



West Point Fire

PROTECTION DISTRICT

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WEST POINT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY, 2020

Background: For the past 15 years, the District has provided staffing 24 hours per day including an Engineer/emergency medical technician (EMT) and at least two firefighters (FFs); paid for by your current property taxes, Cal-Fire reimbursement for assisting them, and a small local tax. Yearly calls have risen from 103 in 1990 to 602 in 2019 including 35 fires with an engine rolling in 89 second on average.

Until 2018, Cal Fire provided the majority of our budget due to our assisting them on their fires, but funds from them have fallen 85% in 2019 due to the lack of fire activity. Our Board is seeking public opinion concerning whether the Directors should reduce services or requests an additional tax to maintain its current coverage. Please review the following paragraphs, answer the four questions, and share any ideas that might help.

Strategy one: If at least two-thirds of our residents support a tax measure to pay fifteen dollars per month, the District can maintain current services 24-7-365 days a year rolling a fully trained and staffed vehicle, on average within 89 seconds to all fires, medical emergencies, and traffic accidents. The most important personnel may be our emergency medical technicians who responded to 550 calls in 2019 and periodically save lives; in one five-month period, in 2017, they arrived quickly enough to restore breathing to three residents. This does not imply that having at least three personnel on duty at all times is less important than EMTs; firefighters first responsibility during a fire is to rescue trapped residents inside their homes, followed by fire extinguishment, and then preventing adjacent structures from igniting. Fire and E.M.S. services are both essential.

Strategies two or three: No increase in taxes would mean WPPFD would have to reduce expenses by either: (a) reducing the number of personnel on duty 24-7-365 to 1 EMT, and request that unpaid fire fighter volunteers rush to the station, dress, and respond to fires or (b) keep our current staffing on Friday through Sunday when most calls occur, and relying on volunteers to arrive, dress, and respond within 15 to 25 minutes on Monday thru Thursday.

Which of the following 4 choices should your Board of Directors pursue? Please read the 4 choices first, then place a Yes or No in front of each question. Thank you for your feedback.

_____ Should we balance the budget by reducing fire services since medical is more important because saving lives is more important than saving property.

_____ Should we balance our budget by doing away with emergency medical services since preventing property loss is more important than saving lives.

_____ Since medical and fire services are both essential, rather than reduce staffing, we should keep what we currently have and place an additional \$15 per month tax.

_____ Should we cut fire and medical services to stay within its existing budget. No new tax.

Other comments/suggestions are welcome here. _____

You can send us your responses in one of three ways, take our electronic survey at www.westpointfire.org, by mail at P.O. Box 315, West Point CA 95255, or drop it off at the fire station at 195 Spink Rd., West Point CA 95255. **Please submit responses by February 15, 2020.** Thank you for participating, you do not need to provide your name.

Stephen Schoenthaler, Ph.D., WPPFD Board Chair