

Crescent Fire Protection District benefit assessment increase fails

October 15, 2020



Voters have rejected the Crescent Fire Protection District's (CFPD) Proposition 218 benefit assessment to renew and increase funding for fire and emergency response services, according to a CFPD press release Oct. 14.

The release states that according to the Del Norte County Registrar, at the close of the 45-day voting period, with all votes tabulated, final ballot tabulation showed 45% voted yes and 55% voted no. In addition, only 24% of total ballots were returned from property owners.

Because this was a ballot process for property owners, the assessment needed a 50% plus 1 vote of total ballots cast to pass successfully.

The CFPD has been providing fire and emergency services to the unincorporated areas surrounding Crescent City since 1949, and in partnership with Crescent City since 2004.

"Because of the District's partnership with the City, operating costs of the department are shared between the two," the CFPD release said. "In addition, CFPD and Crescent City recently completed a 10-year Master

Plan that outlined the costs required to sustain and improve the department for the next 10 years, including improved staffing, volunteer training programs, equipment and apparatus replacement.”

In 1987, and later in 2006, CFPD established a benefit assessment to help fund services and apparatus replacement. However, a portion of this assessment is set to expire next year, which is why CFPD Board of Directors had voted to move forward with the Prop. 218 benefit assessment this fall.

According to the CFPD, with the expiring 2006 assessment, CFPD’s annual budget will be severely impacted.

“Reports from the Board show that the limited reserve funds will likely be exhausted within a 2-3 year period should the CFPD continue operations at the current level of service,” the release states. “The CFPD Board expects that with the news of the assessment failing, that several tough decisions will have to be made, including reducing the level of service provide by the department.”

“While we are disappointed with the results, we know our volunteer firefighter program is the heart of this community,” said Fire Chief Bill Gillespie stated. “The board would like to thank all the property owners who voted in the election, and the volunteers who worked to help get information out about the assessment.”

Looking ahead, the CFPD Board will be evaluating its options in determining its next steps, including the possibility of another election in 2021 before the 2006 assessment funding expires.