



Measure #20-382

Proposed 5-Year Operations Levy

Frequently Asked Questions

Background

In May of 2022, voters approved a 5-year operating levy for \$1.00 per \$1000 of assessed property value. This levy has provided Dexter Fire with the ability to staff the station 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, as well as provided matching funds for grants involving required firefighting safety equipment, including turnout gear and air packs.

In May 2026, voters will have an opportunity to consider renewing the 5-year operating levy which would provide funding to maintain 24/7 staffing levels for the Dexter Fire District, build reserves for future apparatus replacement, training, and new Personal Protective Equipment. If renewed, the measure would authorize collection of property taxes, for a 5-year period, beginning in 2027.

Why is the fire district seeking an operating levy renewal?

Dexter Fire is seeking the renewal of the current \$1.00 per \$1000 Assessed Valuation for the following reasons:

- Maintaining paid staff 24/7, which results in quicker response times to all calls for service
- Decrease in volunteer personnel's availability, with no volunteers living in District
- Higher costs to deliver service and scheduled maintenance
- An increase in demand for emergency responses since the 1967 tax rate freeze

In 1997, Measure 50 made the current tax rate for fire districts permanent, when they previously had the option of increasing it by 3% each year. The 2026 fire tax rate is exactly what it was nearly 30 years ago. The only way to obtain additional revenue is through a 5-year operating levy for operational needs or a 30-year bond for capital needs. Dexter Fire's base tax level, without a levy, is not sustainable for delivering the service we have provided for the past 5 years. If the local option levy is not renewed, the Board of Directors will have to take steps to determine staffing cuts.

If the measure passes, how much would it cost?

If the measure passes, property owners would pay the same as they currently do today. The proposed levy would renew the current rate of \$1.00 per \$1000 of assessed property value (not real market value). The owner of a median-priced home in the fire district, with an assessed value of \$200,000, would pay approximately \$16.66 per month, or about \$200.00 per year. The proposed 2027 levy would raise approximately \$1,424,530 over the five-year period.

If the measure does not pass, what would happen?

If the measure does not pass, the fire district would need to consider staffing reductions. A reduction in staffing could result in delayed response times or, in some cases, no response from the district due to fewer available personnel or reduced coverage hours. Currently, Dexter Fire has 19 volunteer responders, none of whom live within the district, meaning all volunteers come from neighboring cities and towns, with one traveling from Central Oregon.

How does Dexter Fire compare to other similar sized fire districts, for permanent tax rate?

When comparing permanent tax rates in Lane County, Dexter Fire currently has one of the lowest rates. Dexter Fire has a permanent tax rate of \$1.41 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Neighboring districts are as follows:

Lowell Fire - \$2.69 per \$1000*

Pleasant Hill/Goshen - \$2.20 per \$1000

McKenzie Fire - \$1.61 per \$1000*

Mohawk Fire - \$1.91 per \$1000*

Coburg Fire - \$1.18 per \$1000*

*These fire districts currently have a 5-year Operating Levy in place.



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Is Dexter Fire District in debt?

No. Dexter Fire is currently debt free, which has given the District the ability to operate on a smaller budget while still providing 24/7 coverage. The District paid off its engine loan in 2026.

If Dexter Fire does not have personnel at the station to respond, how long will it take for emergency services to arrive at my emergency? (i.e., motor vehicle accident, medical emergency, house or field fire, rescue, etc.)?

If the station does not have volunteers, residents on site, or staff ready to respond to emergency calls, Dexter residents will experience varying response delays depending on the availability of surrounding fire districts, as well as the travel time for the nearest ambulance. Pleasant Hill Goshen Fire and Lowell Fire may assist with high-acuity calls under the current mutual aid agreement; however, they may be committed to their own emergencies, and that assistance is not guaranteed and the mutual aid agreement could end at their discretion.

If Dexter Fire is not able to respond, how long will it take an ambulance to arrive?

The closest ambulance responds from Eugene Springfield Fire Station #16, in Springfield. Travel time will vary depending on their location at the time of dispatch, but it is approximately 18 minutes if the unit is readily available. Dexter Fire does not staff or own an ambulance.

What types of calls do Dexter Fire respond to?

Dexter Fire responds to many types of calls within the district, as well as throughout the county as a mutual aid partner, and across the state during wildland fire season. In 2025, Dexter Fire responded to over 400 calls for service, with approximately 77% being EMS-related, 10% fire-related, and the remaining 13% varying from backyard burns, smoke investigations, fire alarms, hazardous materials, downed power lines, and public agency assists.

How many EMT's, Advanced EMT's, EMT- Intermediates, and Paramedics does Dexter Fire have?

Currently, Dexter Fire has 23 fire and EMS responders on the roster, including 4 career staff and 19 volunteer firefighters/EMS responders. The District has 1 Paramedic, 2 EMT-Intermediates, 1 Advanced EMT, and 16 EMTs.

What is the difference between Real Market Value (RMV) and Assessed Value (AV)?

Real Market Value is the going rate for what a home would sell for to a potential buyer. The Assessed Value is generally lower than the Real Market Value—typically around 50% in Lane County—and is capped to only a 3% statutory increase per year under state law. Your Property Taxes are based on the Assessed Value of your home.

