

Town of Grand Chute Fire Department Staffing Referendum

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why do we need a referendum to hire firefighters?

The State of Wisconsin has imposed tax levy limits on the municipalities of the State, limiting the annual amount of increase in the tax levy. The law also permits the municipality to exceed the state limits if the unit of government approves a resolution for the increase and the resolution is approved by a referendum of the election.

The Grand Chute Town Board has passed a resolution supporting the addition of up to nine (9) full time Firefighter/Paramedic positions, which would authorize the Town to exceed the state levy limit. The resolution also specifies that the proposed increase will apply on an ongoing basis after fiscal year 2021.

2. How much will this cost?

If passed, the referendum will allow the Town to override the levy limit by \$974,200 to hire nine (9) additional fulltime Firefighter/Paramedics. For a Town resident who owns a home valued at \$200,000, it will cost that homeowner \$68.68 per year or \$5.72 a month.

3. What is the exact wording of the staffing referendum?

Under state law, the increase in the levy of the Town of Grand Chute for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year is limited to 1.58 percent, which results in a levy of \$13,802,886. Shall the Town of Grand Chute be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year and on an ongoing basis for the purpose of hiring of nine (9) new Firefighter/Paramedics by a total of 7.06 percent, which results in a levy of \$14,777,086?

This Referendum ballot asks the Town of Grand Chute electors to vote "Yes" or "No" on the Referendum question above.

A "Yes" vote on the question is a vote in favor of increasing the levy limit for an additional nine (9) Firefighters/Paramedics in an amount of \$974,200.

A "No" vote on the question is a vote against the Town Board of the Town of Grand Chute to exceed the levy limit to hire an additional nine (9) Firefighters/Paramedics.

4. How many calls for service does the fire department receive?

In 2019, the Department responded to 2,272 calls for service. Over 60% of those calls were for emergency medical assistance. The fire department also performed over 2,000 fire code building inspections and held over 100 fire prevention education events.

The population of the Town has increased 11% in the last 10 years; the projected population in 2040 is over 29,000. Correspondingly, the calls for service have increased 61% and will continue to increase along with the population.

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5. What is the current fire department staffing level?

Currently 2 fire stations are staffed 24/7 with a minimum of 3 firefighters at each station.

One crew of 3 personnel at Station 2 staff an engine. One crew of 3 personnel at Station 1 staff either an engine or a ladder truck depending on the type of emergency incident. If the Station 1 crew is away from the station with the engine, the ladder truck is unavailable to respond in a timely way, and vice versa.

6. What does this proposed increase in staffing do?

The addition of 9 personnel will add 3 personnel to each of the 3 shifts to staff the ladder truck at Station 1 24/7/365. This proposed staffing increase will also add a minimum of one paramedic to each crew at Station 1 and Station 2.

7. How will this staffing referendum impact response times in the Town?

Response time will improve, especially when the Fire Department is called for overlapping incidents (2+ calls for service at the same time). GCFD has experienced a 126% increase in these overlapping incidents since 2008. Staffing another fire apparatus 24/7 will allow emergency personnel to respond to these simultaneous calls faster.

8. Why does the Town seek to hire Firefighter / Paramedics?

Every GCFD firefighter is a certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) at a minimum. Paramedics receive significantly more training to be able to perform more advanced lifesaving assessments and interventions when compared to EMTs. With a GCFD crew arriving prior to an ambulance over 75% of the time, the addition of paramedics to GCFD crews will ensure that this advanced level of care arrives and is initiated faster at your emergency. Adding this higher level of care represents 1% (\$0.68) of the proposed referendum cost for a home valued at \$200,000.

9. If I have a specific question on the referendum, whom would I ask?

Fire Department Administration can answer any questions regarding the Department's operations, policies and procedures, and data. You can call (920) 832-6050 and ask for Fire Chief Bantes.

10. What happens if the referendum fails?

The Town, in collaboration with the Fire Department, will have to make difficult choices about where risk reduction and response services are modified, curtailed, or eliminated to meet the demands of increasing service demands.