Resolution No. 2017-8-03

RESOLUTION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
NORTH-WEST FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

A RESOLUTION ADVOCATING VOTER APPROVAL OF THE FIRE DISTRICT'S REQUEST FOR A TAX INCREASE DURING THE NOVEMBER 7, 2017 ELECTION

WHEREAS, the North-West Fire Protection District ("***Fire District***") is a political subdivision of the State of Colorado, organized pursuant to the Colorado Special Districts Act, C.R.S. § 32-1-101, *et seq.* ("***Act***"), to provide fire suppression, fire prevention and public education, rescue, hazardous materials and emergency medical services (collectively, "***Emergency Services***") to the citizens and property within its jurisdiction, and to individuals passing through its jurisdiction;

WHEREAS, on August 2, 2017, the Fire District's Board of Directors ("***Board***") adopted a Resolution directing that the Fire District submit a tax increase ballot issue during the coordinated election conducted by Park County ("***County***") on November 7, 2017 ("***Election***");

WHEREAS, the Colorado Fair Campaign Practices Act, C.R.S. § 1-45-117(1)(b), expressly authorizes the Board to adopt a Resolution advocating voter approval of the Fire District's request for a tax increase during the Election; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined it is important to the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens to whom it provides essential, life-saving Emergency Services that the Board adopt this Resolution urging all eligible voters to approve the Fire District's tax increase ballot issue at the Election.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NORTH-WEST FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT, PARK COUNTY, COLORADO:

1. Since 1981, the Fire District has provided essential, life-saving Emergency Services to the citizens and property within its 289 square mile service area.

2. During the summer months, the Fire District sees a significant population increase due to visitors and second home residents, increasing the population served by the Fire District from approximately 3,940 to nearly 10,000 individuals during peak visitor weekends. Moreover, Route 285, the main thoroughfare through the Fire District's jurisdiction, accommodates approximately 24,000 travelers per day, to whom the Fire District is responsible for providing Emergency Service should the need arise.

3. The Fire District has not asked its citizens for a tax increase since 2004! Meanwhile, over the years, service demands on the Fire District have increased substantially. In 2016 alone, the Fire District's 13 paid firefighters and 20 volunteer firefighters responded to 581 total emergency calls – ***a 32% increase in total emergency calls*** since 2007. Additionally, the

risk of a large-scale wildfire now exists year-round, requiring the Fire District to maintain continual readiness for a wildland response.

4. The Fire District also has seen ***a sharp 26% increase in operating costs since 2012***, which includes an increase in personnel costs of 29% alone. As a result of the increased operating costs, ***the Fire District has been forced to cut its training budget by approximately 66%***.

5. At the same time that service demands and operating costs are escalating, the District's revenue has not kept pace with these costs:

- The Fire District's ***tax revenue has decreased by 13.5%*** since 2012, based upon the Fire District's 2017 preliminary assessed valuation. The Fire District's tax revenue accounts for approximately 82% of its total annual revenue.

- Beginning in 2018, ***the assessed valuation of all property within the Fire District's jurisdiction is expected to decrease by $5,550,000*** due to a reduction in the state-wide residential assessment rate. This reduction in assessed valuation will further depress the Fire District's property tax revenue.

- As reported in *The Flume*, July 28, 2017, ***properties in the North-West Fire Protection District saw the smallest 2017 increase in property valuation of any taxing entity in Park County***, at only 0.46%, and the Town of Alma was one of only two taxing entities to have actually experienced a ***decrease*** of 3.57% in its property valuation.

6. Despite conscientious spending of taxpayer money, the double-impact of upward spiraling costs and service demands and sinking revenue has put the Fire District in a position in which ***continuing without a tax increase will significantly compromise the level of life-saving Emergency Services the Fire District is able to provide to the community***. A modest tax increase of 2.553 mills will allow the Fire District to strive toward the following:

- Continuing to ensure stringent training standards for all firefighters, including requiring all firefighters to maintain a Firefighter II certification.

- Providing safe, reliable equipment to Fire District's firefighters by allowing the replacement of firefighter's personal protective equipment and Fire District apparatus within the time limits provided by industry standards.

- Maintaining and growing a Capital Reserve fund that will allow the Fire District to meet future Emergency Services needs.

7. The Fire District currently maintains the second lowest mill levy of any fire protection district in Park County. If approved, the tax increase would set the Fire District's mill levy at just slightly more than the average of all other fire protection districts in Park County.

8. Based upon the Fire District's current assessed valuation, the tax increase would

result in only a slight increase in property taxes to homeowners:

- $100,000 Residence = $1.53 per month
- $200,000 Residence = $3.06 per month
- $300,000 Residence = $4.60 per month
- $400,000 Residence = $6.13 per month

9. The Board knows these are tough economic times from everyone. It would not consider asking its citizens to assume an additional tax burden, no matter how slight, if it were not essential; however, for the last 36 years the Fire Districts single purpose has been the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens and its firefighters. ***This minor tax increase is the first tax increase the Fire District has asked for in 13 years*** and is critical to the Fire District's continued ability to provide high quality, cost-effective Emergency Services to the community and to ensure the safety of its firefighters.

10. **For all of the foregoing reasons, the Board urges voters to approve the Fire District's tax increase Ballot Issue during the November 7, 2017 election.**

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this 2nd day of August, 2017.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
NORTH-WEST FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

By: _____
William "Bill" Pike, President

By: _____
Tom Nourse, Treasurer

By: _____
Will Crago, Vice President

By: _____
Kim Castellano, Director

By: _____
Maria Mitchell, Secretary