

## Public Safety Referendum

After extensive discussion and careful evaluation of the current and future public safety needs within the Town of Grand Chute, the Town Board unanimously voted to move forward with a referendum question to be placed on the November ballot seeking a levy limit increase to fund an additional nine firefighter/paramedic positions (three personnel for each of the three rotating 24-hour shifts) for your Grand Chute Fire Department. This question, which will result in a levy increase of \$5.72 per month on a \$200,000 home, will allow the citizens of Grand Chute to voice their desires in relation to the level of public safety service their community receives, and supports the **top two priorities for improvement identified by citizen stakeholders in the GCFD 2017-2020 strategic plan which included delivering rapid emergency response and staffing to ensure personnel availability for these responses.**

As dedicated servants of our community, the decision to seek voter approval for this increase in the levy to fund these additional positions is not one which was taken lightly. Your Grand Chute Fire Department has and will continue to strive to provide excellent service to the citizens and visitors of our municipality while maintaining the utmost level of fiscal responsibility. With that, increasing service demands in the form of growing numbers of calls for fire, rescue, and emergency medical services (EMS), simultaneous calls for service, and additional inspections and risk reduction activities as a result of growth and development within the Town have contributed to an environment in which the maintenance of existing service levels will be challenging, if not impossible without additional personnel to meet these increasing needs.

The last public safety referendum question was posed to Grand Chute citizens in 2008 and subsequently resulted in the hiring of six firefighters upon its approval. As previously mentioned, there has been a significant increase in service demands since that referendum was approved more than ten years ago. **In 2019, your Grand Chute Fire Department responded to 2,272 calls for service, representing a 62% percent increase since the 2008 total of 1,404.** The number of concurrent calls – when two or more emergency incidents are being addressed simultaneously – has also increased significantly. **In 2019, GCFD had 267 overlapping calls representing a 126% increase when compared to 2008 figures.** This is particularly significant due to the fact that the GCFD currently has only two pieces of fire apparatus staffed each day, meaning that every instance in which there are overlapping calls there are no additional resources to send on subsequently occurring emergencies, leaving the Town unprotected and increasingly reliant on our neighboring fire departments to assist which results in extended response times.

In addition to emergency incidents, **the number of scheduled public education events has increased 71% from 63 in 2008 to 108 in 2019.** Your Fire Department and Town leadership are concerned about how these service demand increases stretch the personnel availability for emergency incidents and compromise their ability to continue to perform the community risk reduction efforts that have resulted in below average injuries, deaths, and dollar loss values in the Town. **The effectiveness of these proactive risk reduction efforts is demonstrated by the fact that there has not been a civilian fire fatality in Grand Chute since 1977.** The additional staffing which would be afforded to our community via the successful passing of the proposed referendum would assist in preserving the abilities of your

Grand Chute Fire Personnel to continue to prevent those types of tragic outcomes not felt in our community for more than 40 years.

Since the 2008 referendum, your Grand Chute Fire Department has added single firefighter positions occasionally as the budget has allowed. Given the experienced and projected growth within the Town, the current and future needs require the addition of another three-person crew across all three shifts similar to the result of the 2008 staffing additions. With this, the staffing minimum will grow from 2 three-person crews who currently staff a minimum of one engine and either another engine or the ladder truck depending on the type of call to 3 three-person crews to staff two engines and the ladder truck at all times. **The addition of a third crew at all times will show immediate benefits to GCFD's coverage of the increasing call volume, the simultaneous calls, and the situations when an incident requires more than one crew or apparatus to address the issue.** Additionally, the staffing of the ladder truck 24-hours a day will enhance civilian and firefighter safety by facilitating the expedient arrival of personnel on the scene to fires, accidents, and other emergencies requiring significant commitment of resources.

Last but certainly not least, this referendum includes the request to hire firefighter/paramedics as opposed to our current practice of hiring of firefighter/EMTs. **This will allow your Grand Chute Fire Department to provide advanced life support (ALS) care to the community immediately upon our arrival at medical emergencies, ensuring our community receives the highest standard of care in their time of need, while simultaneously strengthening the capability and capacity of our EMS system and longstanding partnership with Gold Cross Ambulance.** This increase in service level will result in the Town's residents and visitors receiving emergency medical care from providers trained at the highest level faster than before, ensuring they "experience better" prehospital care. **The cost difference within this referendum request associated with hiring firefighter/paramedics as opposed to firefighter/EMTs equates to 68 cents of additional levy annually based on a \$200,000 home.**

Your Grand Chute Fire Department exists to protect the health and safety of our community through an all-hazards response model utilizing dedicated personnel who are trained and equipped to provide excellent fire suppression, rescue, and emergency medical care. Your Grand Chute Fire Department is dedicated to proactively addressing as well as responding quickly, professionally, and compassionately to the evolving needs of our community and are honored and humbled to do so each and every day. The Town Board has approved this referendum question to allow you, the citizens, to determine how your fire department will meet these current and future challenges associated with the increasing service demands which have accompanied the growth our Town has experienced over the last decade, and we are thankful for their consideration in doing so. Should you have any questions regarding the referendum question, emergency operations, or anything else pertaining to the services your Grand Chute Fire Department provides, please don't hesitate to stop by Fire Station One, or contact Fire Chief Bantes at (920) 832-6050, or [timothy.bantes@grandchute.net](mailto:timothy.bantes@grandchute.net).