

Fire district assessment fails by less than a vote

June 18, 2021



A vote to increase funding to the Crescent City Fire Protection District through local property tax dollars has failed, again.

After an initial tally, the benefit assessment appears to have failed by less than one vote, with 50.006% opposed and 49.993% in favor. A weighted voting system, which gives commercial properties and multi-family residential homes more say, also accounts for the “less than one vote” conundrum, according to City Manager Eric Wier.

The failed benefit assessment puts the district fire department in a precarious position, as a 2006 benefit assessment is set to end this year, leaving the department with enough cash to operate for just two more years unless additional revenues are discovered, according to a recent report from the CCFPD. Another attempt at passing a benefit assessment to fund the district fire department failed in fall of 2020.

The fire department currently collects \$42 per residence in the district, however, with the 2006 assessment ending, that number will fall to \$24 at the end of this year. The proposed assessment would have increased

the cost per residence to \$98, according to the CCFPD report.

In comparison, the Fortuna and Arcata Fire Protection Districts collect \$72 and \$186 per residence respectively.

Since 2017, calls for emergency service to the mostly volunteer fire department have seen a dramatic uptick, jumping from about 1,350 calls each year to more than 2,000 in the past four years. Most of the calls are for emergency medical service, which the fire department is responsible for providing.

Although the county is conducting a recount of the vote due to the narrow margin, it appears the fire department will have to battle rising call volumes with less resources at their disposal.

Crescent City Fire Protection District could not immediately be reached for comment on this story.