medical services?

24
25 Yes _____
26 No _____
27

28 **Section 7. Authorization for Interlocal Agreements.** The County Executive is hereby
29 authorized and requested to negotiate interlocal agreements: 1) with the City of Bellingham
30 and Fire District #7 for EMS services consistent with the recommendations of the EMS Levy
31 Planning Committee and the EMS Oversight Board; 2) and Whatcom County Fire Districts
32 where levy collections provide fire agencies with limited BLS funding consistent with RCW
33 84.52.069 relating to the provision of emergency medical services over the length of time
34 the levy is imposed.


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

4
5 **ADOPTED** this 26th day of July, 2022.

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12 Dana Brown-Davies, Clerk of the Council

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

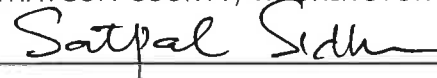

Todd Donovan, Council Chair

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16 APPROVED AS TO FORM:

17
18 /s/ Karen Frakes (approved via phone 7.25.22) / JL

19 Karen Frakes
20 Civil Deputy Prosecutor

WHATCOM COUNTY EXECUTIVE
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

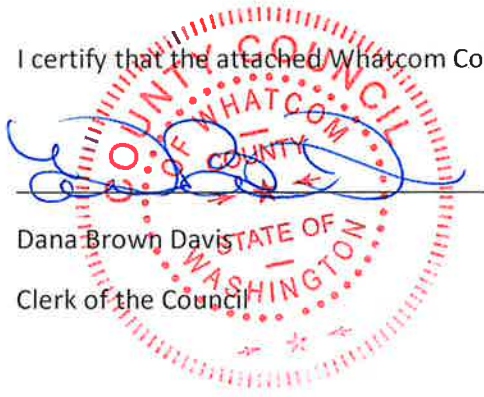
Satpal Sidhu,
County Executive

Approved () Denied

Date Signed: _____

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I certify that the attached Whatcom County Council Ordinance No. 2022-055 is a true and correct copy.



Dana Brown Davis
Clerk of the Council

8.2.2022

Date

RESOLUTION NO. 2022 - 15

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON, APPROVING A COUNTY WIDE BALLOT PROPOSITION FOR A LEVY TO FUND A COUNTYWIDE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SYSTEM FOR THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1, 2023, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2028, PURSUANT TO RCW 84.52.069

WHEREAS, in 2016 the Whatcom County electorate approved a six-year county-wide levy of not more than 29.5 cents per thousand dollars assessed valuation each year for a period of six consecutive years to provide stable and long-term funding for countywide emergency medical services (“EMS”) (the “2016 EMS Levy”); and

WHEREAS, the 2016 EMS Levy expires on December 31, 2022; and

WHEREAS, in anticipation of the expiration of the 2016 EMS Levy, the Whatcom County Emergency Medical System Oversight Board (“EOB”) convened an EMS Levy Planning Committee on March 10th, 2021, with the mission “to recommend a funding strategy and mechanism that will support a countywide emergency medical system”; and

WHEREAS, the EMS Levy Planning Committee has produced the 2023-2028 Levy Plan that has been endorsed by the EOB; and

WHEREAS, among other findings and recommendations, the 2023-2028 Levy Plan recommends submission to the Whatcom County electorate of a ballot proposition for the continuation of county-wide regular property tax levy of not more than 29.5 cents per thousand dollars assessed valuation each year for a period of six consecutive years for the purpose of continuing to provide stable and long-term funding for countywide emergency medical services; and

WHEREAS, on July 26, 2022, the Whatcom County Council adopted Ordinance 2022-055, providing for submission to the qualified voters of Whatcom County a proposition renewing the levy of a regular property tax each year for six years, collection beginning in 2023, at a rate of \$0.295 or less per \$1,000 of assessed valuation to continue to provide emergency medical services, in the general election to be held November 3, 2022; and

WHEREAS, RCW 84.52.069 requires the approval of the legislative authority of a majority of at least seventy-five percent of all cities exceeding a population of fifty thousand within the county to put an EMS Levy on the ballot.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM:

Section 1. The City of Bellingham supports the Whatcom County EMS Levy Planning Committee recommendations prepared and submitted to the EMS Oversight Board in May 2022 and supports placement of a ballot proposition on the ballot in the 2022 general election, as set forth in Whatcom County Ordinance 2022-055.

Section 2. The City of Bellingham hereby approves, pursuant to RCW 84.52.069, submission to the voters of a ballot proposition described in Whatcom County Ordinance 2022-055 for the continuation of countywide regular property tax levy of not more than 29.5 cents per thousand dollars assessed valuation each year for a period of six consecutive years, commencing January 1, 2023 and ending December 31, 2028, to provide stable and long-term funding for countywide emergency medical services.

PASSED by the Council this 1st day of August, 2022.


Council President

APPROVED by me this 2 day of August, 2022.


Mayor

ATTEST:


Finance Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Office of the City Attorney



Finance Department
City of Bellingham

August 2, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

I, Kelley Goetz, Deputy City Clerk, hereby certify that the attached copy of **Resolution #2022-15** is a true and correct copy of the original Ordinance AB 23382 approved by the Bellingham City Council on August 1, 2022.



Kelley Goetz
Deputy City Clerk



Date