

**RESOLUTION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DE BEQUE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

**A RESOLUTION ADVOCATING VOTER APPROVAL OF THE FIRE DISTRICT'S
REQUEST FOR A PROPERTY TAX REVENUE INCREASE DURING THE MAY 5,
2020 ELECTION**

WHEREAS, since it was organized in 2008, the sole purpose of the De Beque Fire Protection District ("*Fire District*") has been to protect the communities it serves by providing essential, life-saving fire protection, fire suppression, rescue, extrication, hazardous materials, emergency medical, and ambulance services (collectively, "*Emergency Services*");

WHEREAS, on January 21, 2020, the Fire District's Board of Directors ("*Board*") adopted a Resolution directing that a property tax revenue increase ballot issue be submitted to the Fire District's voters during the election that the Fire District will conduct on May 5, 2020 ("*Election*");

WHEREAS, the Colorado Fair Campaign Practices Act, C.R.S. § 1-45-117(1)(b), expressly authorizes the Board to adopt a Resolution advocating voter approval of the Fire District's request for a property tax revenue increase during the Election; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined it is important to the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens that the Board adopt this Resolution urging all eligible voters to approve the Fire District's property tax revenue increase ballot issue at the Election.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of Directors of the De Beque Fire Protection District that:

1. THE FIRE DISTRICT HAS THE LOWEST PROPERTY TAX RATE OF ALL FIRE DISTRICTS IN BOTH MESA AND GARFIELD COUNTIES, AND HAS NOT INCREASED ITS PROPERTY TAX RATE SINCE ITS ORGANIZATION IN 2008. However, during that time, the operational costs to provide Emergency Services have increased significantly. Just as the cost of a pickup truck has increased from around \$18,000 in 2008 to around \$30,000 in 2020, so too have the costs of the vehicles, equipment, and safety gear relied on by the Fire District's dedicated firefighters to keep the community safe. The Fire District is separate from the Town of De Beque, and does not receive any funding from the Town.

2. FAR FROM KEEPING PACE WITH THE RISING OPERATIONS COSTS, THE FIRE DISTRICT'S PROPERTY TAX REVENUE HAS FALLEN FROM MORE THAN \$4 MILLION PER YEAR WHEN THE FIRE DISTRICT WAS ORGANIZED TO LESS THAN \$1 MILLION PER YEAR NOW. The drop in property tax revenues, which is primarily due to a decline in oil and gas, has severely hampered the Fire District's Emergency Services capabilities. The Fire District does not have enough money to replace aging vehicles, equipment, and safety gear, some of which the Fire District must continue to use even though it is past its useful life and due for replacement under industry

standards. Likewise, the Fire District cannot afford to hire 4-person crews, meaning that the Fire District does not meet the National Fire Protection Association standard for staffing on a residential fire.

3. **AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE FIRE DISTRICT'S PROPERTY TAX REVENUES ARE FALLING, THE DEMAND FOR ITS EMERGENCY SERVICES IS RISING.** Since its formation, the Fire District has seen rapidly increasing call volumes, putting heightened stress on its firefighters, paramedics, and capital assets. In the period between 2013 and 2018 alone, the Fire District experienced a nearly 40% increase in call volume, from 158 calls per year to 260 calls per year. Because the Fire District currently cannot afford to staff two crews, the Fire District sometimes receives an emergency call when its personnel are already responding to another emergency. In those cases, the Fire District cannot respond, and must rely on neighboring fire departments for help.

4. **APPROVAL OF THE PROPERTY TAX INCREASE WILL GIVE THE FIRE DISTRICT THE REVENUE IT NEEDS TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY SERVICES.** The increased revenue from the property tax will allow the Fire District to address its highest priority staffing, equipment, and apparatus needs, including:

- Hiring a third full-time person for each shift, up to a total of four personnel per shift, thereby meeting the National Fire Protection Association standard of four firefighters per shift. This will allow the Fire District to provide more efficient Emergency Services, and to respond to two calls for service at the same time.
- Hiring one operational supervisor to assist with crew training, professional development, and implementation of services.
- Upgrading its firefighter training equipment.
- Improving recruitment and retention of firefighters and paramedics.
- Replacing aging and overdue emergency vehicles and equipment.
- Re-hiring the part-time secretary position, which was eliminated in 2017, to improve the efficiency of the Fire District's administration.

5. **THE PROPERTY TAX REVENUE INCREASE WILL BE CAPPED AT \$2.5 MILLION IN REVENUE OR 9.0 MILLS, WHICHEVER IS LESS, ENSURING THAT THE FIRE DISTRICT ONLY RECEIVES WHAT IT NEEDS TO PROVIDE QUALITY, COST-EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY SERVICES.** The Fire District has tried to utilize the funding available to it as carefully as possible. For example, when building its new fire station, the Fire District sought numerous grants and donations, and used cash on hand, so that the fire station could be built without taking on any new debt. Construction of the fire station lowered the Fire District's station expenses by nearly half, because it allowed the Fire District to end its more expensive lease with the Town. However, despite its conscientious spending, the Fire District can no longer absorb the double-impact of upward spiraling costs and Emergency Services demands, and declining tax revenues. The property tax revenue increase proposal will allow the Fire District to meet its operational needs by "floating" its mill levy up or down as needed to receive \$2.5 million in annual revenue; however, the proposal does not allow the Fire District to float its mill levy above 9.0 mills, even if less than \$2.5 million in annual revenue would be received.

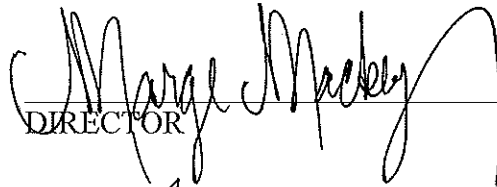
6. THE FIRE DISTRICT WOULD NOT CONSIDER ASKING ITS CITIZENS FOR PERMISSION TO INCREASE ITS PROPERTY TAX REVENUE IF IT WERE NOT ESSENTIAL. The Fire District's sole focus is the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens, firefighters, and paramedics, and this ballot initiative is critical to the Fire District's continued ability to provide life-saving Emergency Service to the community and to ensure the safety of its first responders.

FOR ALL OF THE FOREGOING REASONS, THE BOARD URGES VOTERS TO APPROVE THE FIRE DISTRICT'S PROPERTY TAX REVENUE INCREASE BALLOT ISSUE DURING THE MAY 5, 2020 ELECTION.


ADOPTED this 21st day of January, 2020 by the Board of Directors of the De Beque Fire Protection District.




DIRECTOR



DIRECTOR



DIRECTOR



DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR

PROPERTY TAX REVENUE INCREASE
BALLOT ISSUE LANGUAGE
MAY 5, 2020 ELECTION

SHALL DE BEQUE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT TAXES BE INCREASED BY \$1,561,586 (FIRST FULL FISCAL YEAR DOLLAR INCREASE) ANNUALLY, OR BY SUCH OTHER AMOUNT IN ANY SUBSEQUENT YEAR AS IS NECESSARY TO GENERATE AD VALOREM PROPERTY TAX REVENUES FOR THE DISTRICT IN THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$2,500,000 ANNUALLY, BEGINNING IN LEVY YEAR 2020 (FOR COLLECTION IN CALENDAR YEAR 2021), PROVIDED THAT THE DISTRICT'S PROPERTY TAX RATE SHALL NOT BE CERTIFIED ABOVE 9.000 MILLS IN ANY YEAR WITHOUT THE VOTERS' PRIOR APPROVAL, AND SHALL ALL REVENUE AND ANY EARNINGS ON THE DISTRICT'S TOTAL AD VALOREM PROPERTY TAX UP TO 9.000 MILLS CONSTITUTE A PERMANENT VOTER-APPROVED REVENUE CHANGE WITHIN THE MEANING OF ARTICLE X, SECTION 20 OF THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION AND AN EXCEPTION TO THE LIMITATIONS SET FORTH IN SECTION 29-1-301 OF THE COLORADO REVISED STATUTES, AND ANY OTHER LAW?