

FIRE SERVICE CONTRACT?



A BRIEF SUMMARY

THE TIMELINE

OUR FIRE CONTRACT HISTORY

1970s

The County accepted on our Fire Fund property tax increment to fund the fire services (Fire Fund is approximately 9.3% of the 1% property tax collected within the city). This arrangement was beneficial to both the City and the County at the time.

2003/2004

Kern County Grand Jury Report, notes that contract cities including Ridgecrest are underpaying for fires services.

2007

The City and the County entered into a revised agreement for fire protection services and the City began to make General Fund Fire Service payments, direct payments to the County to augment the Fire Fund (tax).

2017

Center for Public Safety Management (CPSM) study showed that on average only 48 percent of the cost of providing services was being covered by the cities served.

2018

CPSM recommends that the County move to a 100% cost recovery for municipal fire service contracts with the nine contract cities, including Ridgecrest.

2020

Kern County starts to pursue new Fire Services Contracts with each of its service areas.

2021

Ridgecrest and most other serviced cities are shocked by the proposed increase and start investigating resolutions.

NOW

After a year of negotiating, Ridgecrest City Council votes unanimously to approve the new contract which increases the General Fund Fire payments for 2022/23 – 2027/28.

THE OLD CONTRACT

JULY 1, 2017 - JUNE 30, 2022

KCFD provides:

- Two Fire Stations in Ridgecrest, One in Inyokern, and One in Randsburg
- All are staffed 24/7 with three personnel – captain, engineer and firefighter
- All coordinate in fire and emergency response
- Large agency resources: vehicles, staff, training, equipment, oversight
- Mutual Aid Agreement with neighboring agencies

Payment:

- Fire Fund Property Tax = to 9.3% of the 1% property tax collected in the City, currently \$2,118,371
- General Fund Fire Service payments = amount shown for years 2017 - 2022

FY 2017 / 2018	FY 2018 / 2019	FY 2019 / 2020	FY 2020 / 2021	FY 2021 / 2022
\$252,564	\$257,868	\$263,283	\$268,812	\$274,457

THE NEW CONTRACT

JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2028

KCFD provides:

- Two Fire Stations in Ridgecrest, One in Inyokern, and One in Randsburg
- All are staffed 24/7 with three personnel – captain, engineer, and firefighter
- All coordinate in fire and emergency response
- Large agency resources: updated vehicles, staff, training, equipment, oversight
- Mutual Aid Agreement with neighboring agencies

Payment:

- Fire Fund Property Tax = to 9.3% of the 1% property tax collected in the City, currently \$2,118,371
- General Fund Fire Service Agreement payments = amount shown for years 2022 – 2028

FY 2022 / 2023	FY 2023 / 2024	FY 2024 / 2025	FY 2025 / 2026	FY 2026 / 2027	FY 2027 / 2028
\$415,183	\$583,232	\$773,795	\$987,454	1,224,783	\$1,486,711

KEY POINTS

The prior fund payment and tax only covered an average of 48% of the costs of KCFD Service.

Home values in Ridgecrest, while steadily increasing, are lower on average compared to other service areas, which in turn generate lower dollar amounts for the Fire Fund Property Tax (9.3% of the %1 City property tax).

Oil revenue in the County which used to supplement costs has decreased, while personnel and equipment costs have increased.

Cities needing only a one- or two-station fire department cannot afford the headquarters staff and support systems for regulatory fire services oversight and compliance (therefore, no cost savings and to establish our own fire department).

The \$1.2M increase cost for fire protection services is significant and cannot be absorbed in our current budget structure, even with the plan for the increase to be phased in over the next 6-years.