



# GRANT PARK FIRE DISTRICT

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## Press Release

### Grant Park Fire District announces upcoming referendum on November 3<sup>rd</sup> ballot

The Grant Park Fire District today announces a ballot initiative on the November 3, 2020 Election seeking support from the community for a referendum to improve services throughout the fire district. Since the inception of the fire district in 1954, the fire service has evolved with significantly increased operating expenses in addition to a greatly increased demand for service. Today, the Grant Park Fire District not only responds to fire and medical emergencies, but also has become an all hazards response organization. With the increased demand for service, the fire district is in a financial crisis and we need the communities help and support!

Our organization is faced with significant challenges such as replacing apparatus in an extremely outdated fleet much of which requires significant and highly expensive repairs, staffing issues, and equipment replacement mandates. With a fleet with an average age of over 27 years of age, we are experiencing tremendous and grave increases in maintenance in order to keep our fleet running. Now we are being tasked through state and federal mandates to replace equipment whether or not we have the financial means to do so in order to remain operational. Next, we are operating in a staffing crisis with critically low levels of firefighters due to the reduction of interest in the volunteer fire service, which is an issue that is seen across not only all of Kankakee County but further across the state and nation as well. Without the support of the community for this referendum, the fire district will be faced with decisions that may result in staffing reductions meaning there will be hours of the day without staffing for fire apparatus and ambulances. With the impact of stagnant population with minimal growth in numbers as well as the financial draw for firefighters to go to departments that offer a higher paying career has directly impacted how many people are willing and able to spend their limited free time volunteering to serve their community in the fire service, which directly impacts the department's ability to safety staff the station to sufficiently protect the community. This means that we are tasked with 3 major issues on an already extremely taxed budget while being challenged by a significantly increased call volume. This raises concern for our future ability to protect the community if we don't act now and address this problem immediately.

The priority has always been providing the highest level of service, while keeping taxes low. However, in order to continue to meet the emergency needs of the community, the Fire District needs the support of the community for this referendum. For the average single-family home in Grant Park, it would be a \$116.67 annual increase or .32/day per \$100,000.00 home value. This will allow the Fire District to address the three critical areas of our organization in apparatus replacement, maintaining staffing, and replacement of broken and outdated equipment.

Please vote on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.grantparkfire.com](http://www.grantparkfire.com). If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our Administrative offices at (815)465-6123.

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