

AFDA Ballot Letter 2017 March

To: Arizona Fire Districts

Subject: Guidance checklist for tax levy override to \$3.50

As you may know, the Arizona State Legislature passed Senate Bill 1244 last spring. The bill allowed those fire districts who are capped at \$3.25 to go to the voters to approve a *one time* budget override to \$3.50. The bill allowed the question to be placed ONLY on last year's General Election and this coming November 2017 election.

Please note; This November is the LAST CHANCE for fire districts to place the measure on the ballot!

The Arizona Fire District Association Board of Directors has prepared this packet of information that may be helpful to those fire districts that plan to go to ballot in November.

Here are some very important items to consider;

- ✓ Major deadlines in preparing for the ballot measure are rapidly approaching. You must get started now! Below are the early critical items that need to be addressed quickly;
- ✓ Only those fire district currently capped at \$3.25 are eligible to place the measure on the ballot. **John, we need clarification on this**
- ✓ Connect immediately with you County Election Office for direction and deadlines. Each county has different deadlines for submitting documents; some as early as this coming June.
- ✓ One of those documents is a resolution approved by the Fire Board reflecting the Districts intent to place the measure on the ballot. So place the resolution on your Fire Board meeting agenda quickly.
- ✓ Check in with both your County Recorder's Office and Records Office. Both *will charge fees for placing the measure on the ballot* based on the number of registered voters. You'll need that data for your 2017/2018 budget development.

- ✓ You must check in with your fire district attorney, or your county attorney, for *approval of the ballot language*. Do so quickly as it often takes time for attorneys to review documents. See attached model language.

The attached information packet includes a guidance checklist for all the benchmarks and documents that may need to be considered and/or submitted. They were developed by Chief Gary Morris of the Pine Strawberry Fire District along with Chief Paul Bourgeois of the Superstition Fire and Medical District. Both had very successful ballot measures pass with very high percentages of passage; 67% and 58% respectfully. In addition to the checklist, the packet includes sample ballot language, a sample resolution, a copy of a post card that Pine Strawberry Fire District sent to all residents (at 7 cents each to mail), a voter education pamphlet, a copy of the Pine Strawberry Fire Districts PowerPoint used at public meetings, a copy of three PowerPoints delivered at the January AFDA Conference in Laughlin in January related to the ballot process. Feel free to contact Chief's Morris and Bourgeois for advice or questions.

Chief Morris 928-476-4272

Chief Bourgeois

480-982-4440

The AFDA has also retained a consultant who specializes in budget override and bond elections that is also available to you for advice and guidance. Contact Paul Ulan at 602-294-0700

In all your literature and pamphlets you share with the public, as well as, when you speak to the public, consider including an example of a save of life or property. The members of our communities rarely hear about these saves. If you have a survivor of a cardiac arrest, invite him/her to speak at the meeting and let them talk as a survivor.

The Pine Strawberry Fire District used two slides (see attached PowerPoint) at public meetings of a single story home which had a two story addition attached to the back of the house. The two story section nearly burned to the ground, yet the single story portion suffered little damage. Firefighters had entered the home with hose lines and prevented the fire from penetrating the single story portion of the home. One slide showed the two-story section well involved. The second slide showed the interior of the first story totally clear of even smoke smudge or other fire damage. These are powerful examples reflecting that we can, and do, save homes and people.

Also, you should use the terms "public safety crisis" along with "firefighter paramedic" in any published documents, etc., as well as at any public meetings. We truly do have a public safety crisis when we are capped and eliminate full time positions or close fire stations.

The term “firefighter paramedic” registers at a higher degree with many of the public over their concern about a possible fire. This is especially true with a retirement community, or the elderly population, in our fire districts who cherish paramedic services.

Further, during public hearings, consider demonstrating the need for a minimum of 5 “firefighter paramedics” to efficiently run a cardiac arrest event by having a member of the audience stand up as the fire chief describes each prostitution needs; One firefighter to do ventilation (1), one firefighter to do chest compressions (2), one firefighter/paramedic to incubate the patient for breathing (3), One firefighter/paramedic to start the intravenous fluid/medication line (4), One firefighter/paramedic to begin documentation and talk with the base hospital (5). Five person persons standing is a very visual and powerful demonstration to the audience of the need for adequate staffing levels. Additional firefighter paramedics on scene will improve the chances of survival.

An important lesson learned by the Pine Strawberry Fire District was the use of direct mailing of post cards to residents. The post office delivered 2,900 post cards to each address in the two communities for *only 7 cents per card*. Check your local post office for details. This was a very inexpensive method of educating the voting public. See attached copy of the card in actual size and messaging.

If you are successful, thank the public in website postings and any media interviews. The Pine Strawberry Fire District put up a hard copy “Thank You” posting at all their public post locations used for meeting notices also in addition to the website. The fire district also sent a news release to the local newspaper whose contents were also used in a news article thanking the community for their support

Finally, please let the AFDA know of your intent to go to ballot in November. This knowledge will be helpful in our legislative efforts.

Good luck;

Attachments:

Ballot Measure Checklist

Model Resolution

Pine Strawberry Fire District Voter Information Pamphlet

Pine Strawberry Fire District Public Education PowerPoint

Pine Strawberry Fire District Conference PowerPoint

Superstition Fire and Medical District Conference PowerPoint

Primary Consultants Conference PowerPoint

Thank you statement

Thank you newspaper article

Post Card