

voters' pamphlet

Oregon Vote-by-Mail Special Election | **November 7, 2023**



This pamphlet may be used to assist electors in voting.

Translation

Selected portions of this county voters' pamphlet are available in Simplified Chinese, German, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese. These translations can be found online at **oregonvotes.gov/YamhillVP**

本县选民手册的部分内容提供简体中文版本。可以访问 **oregonvotes.gov/YamhillVP** 获取译本。

Bestimmte Teile dieser Bezirks-Wahlbroschüre sind auf deutsch verfügbar. Diese Übersetzungen finden Sie online unter **oregonvotes.gov/YamhillVP**

주 유권자 팸플렛의 선택된 부분은 한국어 준비되어 있습니다. 번역은 온라인 **oregonvotes.gov/YamhillVP** 에서 찾아볼 수 있습니다.

Отдельные части брошюр избирателей этого округа доступны на русском языке. С данными переводами можно ознакомиться в Интернете по адресу: **oregonvotes.gov/YamhillVP**

Algunas secciones de este folleto para votantes del condado están disponibles en español. Estas traducciones están disponibles en línea en **oregonvotes.gov/YamhillVP**

Các phần được chọn trong tập thông tin cho cử tri quận này có bản ngôn ngữ tiếng Việt. Bản dịch có thể xem trực tuyến tại **oregonvotes.gov/YamhillVP**

Measure 34-326 Gaston Rural Fire Protection District

Ballot Title

34-326

RENEWAL OF 5-YEAR LOCAL OPTION LEVY FOR CAPITAL AND OPERATIONS.

Question: Shall the District increase the Local Option Levy at the rate of \$1.01 per \$1,000 assessed value beginning in FY2024/2025? This measure may cause property taxes to increase by more than three percent.

Summary: This measure will replace the current Local Option Levy of \$0.67 and increase it by \$0.34 per \$1,000 assessed value beginning fiscal year 2024/2025. The proposed total Local Option Levy of \$1.01 per \$1,000 assessed value will support the annual cost of fire and emergency medical services and capital costs.

The District operates one station that responded to approximately 759 calls for service to the communities of Cherry Grove, Laurelwood, and the City of Gaston during 2022. The District began staffing the station 24/7 which has improved the response times.

The new levy would:

- Maintain a 24/7 staffing model at the fire station.
- Allow the District to sufficiently cover costs associated with the goal of maintaining adequate response times.
- Provide protective clothing, equipment, and training for volunteer membership.
- Acquire, upgrade, renovate, and improve apparatus and equipment.
- Upgrade technology equipment and software

The new Local Option Levy would raise approximately: \$468,097 in 2025-2026, \$482,140 in 2026-2027, \$496,605 in 2027-2028, \$511,503 in 2028-2029, and \$526,848 in 2029-2030

a resident volunteer. Volunteers will respond to the station from home and respond as additional resources are needed.

What has the district done to provide a quick response to emergency calls for help?

In June of 2022, the district moved its staffing from daytime staffing to 24/7 staffing. There is a career firefighter and a resident volunteer on duty 24 hours a day. This allows for a crew of at least two firefighters to respond from the station moments after the call for help comes in. Prior to this change, the average response time was over 10 minutes. With the 24/7 staffing, the average response time decreased by more than 8 minutes with an average response time of less than 2 minutes.

What has changed to require the additional funds?

To meet the call volume the District has increased the volunteer ranks from 8 to about 25, technology is constantly changing with associated expenses not experienced in the past, and an aging fire engine needs to be replaced in the next 5 years.

(This information furnished by Michael Pedemonte, GRFPD Board of Directors, President.)

Explanatory Statement

The Gaston Fire District's permanent tax rate is \$1.0921 per \$1,000 of assessed value. This rate was set by the Oregon Department of Revenue as a result of Measure 50 in 1998. This rate was insufficient to meet the rising costs, in November 2004, voters approved a five-year local option levy (LOL) of \$0.42 per \$1,000 of assessed value to allow for the District to meet its operational expenses and to allocate reserve funds. In November of 2008, voters approved a renewal of the LOL at \$0.67 per \$1,000. The District has operated with this level of funding without asking the community for an increase for the past 16 years.

The District Board of Directors has prioritized 24/7 staffing to provide an immediate response to emergency calls and recognized that the cost of providing emergency response to a growing community is outpacing the income generated from the permanent rate and the LOL. Therefore, they are asking voters to replace the LOL with an increase of \$0.37 per \$1,000. This would provide the District with a LOL of \$1.01 per \$1,000.

If approved, the LOL would generate the revenue necessary to maintain staffing levels that meet the demands for service, provide for costs associated with a nearly 48% increase in 911 calls over the past 5 years, outfit our volunteer firefighters with up-to-date protective clothing, support the implementation of required technology, and grow the apparatus replacement fund so that the district can purchase a fire engine to replace aging apparatus.

Who does Gaston Fire District serve?

Gaston Fire District provides 911 emergency fire, rescue, and medical services to the communities of Laurelwood, Cherry Grove, and the City of Gaston. Their response area is 55 square miles and is in both Washington and Yamhill counties.

How many firefighters does Gaston Fire District have?

Gaston Fire District has three career firefighters and about 25 volunteer firefighters. The station is staffed 24/7 by a career firefighter and

Argument in Favor

As a community member, I have been a part of the Gaston and Cherry Grove all my life. I enjoy our rural town.

In September 2020, a significant fire event threatened our family. The Power Line fire started on a neighboring property and was one of several significant fires that restricted access to resources locally. Gaston Fire District was the initial response to this fire, and it was amazing watching our communities come together to deal with this event. These fires threatened our way of life, and I was grateful for the response from the district and the resources that they were able to bring in to help fight fires.

After the fire I wanted to find out what I could do to prepare for future fires and emergencies. Before long I became a volunteer firefighter and went through the extensive training required of all volunteers. I did not realize how much our Gaston Firefighters had to learn. They are prepared to handle medical emergencies, car wrecks, hazardous materials accidents, animal rescues, wildland fires, house fires, water rescues, and technical rescues. If it's not a police problem and you call 911, Gaston Firefighters most likely will be called to help you.

When I became a firefighter, the department had career firefighters on duty during the daytime with a volunteer workforce of 8 volunteers who would respond to the station to handle calls after hours. I was surprised to learn that in the evenings and nights, it could be 10 to 15 minutes before a fire engine would leave the station and those times that no volunteers were available, we had to rely on neighboring departments to respond to our emergencies.

Please join me in supporting Measure 34-326 to support our fire department as they continue to meet the increased call volume and expenses associated with meeting the demands of a growing community and the ongoing threat of wildfires around us.

(This information furnished by Rachel Tarnowski.)

Argument in Favor

GASTON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS SUPPORT THE LEVY RENEWAL

Volunteers are critical to every community, and our volunteer firefighters are critical to the Gaston community. Over 20 of us spend hundreds of hours every year working to keep our community safe.

When our pagers go off we respond to your call for service, but like many in our community most of us work outside of the community, which means we need a good balance of career and volunteer firefighters to help protect our homes and families. Passing this Option Levy, does just that by ensuring that our career personnel can continue to staff the fire station 24x7 and our volunteers can supplement the response. This keeps our response times low, ensuring that you quickly receive the help you need, when you need it.

This Levy will also provide funding for future replacement of some of our aging equipment that we use to respond to your fire and medical emergencies.

That is why we are supporting Gaston Fire Department's replacement levy. Please join us by voting yes on Measure 34-326

Gaston Volunteer Firefighters Association

Lorne Vaught, President

(This information furnished by Lorne Vaught, Gaston Volunteer Firefighter's Association.)

The printing of this argument does not constitute an endorsement by the County of Yamhill, nor does the county warrant the accuracy or truth of any statement made in the argument.

Argument in Favor

Gaston Rural Fire Board Supports Measure 34-326

As the voter-elected Board of Directors for Gaston Rural Fire Protection District, we are asking you to vote YES on Measure 34-326

For the past 16 years, the Gaston community has generously supported our local fire department with a levy of \$0.67 per \$1,000 of assessed value to meet the operational expenses and to allocate reserve funds. In return, the fire district has provided the community with an excellent level of service for fire and health emergencies, traffic accidents, smoke investigations, lift assistance, property inspections for fire mitigation, and assorted other responses. Please consider the following...

- Gaston's call volume has increased 48% in the last five years. The district responded 510 times in 2017 and responded to 759 calls in 2022.
- Response times have come down dramatically in the last year as we have moved to a 24/7 staffing model. Before the change we had an average 10-minute response time, we now have an average response time of less than 2 minutes.
- We maintain a staff of about 25 volunteers, 3 career firefighters, and a part-time chief. We also have added 6 resident volunteer positions to bolster our response times.
- Equipment and personnel costs have increased significantly. We need to replace fire engines and other essential equipment in the next 5 years and build reserves for future equipment needs.

We are asking you to support an increase of \$0.34 per \$1,000 of assessed value to continue providing excellent service and plan for future needs while protecting our firefighters.

Please join in supporting Measure 34-326. VOTE YES

Michael Pedemonte, Chair

(This information furnished by Michael Pedemonte.)

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Voter Information

To be eligible to vote in the November 7, 2023, Special Election, a completed voter registration card must be on file at the Yamhill County Clerk's Office no later than 5:00 p.m., October 17, 2023.

YOU MAY REGISTER TO VOTE IF:

- You are a United States citizen
- You are at least 16 years of age (*you may vote if you will be 18 years of age or older on election day*)
- You are a resident of Oregon

YOU MUST UPDATE YOUR REGISTRATION IF:

- Your residence or mailing address changes
- Your name changes
- You wish to change your party affiliation

You may **register to vote** or **update your registration** at www.oregonvotes.gov

VOTING INSTRUCTIONS:

When you receive your ballot packet in the mail, immediately examine it to make certain it is complete. It should contain the following items:

- Printed ballot
- Postage-paid, purple-trimmed return envelope to return your ballot (don't forget to sign)
- Voters' Pamphlet insert

CORRECTING YOUR BALLOT:

If you make an error on your ballot, spoil it in any way, or lose it, please contact the Yamhill County Clerk's Office at (503) 434-7518 or (503) 554-7580 -Newberg to request a replacement ballot.

RETURNING YOUR VOTED BALLOT:

- Insert ballot into the purple-trimmed return envelope
- **Remember to sign your ballot return envelope**
- The signature of each voter's ballot return envelope is verified against the voter's signature on file. The signature must match before it can be counted. If your signature has changed, please update your voter registration
- Mail (no stamp required) or place the return envelope in an Official Ballot Drop Box
- Track your ballot with ballottrax - Sign up for this service at:
<https://yamhillcounty.ballottrax.net/voter/>

VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES:

If you need assistance with voting or casting your ballot, call the Yamhill County Clerk's Office at 503-434-7518 or 503-554-7850 – Newberg. We can provide assistance or you may authorize a friend, family member, or other trusted person, who are not affiliated with your employer or union, to assist you.

Official Drop Sites

**All Drop Sites Open 24 hours a day – 7 days a week
Starting Wednesday, October 18, 2023**

**All Drop Sites Close at 8:00 pm, on Election Day,
Tuesday, November 7, 2023**

Note: Only the following drop boxes will be available for this election.

Find a Drop Site Near You:

Carlton

NEW Temporary location
American Legion Hall
Parking Lot
158 E Main Street

Yamhill

Yamhill City Hall
205 S Maple Street

McMinnville

Courthouse (inside lobby)
535 NE 5th Street

Courthouse Drive-Through Drop Box
(East end of Courthouse Parking Lot,
enter on 5th and Ford Streets)

Yamhill County Clerk's Office
(Outside front door and inside lobby)
414 NE Evans Street

Postmarks can count!

As of January 1, 2022, an Oregon Elections Official can accept and process a ballot that arrived at their office via the USPS if the envelope was postmarked by Election Day.

- Ballot envelopes must be signed
- It must have a Postmark (or USPS indicator) on or before Election Day
- It must arrive by the 7th day after Election Day