



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 23, 2025

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Board of Fire Commissioners to discuss temporary levy increase

Public invited to learn more and provide comment

OTHELLO, Wash. — The Board of Fire Commissioners for Adams County Fire District 5 (ACFD#5) will meet Tuesday, July 8, 2025, at 7 p.m. at 220 S. Broadway in Othello to discuss placing a temporary fire levy increase on the November general election ballot. Community members are encouraged to attend, learn more and provide input.

ACFD#5 provides fire protection and emergency services to about 7,600 residents across 215 square miles, and currently serves the City of Othello (population 7,000) through a contract that ends in May 2026.

Emergency call volumes have grown—up 25% in the district and 43% in the city over the past four years. At the same time, costs for staffing, equipment, vehicles, and supplies have risen sharply due to inflation. The contract with Othello makes up more than half of ACFD#5's annual budget. Its expiration will create a significant funding gap.

"We want to be transparent with our community," said Fire Chief Tom Salsbury. "Even though our service area will shrink, fixed costs like vehicles, safety gear, insurance, dispatch, and fuel are going up. Fewer people will be sharing those costs."

To prepare, ACFD#5 is already deferring apparatus replacements, canceling station renovations, and eliminating city-specific programs. Still, these cuts may not cover the projected shortfall.

The Board is considering a temporary levy increase of \$0.27 per \$1,000 of assessed property value to help sustain service levels. For a home assessed at \$222,000—the district average—that's about \$60 more per year, or \$5 per month.

In the long term, ACFD#5 recommends that the City of Othello pursue annexation into the fire district, so all property owners currently served by ACFD#5 would pay the same rate for emergency services.

For more information, visit www.acfd5.com/fire-levy-lid-lift, call 509-488-2951, or email secretary@acfd5.com.

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Adams County Fire District 5 provides fire suppression, rescue, and wildland fire services to Over 7,600 residents across 215 square miles in the heart of the Columbia basin. The district also serves the City of Othello, home to 7,000 residents, through a contract for service in place through 2026. Five full-time and 21 volunteer personnel respond to a range of emergencies with professionalism and pride. Learn more at www.acfd5.com.