



Hurricane Valley Fire District



202 East State Street
Hurricane, Utah 84737
(435) 635-9562

Hurricane Valley Fire District
Public Hearing
Monday, October 7, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.
Hurricane Fine Arts Building
92 S 100 W Hurricane Ut 84737

Board Members Present:

Board Chairman Mayor Bill Hoster of Leeds

Board Vice Chairman Justin Sip of Toquerville

Board Member Randy Aton of Springdale

Board Member Robin Smith of Rockville

Board Member Paul Luwe of Virgin

Board Member Clark Fawcett of Hurricane

Board Member LaRene Cox of the Unincorporated area of Washington County

Board Members Absent:

Board Member Richard Hirschi of La Verkin

Chief Joseph Decker

Deputy Chief Kohl Furley

Legal Counsel Ben Ruesch

District Clerk Cari Bishop

Director of Human Resources Megan Ayala

Meeting will start at 6:00 pm



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A. *Called to Order* – by *Board Chairman Bill Hoster* at 6:05 pm.

Invocation by Invitation – *Board Member Clark Fawcett*

Pledge of Allegiance – *Board Vice Chairman Justin Sip*

Board Chairman Bill Hoster states that we are going to start with State Representative Ellison sharing his insight on the State level.

Representative Joe Ellison for District 72 from the State House is here to speak. He wants to thank the committee and the wonderful first responders for all that they do for the citizens.

A couple of years ago, we had a meeting very similar to this, after the last truth in taxation on what we can do to mitigate these problems. We are a second-class county; we are still kind of a rural county so there are some challenges that we face. The district is trying to cover all the county, so we have the cover every part of the county needs. A lot of the calls that we have are due to the tourist that are visiting, this is a statewide challenge this is happening all over Utah.

The House bill filed for the first year was passed and we can implement it if we want to, so that we can offset the property tax, and tap into a sales tax. Now, how can we get some of the tourist to pay into the district and get them to pay their fair share. There was some fine tuning that had to be done. They said if we implement it, it must be the same for all cities. That would not work for some of the surrounding cities. Then it was revised and looked at again. Then we got another House bill into the State, and it stalled at Senate level. There was miscommunication. It not passing last year did not help the budget this year. State Representative Joe Ellison got a commitment that it will pass the next time that it gets to Senate floor. We are getting it into the legislature early so that we can get it through.

A portion of the money that the district gets is transient room tax, and in State Representative Joe Ellison opinion it is not enough. We have a committee that is trying to see what we can do to mitigate additional expenses and freeing up the counties and cities and maybe lapsing some of the restrictions on the funds. So much of those funds must be used for advertising Utah. We are looking at multiple options to afford to have the firefighters stay employed.

We got the baseball stadium stopped so that the southern Utah citizens would not be taxed for something that is built in Salt Lake City.

This particular tax increase is really a short time issue right now because of the direction that we are going.

State Representative Joe Ellison gave the information to the State website for information on taxes and contacting him directly for any questions.



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Board Chairman Bill Hoster states the history of the movement on the first-time increase, and that some of the members were very new to the fire board. They looked at the budget as a new board and started picking apart the budget. They as a board started looking at where they could start making changes and options that were not the property tax. With that they identified a sales tax with the House bill, and they had a rough draft. With the House bill going to the State, we felt so confident. Then it didn't get across, now we have more people going to bat for us. The reason why we are all here tonight, we do not want to compromise your fire and ems safety, we are confident that we can lower the property tax after the bill is passed.

B. Discussion – District is grateful for allowing us to borrow the American flag the afternoon of September 11th from Mayor Billings. (Item moved to the last part of meeting)

C. PUBLIC HEARING for Hurricane Valley Fire District Truth in Taxation hearing

No action will be taken at this meeting.

To speak, you must be a property owner within the Hurricane Valley Fire Special Service District and request by email at Info@hvssd.org or by phone at 435-635-9562 by noon on October 7, 2024.

The Fire Board Chairman will have a list of individuals that have requested to speak, and he will call them up at the meeting to speak. Each person commenting will be limited to 3 minutes.

Board Chairman Bill Hoster is told by the audience that there was nothing on the card that states that they needed to register to speak at the meeting, he looked on the card, but there was nothing about the registering to speak. He will go through the list first and then have the ones that didn't register will then come up.

1. **David Lusk** – Hurricane – Crossing guard for 10 years, supports the Fire District, upmost admiration for the district.

2. **Mayor Nanette Billings** – Hurricane – Representing Hurricane Group, letter addressed to County Commissioners. Read off the letter that was written to the Commissioners.



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Board Chairman Bill Hoster goes over the states of calls and percentages for Hurricane. There is no politician that wants to raise taxes. The City of Hurricane contributes 66% of our budget and consumes about 71% of the call volume. We just want to have the support for the community for fire and ems.

3. **Wayne Peterson** – Leeds – Goes over when he was the mayor of Leeds. Wants the services to reach him in a timely manner. He talks about the levy, and what happens when you do not capture the new growth.

Board Vice Chairman Justin Sip goes over the mil levy and states that it is half of what it was in 2017. Tax has been going down since 2017. He states that it is just a temporary hold on what we need to get to. We have been trying to get another way.

4. **Raymond Palmer** – Hurricane – Resident is opposed due to lack of information.

5. **Vince Guglielmetti** – Hurricane – Went over the budget items that he spoke with Chief Joe Decker about the items he was concerned about so that he could understand better.

Board Vice Chairman Justin Sip goes over the information for Zion National Park and the stats on the 29% the 29% is from out of the area, Quail Lake, and other surrounding areas.

6. **Ralph Ballard** – Hurricane – Resident is not for the increase. Wants to know where the money is going from his taxes. Has a back and forth with Board Vice Chairman Justin Sip and Board Chairman Bill Hoster. Board Vice Chairman Justin Sip states that the increase is going from the current tax rate of 0.000699% to 0.001063%. In 2017 the mil levy was 0.0014 it is lower than last time. Went over the inspection fees amount for the commercial companies. The board is trying to explain that the goal is to lower the property tax. They go over the option for the district to go private. They talk about the decrease of service vs. the amount that is billed to the patient. Citizen takes the conversation into Kolob discussion, then he would challenge that the vehicles that the district takes out that we limit the vehicles miles and ware and tare.

Citizen goes into the discuss having other police agencies help with the needs of lifting patients. Board helps with the understanding that some of the surrounding agencies are limited to staffing and other restrictions. Citizen states that not all district firefighters are in poverty. Board affirms that most have second jobs.

7. **Andrew Lee** – Kolob – Had the firefighters stand up and we all thanked them. Wrote a letter to the board about the tax.



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8. **Matt Murray** – Springdale – Resident is against the increase because of inflation and other raised amounts in city bills.

9. **Adam Libman** – Hurricane - Resident moved here from California. Does not know why we are asking for an increase. There is no call to action for the increase. He would like to know where the increase is going.

Board Vice Chairman Justin Sip and Board Chairman Bill Hoster go over the levy and the truth in taxation and how the money does not get captured when the new houses come in, we need to do a truth and taxation to raise it.

10. **Sherron Hall** – Resident has used the services of the district.

11. **Donald McDonald** – California transplant asking about the calls.

12. **Rory Bringhurst** – Hurricane – we need you!! He wants a balance on things, he wants us to look at it at one area. Question how much time was used to communicate with the cities with the Fire District. Incorporate the people.

13. **Michelle Peot** – Leeds – thanks the Fire District. The problem stems from others, called other entities. Standbys, are we charging at cost only? Went over what she expects of the Commissioners.

14. **Bob Taylor** – Hurricane – Not attending.

15. **Benjamin Lee** – La Verkin – Worked with a lot of the chiefs. Consider the options, it should be a gradual increase. Instead of a big one.

Washington County Commissioner Gil Almquist speaking, it seems like fire and ems is part of my life. During the Kolob Fire he was affected T-R-T 47% of the T-R-T is in advertising that is mandated by the state 12 to 13 hundred dollars the state backs it up the other is brick in mortar. 53 % of it has gone to other communities. State school tax went up 5 years in a row. Washington county is the lowest in the state. We are trying to keep it low.

16. **Deward Stout** – Hurricane – everything has been said that he wants to say, be efficient we can,



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17. **Kim Seegmiller** – Resident is for helping the district
18. Board Chairman Bill Hoster is reading letter from the **David and Rebecca Galves**. (in file for meeting)
19. **Ann Standly** - Hurricane – Came back from corrupted city, stepping on residence throats is not the way to find answers. Wants to know if we have looked everywhere for ways to do this.
20. **Skyler Zaleski** – Hurricane - Looked at budget asking questions, where to find the information on the website.
21. **Eric Sorenson** – Hurricane - If you vote for any tax increase what is the process to reverse the property tax and get a guarantee that it would be reversed. Board Chairman Bill Hoster answered that overall property tax should go down. Going over what the district is wanting to happen with the bill. When the funds hit our account after the House bill is put into law then it will be most likely August. Property tax for the Truth in Taxation that is happening now would go into effect in November of 2025, the House bill for sales tax would go into effect in August of 2025. Then they would reverse the Truth in Taxation that is happening now. 98
22. **Ron Baldwin** – Leeds – In another state there was a situation where a road was built and there was a toll charged and the citizens were told that it would go away but another way happened. He is asking that the board can recommend but cannot implement anything, Board Chairman Bill Hoster goes over that the board is a recommending board.
23. **Sheila Bochei** – Hurricane - asked why the new homes are excluded, she is referencing the card that she got in the mail. Chief Joe Decker states it is how State Law is read. The State would need to address this question.
24. **Randy Bochei** – Hurricane - Worried about us building buildings on the Truth in Taxation. Board Chairman Bill Hoster, states that the board looks at the current budget and the future budget and the 3-month trailing. Washington County Commissioner Gil Almquist states that the county has implemented something that you should be aware of, we have a housing crunch, and we have asked the legislature that has been so generous to find out who has a short term rental and they have been legal and have been paying their fair share of the tax because some have not been paying and they have been flying under the radar.



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Resident is concerned about the where the money is coming from to build other fire stations. Board Chairman Bill Hoster goes over where the money comes from to pay for those homes.

25. **Cheri Ikerd** – Springdale - 19 hr. rescue in Zion is a hiker and very thankful questions for board and compromising, Board Chairman Bill Hoster states that the tax is not going up for the whole bill just for the line item for our named line. Goes over the rules that are governed to us by State and Constitution.

26. **Randy Tyler** – Hurricane – Concerned about the tax increase. Board Chairman Bill Hoster and Board Vice Chairman Justin Sip go into discussion about the processes on why we are doing the Truth in Taxation.

27. **Jan Gittins** – Hurricane - Concerned about the property tax. Feels like that sales tax won't go through.

28. **Ian Crowe** – Leeds/Kolob – Concerned about the way things are working and the tax going up.

29. **Jessie Cest** - Fees for business for inspection concern. Discussed back and forth with Board Chairman Bill Hoster about fees for vacation rental.

Board Vice Chairman Justin Sip goes over that there are a lot of things going on. Also states that the sales tax will not be on our groceries, fuel, prescriptions.

30. **Sean Amdot** – Virgin – Resident runs a mosquito abatement SSD, concerned for the tax increase. He wants to share his perspective with us.

31. **Orion Parker** – Hurricane - Asking about going back to volunteers, asking about hidden money in 2023, wants increase on bigger places like hotels for the money to come from.

32. **Jay Lee** – Virgin - Resident runs a mosquito abatement SSD – when he was on the board he received 0 compensation for being on council. Resident states taxes on home goes up never stays the same.

33. **Todd Sands** – Toquerville thanks the board for understanding what's happening thinks that Chief Decker is the guy for the job.



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34. **Kent Peterson** – Virgin – Resident feels if the tourist causes the issue, he thinks it's the growth, how can we stop the growth.

Board Vice Chairman Justin Sip goes over that we cannot use impact fees for daily use on our district.

Board Chairman Bill Hoster speaks on the help and how grateful that we are for The City of Hurricane. On 9/11/2024 we had a donated flag that the winds kicked up and ruined the flag and we received another flag donated to us by Mayor Nanette Billings we want to make recognition for that.

35. **Howard Woods** – States his opinion on the district.

Adjourned 9:04 pm

Date approved:

Minutes taken by Cari Bishop

Bill Hoster, Board Chairman

Attest:

Cari Bishop, District Clerk