



Brevard County Board of County Commissioners

2725 Judge Fran Jamieson
Way
Viera, FL 32940

Legislation Text

File #: 2594, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Proposed Fire Assessment for Brevard County Fire Rescue

Fiscal Impact:

To be determined by Board consideration for two adjustment options to the current Fire Assessment Rate

Dept/Office:

Public Safety/Brevard County Fire Rescue

Requested Action:

Fire Rescue is requesting Board consideration for three actions 1) Tentatively approve a fire assessment adjustment after considering two options, 2) Approve Fire Assessment Notice to Property Owners, and 3) Approve Public Hearing for final approval of the proposed Fire Assessment.

Summary Explanation and Background:

At the February Budget Workshop, Public Safety presented a Fire Assessment proposal to be effective Fiscal Year 2021-2022. The Board gave staff general direction to bring back options to meet identified requirements in funding that address operating expenses. The Fire Assessment is one of two revenue sources that fund Fire Operations and is responsible for funding personnel, capital, infrastructure, and a reserve balance for the department.

The current Fire Assessment was developed in 2008 and readjusted in 2018 upon public hearing and Board approval. Population growth contributing to increased workload, employee turnover resulting in excess overtime, and year-to-year inflation on emergency equipment and supplies are escalating operating expenses for Fire Rescue.

Action 1: Proposed Fire Assessment Rates:

Option 1

A 29% adjustment to the current Fire Assessment rates using current approved Fire Assessment methodology with annually adjusted increases to CPI or 3%, whichever is lower. The new assessment rate equates to a \$4.75 per month increase to the average assessed homeowner.

This adjusted rate would generate approximately \$7,267,100 annually in additional revenue.

This increase will focus investment to entry level and high attrition Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician and Firefighter Paramedic positions with a salary in a range with identified 2021 comparables of surrounding jurisdictions within three years. This option also covers future capacity requirements due to growth and adds the positions needed in the floater pool to help resolve overtime issues.

Option 1 will enable Brevard County Fire Rescue to improve compliance with National Fire Protection Association standards in regards to apparatus and equipment replacement, make an investment in current and future fire station relocations and replacements, and support an investment in the Fire Rescue Fleet facility. Additionally, property owners may see a benefit as a result of an improved Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating. This option also addresses required reserves over 7 years, recommended as a best practice.

Option 2

A 35% increase to the current Fire Assessment rates using current approved Fire Assessment methodology with annually adjusted increases to CPI or 3%, whichever is lower. The new assessment rate equates to a \$5.74 per month increase to the average assessed homeowner. This adjusted rate would generate approximately \$8,770,650 annually in additional revenue.

This increase will provide flexibility to accelerate the time frame for addressing the wage disparity between Brevard County and identified 2021 comparables of surrounding jurisdictions. It would also allow addressing all Brevard County Fire Rescue field classifications with surrounding jurisdiction comparables notwithstanding attrition rates.

Option 2 mirrors option 1 in terms of future capacity, overtime, reserve requirements, and meeting National Fire Protection Association standards.

Action 2: Approve Fire Assessment Notice to Property Owners:

Request approval of notice to property owners (please see attachment 1) and impacts to each property class (please see attachment 2). We will update this notice with the amounts as approved by the board. The proposed notice has been coordinated with the County Attorney's Office.

Action 3: Set public hearing date for final approval of proposed Fire Assessment:

Request authorization to schedule a public hearing for final approval of the proposed Fire Assessment at the regularly scheduled board meeting on 20 April, 2021 at 09:00 a.m. If approved, the Special Assessment rate resolution will be modified to reflect the Board authorized user fees.

Clerk to the Board Instructions: