

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIRWAY HEIGHTS IS ON THE AUGUST PRIMARY BALLOT

Propositions would fund improvements to library and fire services

(Airway Heights, WA) – The city is asking voters for two ballot measures to support the library and fire department on the August 1, 2023, primary election ballot. The purpose of the measures is to help the city provide services that residents want and services that residents need. Ballots begin arriving in mailboxes July 14.

The city funds all its services, including library, police, and fire suppression, with a general property tax levy of \$1.43 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The demand for all city services exceeds the amount collected by the general property tax and is not sustainable.

The first ballot measure asks voters to annex to the Spokane County Library District to keep the library open. The city currently pays the library district \$0.34 of its \$1.43 property tax levy or 24 percent of property taxes goes to library services. If voters approve annexation, property owners would pay the library district directly for its services.

This would allow the city to retain that revenue to maintain funding for four full-time firefighters to respond to higher call volumes. Emergency call volumes have increased by 172 percent in the last 10 years.

The second ballot measure asks voters for a bond to renovate a building on South Garfield Avenue to include a fire station. The current facility built in 1968 has been renovated 10 times and is no longer capable of serving the community or its firefighters.

Firefighters are working with no heat and air conditioning in most areas. The station also lacks adequate decontamination areas (such as showers and laundries) for firefighters returning from fire and medical calls. Decontamination areas are necessary to wash carcinogens and medical waste from firefighters and their protective gear. In addition, the bays are too small to house modern apparatus, such as a ladder truck that is needed to respond to fires in multistory buildings.

The city has staggered these requests to reduce impacts to taxpayers. The bond (projected at \$0.37 per \$1,000) would take effect in 2024 and cost the owner of a \$300,000 home \$111 per year or \$9.25 per month. The library annexation would take effect in 2025 and cost \$0.34 per \$1,000 or \$102 per year or \$8.50 per month for the same homeowner.

If the bond is successful, the city will receive \$1.3 million in grant money from the state to help pay for the purchase and renovation of the new fire station on South Garfield. (There is a fire station near this location, but that facility is owned by a neighboring fire district and cannot be used to house city

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firefighters or city-owned apparatus). If the bond is successful, the city will also list one of its existing buildings for sale to help fund renovations and pay off the bond debt earlier to save taxpayers money.

Ballots must be postmarked by August 1, 2023, or placed in a ballot box by 8 p.m. on Election Day to count.

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The City of Airway Heights, Wash. (pop. 10,562) was named after its location between Fairchild Air Force Base and the Spokane International Airport in Spokane County. Airway Heights is a full-service city with its own police, fire department, and municipal court system. The City's vision is to maintain its small town feel where neighbors are friendly, welcoming, and willing to help each other. Airway Heights operates under a balanced budget and has passed all its independent audits by the state. More information on Airway Heights can be found at www.cawh.org.