Emergency Medical Services in Mukilteo

The Mukilteo Fire Department provides Emergency Medical Service (EMS) to the community and its visitors. Each fire station has an ambulance to meet the community’s EMS needs. On each ambulance, a Firefighter/Paramedic, a Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), and a Fire Captain/EMT provide service. The ambulances are stocked with all the necessary equipment and supplies to take care of the sickest patients. Last year, about two thirds of the department's calls were for medical issues, with the City's two ambulances responding 24/7 to help residents in need and to transport many of those patients to area hospitals. Mukilteo firefighters are responding to 35% more calls since 2011, though staffing levels remain the same.

The EMS system is funded through two primary mechanisms. In 2005, voters approved a six-year EMS levy. This funding is specifically designated for the EMS system and cannot be diverted to other purposes. In addition, the city bills patients or applicable insurance companies for transports to the hospital. Fifty percent of the patients have Medicare coverage, thirty percent have commercial insurance, fourteen percent have Medicaid coverage, four percent have no insurance and two percent are covered by auto insurance after motor vehicle collisions.

In 2010, the voters approved a permanent EMS levy, at a rate of $0.50 per $1000 in assessed property value. However, over time, due to a state initiative, the amount the City can collect has dropped to $0.395.

In the event these two revenue sources are not enough to cover the City’s EMS expenses in a given year, a transfer from the General Fund is required to balance the account. Last year, the City's General Fund transferred $98,025 to fill the revenue gap for EMS services. This year, it will be $100,525. Transfers of this type reduce the funds available to fund other city services.

This year, The Mayor has asked the Council to consider whether to ask the voters to reaffirm the $0.50 levy rate this fall, ensuring that local EMS taxes fully fund the City’s emergency medical services. No ballot proposition has yet been approved by the Council.

As with the current funds raised through the EMS levy, any additional funds must go to support the EMS system. Increasing the EMS fund will help pay for community medic services, to prevent 911 calls and help those that do not require ambulance transportation to the hospital. The City can better handle issues related to those with chronic health problems, our aging population, substance abuse and opioid addictions, and the un-housed with this type of preventive care. Additional funds would also help support public outreach and education, which can assist in preventing injuries before a 911 call is made, as well as giving residents the ability to help someone until an ambulance arrives.

Please feel free to contact Fire Chief Chris Alexander at 425-263-8150 or calexander@mukilteowa.gov with any questions.