

Municipality of Anchorage



*P.O. Box 390
Girdwood, Alaska 99587
<http://www.muni.org/gbos>*

David Bronson, Mayor

*GIRDWOOD VALLEY SERVICE AREA BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Briana Sullivan and Jennifer Wingard, Co-Chairs
Mike Edgington, Amanda Sassi, Guy Wade*

Resolution 2023-17 Of the Girdwood Board of Supervisors Support for a Property Tax Exemption in the GVSA for Volunteers serving Girdwood Fire Department

WHEREAS, volunteer fire departments provide critical public safety services to many non-urban communities across the state of Alaska and across the nation; and,

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Fire Department (AFD) is the public safety department responsible for providing emergency response to the citizens and visitors of Anchorage, providing fire services across most of the Anchorage Bowl and much of Eagle River, with EMS coverage extending throughout the 1,961sq miles of the entire Municipality of Anchorage (MOA); and,

WHEREAS, the Municipality of Anchorage has two volunteer fire departments within its boundaries, namely Chugiak Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company (CVFRD), serving the communities of Chugiak, Peters Creek and Eklutna, and Girdwood Fire and Rescue (GFR) serving the Girdwood and Turnagain Arm region; and

WHEREAS, the community of Girdwood is located over 30 miles from the closest AFD Fire Station 9 in Anchorage; and,

WHEREAS, Mutual Aid agreements exist between the AFD, GFR and CVFRD, and others; and,

WHEREAS, Girdwood Fire Department was originally established in 1959 to provide fire protection in Girdwood Valley and took on responsibility for Emergency Medical Services in 1974; and,

WHEREAS, Girdwood Fire and Rescue was incorporated in 1998 as a member run non-profit organization to provide fire, EMS and rescue services in the Girdwood and Turnagain Arm region under contract with the Girdwood Valley Service Area (GVSA) and the Municipality; and,

WHEREAS, retention of qualified volunteers continues to be a challenging aspect of managing a volunteer fire and EMS department; and,

WHEREAS, significant time and taxpayer funds are allocated to the recruitment and training of volunteers to meet and maintain state qualifications, so it is in the fiscal interests of both the GVSA and the Municipality to retain qualified volunteers; and,

WHEREAS, other Alaskan boroughs, including Fairbanks North Star and Kenai Peninsula Boroughs, have established a property tax exemption for volunteer fire and EMS personnel to acknowledge the significant investment of time and energy these community members make to their fellow citizens; and,

WHEREAS, at their August 29, 2023 meeting, the GFR Board of Directors passed a resolution of support for a property tax exemption for creating a property tax exemption for current and active volunteers;

THEREFORE, the Girdwood Board of Supervisors recommends that the Municipality adopts policies to encourage retention of qualified volunteer firefighter and emergency medical providers, both to acknowledge the critical service such volunteers provide to our community and as good fiscal policy,

ALSO THEREFORE, GBOS requests that the Anchorage Assembly establish a property tax exemption for current and active volunteers of a registered fire department operating within the Municipality, modeled on similar exemptions in Fairbanks North Star and Kenai Peninsula Boroughs, by amending AMC 12.15.015.E and prepare an associated ballot proposition on the 2024 Municipal election.

PASSED AND APPROVED by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed this 18th day of September 2023.

Briana Sullivan

Briana Sullivan
GBOS Fire Supervisor

Margaret Tyler

Attest