



GLASSY MOUNTAIN FIRE SERVICE AREA

Robert J. Staples, Fire Chief

2015 Highway 11
Landrum, South Carolina 29356
Business (864) 895-4306 Fax (864) 895-4748
Website: www.gmfd.net

April 22, 2022

Greenville County Council
301 University Ridge, Suite 2400
Greenville, SC 29601

RE: GMFSA Millage Increase Request

Honorable Chairman Meadows and Greenville County Council:

The Glassy Mountain Fire Service Area (GMFSA) is a special tax district created by Greenville County and established in 1988 pursuant to Ordinance No. 1786 to provide fire suppression and other fire protection related services to County residents residing in the GMFSA – District 52.

Operating from five stations, the Department has been successfully operating for approximately 34 years. Today, the Department is comprised of one full-time Chief, an Administrative Manager, twelve full-time firefighters, fifteen part-time employees (firefighters and/or paramedics), and approximately twenty volunteers. The GMFSA personnel include sixteen paramedics and thirteen EMTs. Since 2017 we have provided Advanced Life Support-Paramedic level response to our citizens, which is crucial considering our rural location.

The Department strives for a very high standard for fire service provision, and ISO ratings are split between an ISO 3 (majority) and ISO 9, depending on location within the FSA, which covers approximately 52 square miles.

The current operating millage for the FSA is 26 mills – 21.5 mills for Operations and 4.5 mills for Bond debt service. As you are aware, cost increases have escalated in the past year and continue to rise. In order to fund operations and adequately staff the GMFSA, a millage increase is imperative to our continued operations. The Department continues to find the most cost-effective solutions to provide for increased compensation and operational costs, as well as replacing equipment on a regularly scheduled basis.

For FY22, the FSA is requesting a 16.2% operational millage increase which includes (maximum CPI + population) and the three-year lookback millage available to us, or 3.5 mills, in order to continue the implementation of the five-year CIP, which is attached. The impact of this increase will be \$14.00 per 100,000 in assessed value.

We kindly ask that you consider the following:

- The adjusted collectable levy for the GMFSA has only recovered in 2022 to its levels in 2012 after a decade of declined values.
- The operation expenses have continued to increase with current inflation exacerbating that rate and depleting previous reserves.

Preserving Our Heritage - Protecting Our Future



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- Employee health benefits are scheduled to increase approximately 18% in 2023.
- The GMFSA has not asked for a millage increase since 2015 and has strategically utilized revenue and reserves to expand services and increase the ISO rating despite stagnation in tax revenue.
- With the improved ISO rating of 3/9, the majority of residents have benefited from the expansion of services with better insurance rates.
- The acquisition of additional quick response vehicles will significantly increase the effectiveness of the GMFSA, making it possible to further reduce response times for homes and businesses located within the GMFSA and reduce overuse of more costly apparatus.
- The *most important reasons* for these improvements are a continued reliability of our service as well as the safety of our personnel and those we are summoned to assist.

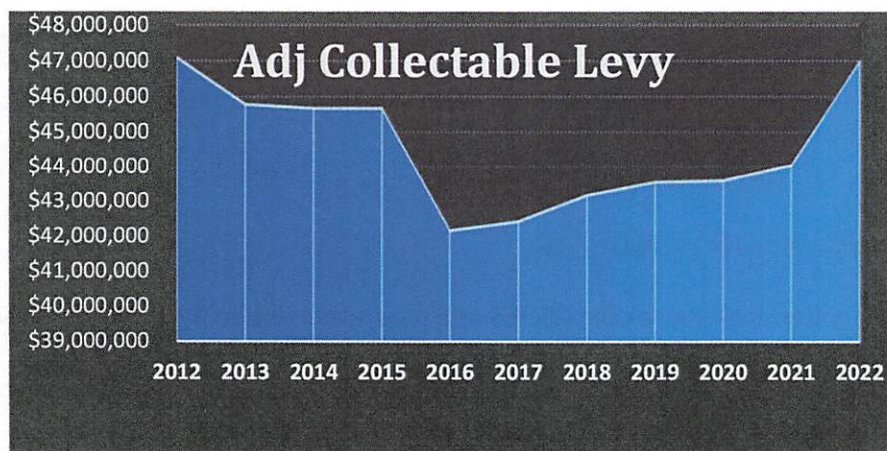
Please review the attached information, including the five-year revenue and expenditure projections and the Resolution adopted by the GMFSA in support of the CIP, and let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you very much for your continued support and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Dwight Hammack
Chairman

Attachments



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