

MAR 01 2024

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT FOR PRINTING IN THE MARION COUNTY VOTER PAMPHLET

Measure No. 24-496

Election Date: May 21, 2024

The Jefferson Rural Fire Protection District (JFD) relies on a five-year levy to meet the increasing demands for emergency services of the Fire District. The current local option levy expires June 2024. As a result, the Board of Directors is asking the voters to approve a five-year operating levy at the rate of \$0.81 per \$1,000 of **taxable assessed** value. Without levy funding, emergency service levels will be greatly reduced. Revenue from this levy would allow the Fire District to meet growing demands on Fire District services caused by increased call volume. The revenue would also address the rising cost of fuel, medical supplies, and other materials needed for operation.

Who does the Fire District Protect?

Jefferson Rural Fire Protection District provides ambulance, EMS, fire response, hazardous materials response, and water rescue within an 86 square mile area in Marion and Linn Counties protecting the communities of Jefferson, Millersburg, and Talbot. Jefferson Fire District has seen a 41.5% increase in services used over the last ten years.

How is the Fire District Funded?

Jefferson Fire District is a Special District, a separate unit of government with its own tax base, not part of a city, county, or state government. Taxes levied within the Jefferson Fire District stay within the district. All registered voters within the Jefferson Fire District vote on the levy and all residents including businesses within the Fire District pay taxes. The Fire District was formed in 1956 by a vote of the people, it is governed by an elected Board of Directors, who reside in the Fire District. After careful review of Equipment, Facilities, and Staffing, the Board of Directors is asking the voters to approve a five-year levy to sustain current services and to meet the growing needs of the Fire District.

How would levy funds be used?

If approved the Fire District will use tax revenue to cover increased operational costs for day-to-day operations. Increased costs include fuel, protective equipment for volunteers, training for volunteers, medications used for treating patients, and equipment. Additionally, revenue from the levy is anticipated to pay for 3 additional firefighters/paramedics to provide 24-hour coverage for a second ambulance, fire engine, water tender or rescue as needed. Funding will allow the District to cover back-to-back calls, replace an aging ambulance, continue to maintain apparatus and facilities to a high level of readiness, and review and update JFD strategic plan.

What happens if the levy fails?

If the levy fails, JFD will reduce part-time staff that provide coverage for the ambulance and use administrative staff to cover those positions, which will reduce the number of personnel available to cover back-to-back calls. Reduced funding will impact the ability to recruit and retain volunteers; limit the ability to purchase personal protective equipment, gear, and provide training opportunities for volunteers. It will cause a reduction in funds to repair and maintain fire apparatus and fire stations. The District will eliminate the water rescue team.

For information contact Chief Eckhardt at (541) 327-2822 or email Jefferson.chief@jeffersonfire.org.

Total Words 500 (NOTE: This statement must not exceed 500 words.)

Authorized Signature Signature redacted Title Fire Chief

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Local Government Unit Jefferson Rural Fire Protection District