

WHATCOM COUNTY
Emergency Medical Services
800 E Chestnut, Suite 3C
Bellingham, WA 98225



Mike Hilley
WCEMS Manger

MEMORANDUM

To: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
From: Mike Hilley, EMS Manager
Re: 2024 to 2029 Advanced Life Support Inter-Local Agreements
City of Bellingham Fire Department (BFD)
Whatcom County Fire Protection District 7 (FD7)
Date: November 11, 2023

Background and Purpose

The 2023-2028 Countywide Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Levy was passed in November 2022 that provides funding for five (5) Paramedic Units (personnel and operations) as well as programmatic costs for Community Paramedics, Paramedic Training and Emergency Medical Services Field Supervisors (EMS Captains). Levy funding for the lead Advanced Life Support (ALS) agencies (BFD and FD7) is based on the 2023 to 2028 Emergency Medical Services Levy Plan drafted and approved by the County Council July 2022.

Both Interlocal agreements presented (ILA's) contain elements of the EMS Levy Plan as related to developing the base costs of operations, personnel and programs beginning in 2024. Each year beyond 2024, those base costs are scheduled to increase using CPIW+1 averaged over the previous six (6) months (Jan to June) to determine the next year's annual allocation amount with a floor of 3.0%.

The **Bellingham Fire Department** ILA includes the annual ALS service fee for calendar year 2024 which totals **\$12,830,990.00**.

Total cost for four (4) Paramedic Units:	\$10,835,136.00 (\$2,708,784.00 per unit)
EMS Captain:	\$1,054,869.00 (4 EMS Captains)
Community Paramedic Program:	\$455,180.00 (2 Community Paramedic Units)
Paramedic School Base Budget (without students):	\$485,805.00

The **Whatcom County Fire Protection District 7** ILA includes the annual ALS service fee for calendar year 2024 which totals **\$3,189,754.00**.

Total cost for one (1) Paramedic Unit:	\$2,708,784.00
EMS Captain:	\$263,717.00 (Beginning July 1, 2024 12-hour unit, 7 days per week)
Community Paramedic:	\$217,253.00 (1 Community Paramedic Unit)

For both agencies, the annual allocations remain consistent with the adopted Levy Plan with the exception of the Paramedic School base budget, the Community Paramedic programs and the implementation of a half time EMS Supervisor unit at FD7.

As related to the Paramedic School; this budget represents a base budget for BFD to operate the school during this levy cycle. This budget has increased by approximately \$114,000 over the adopted levy plan. This increase is due to the need for administrative support of the paramedic training program and increased instructor/equipment costs as the program expands.

The Community Paramedic program costs increased approximately \$15,000 over CPIW+1% which is related to initial and

continuing education costs for the Community Paramedic as well as increased labor costs associated with new labor contracts. There is a desire to increase the numbers of Community Paramedics in future years as mentioned in the Levy Plan. Increases were not contemplated in the plan budget.

In addition, there is an increase of EMS response services where Fire District 7 will implement 12 hour/7 days a week Field Supervisor Unit (EMS Captain) serving the north county response area beginning July of 2024. The Levy Plan narrative mentions a possible expansion of this program later during this levy period. Costs increase from \$263,717 to \$527,434 per year beginning in 2025 with the CPIW+1% inflator applied.

Both the EMS Oversight Board (EOB) and the Finance Sub-Committee recognize these increased budgets will have an effect on the ending fund balance over the life of the levy. As required by the EMS levy ordinance, the EOB and EMS administration will report and update the County Council on the health of the ending fund balance which will require budget adjustments to maintain an ending fund balance in accordance with the reserves policy.

The 2024 to 2029 Interlocal Agreements are presented to the county council for approval after months of work between Whatcom County EMS and the ALS lead agencies. The overall goal is to reduce the amount of budget supplementals and monthly invoicing as those programmatic base costs are integrated into the annual/monthly payments to the agencies.

Submitted by Mike Hilley, Whatcom County EMS Manager; mhilley@co.whatcom.wa.us, 360-927-1155