



Byers Fire Protection District Election Issue Q&A

I. How is Byers Fire Protection District funded?

Funding for fire protection and medical response services provided by Byers Fire Protection District No. 9 (Byers Fire) comes from property taxes, and some ambulance transport fees. Since the 1980s, Byers Fire has assessed a mill levy of 6.774. However, the population in the Byers Fire service area is growing faster than the revenue from taxes. As a result, the call volume is outpacing the resources of Byers Fire.

II. How many emergencies does Byers Fire respond to each year?

Call for emergency services have increased steadily and rapidly. In 2014, Byers Fire received 374 calls. In 2018, Byers Fire received 517 calls, a 38% increase in just 5 years. The District projects answering nearly 600 calls this year. Currently Byers operates with just two full-time personnel, who may work as much as 80 hours a week, and two part-time personnel. Twenty-six volunteers commute to Byers from around Metro Denver; just six volunteers live in Byers.

III. Why is Byers Fire seeing this increased demand for service?

The area population in Byers is growing and the call load is expected to increase to almost 600 this year. Additionally, the new population, as well as long-term residents, have an enhanced expectation that Byers Fire will provide top-class emergency medical service and fire response. More traffic volume on I-70 also increases the potential for major vehicle accidents, and Byers, as a department with on-duty firefighters, is called for service on those events.

IV. What may Byers Fire ask taxpayers to vote on in November 2019?

The directors of Byers Fire are considering including three measures on the November ballot that will allow the District to better manage its budget and stabilize property tax revenue.

- One measure would increase the mill levy rate by 3 mills.
- The two other housekeeping measures will allow the District to retain voter-approved revenue from the mill levy increase, and stabilize its property tax revenue from effects of the Gallagher amendment.

V. How will Byers Fire use additional tax revenue?

- Byers Fire will hire two new full-time firefighter-paramedics to fill shifts and help meet the increased demand for services.
- The Byers Fire station does not currently have sleeping quarters for overnight staff. Because of the lack of infrastructure, overnight support for Byers must sleep at home and commute to the station when an emergency call comes in, resulting in an increased response time in an emergency. Nearly all fire stations in the U.S. are equipped with staff sleeping quarters, which allows faster response times in overnight emergencies.
- Funding will also be used to install a vehicle exhaust ventilation system in the station's vehicle bay and replace cracked pavement in the station's driveway.

VI. How much additional taxes will I pay if these measures are approved?

The tax increase per \$100,000 property value would be \$1.78 per month, \$21.45 per year. For example, a home valued at \$300,000 would pay an additional \$5.34 each month in property taxes, or \$64.08 per year.

VII. What will happen if voters do not approve these measures?

Byers Fire will continue to operate as it has, but may struggle to keep up with increasing call volume, resulting in longer response times. The population is aging, and at the same time younger families are moving in, so the breadth of medical calls (85% of the District's calls) certainly varies. Additionally, the District may have difficulty attracting experienced firefighters, paramedics and EMTs because of a lack of station infrastructure. Future maintenance needs may also go unmet without access to additional funding.

VIII. What should I know about Byers Fire history?

This fire department was founded in 1949, and for years was entirely volunteer. Now it has full-time personnel, backed by a volunteer force, many of whom are gaining hours and certifications to be able to go to bigger, full-time departments. In past years, calls were primarily to respond to wildland fires and auto accidents. With population growth and increased traffic, many of today's calls involve serious medical situations. That's why it's important to have well-qualified and trained personnel. Our residents expect that level of service. Byers, Bennett-Watkins, Sable-Altura and Strasburg are the only neighboring departments with professional personnel.