

Consideration in the Public Safety Mill Levy:

BUDGET

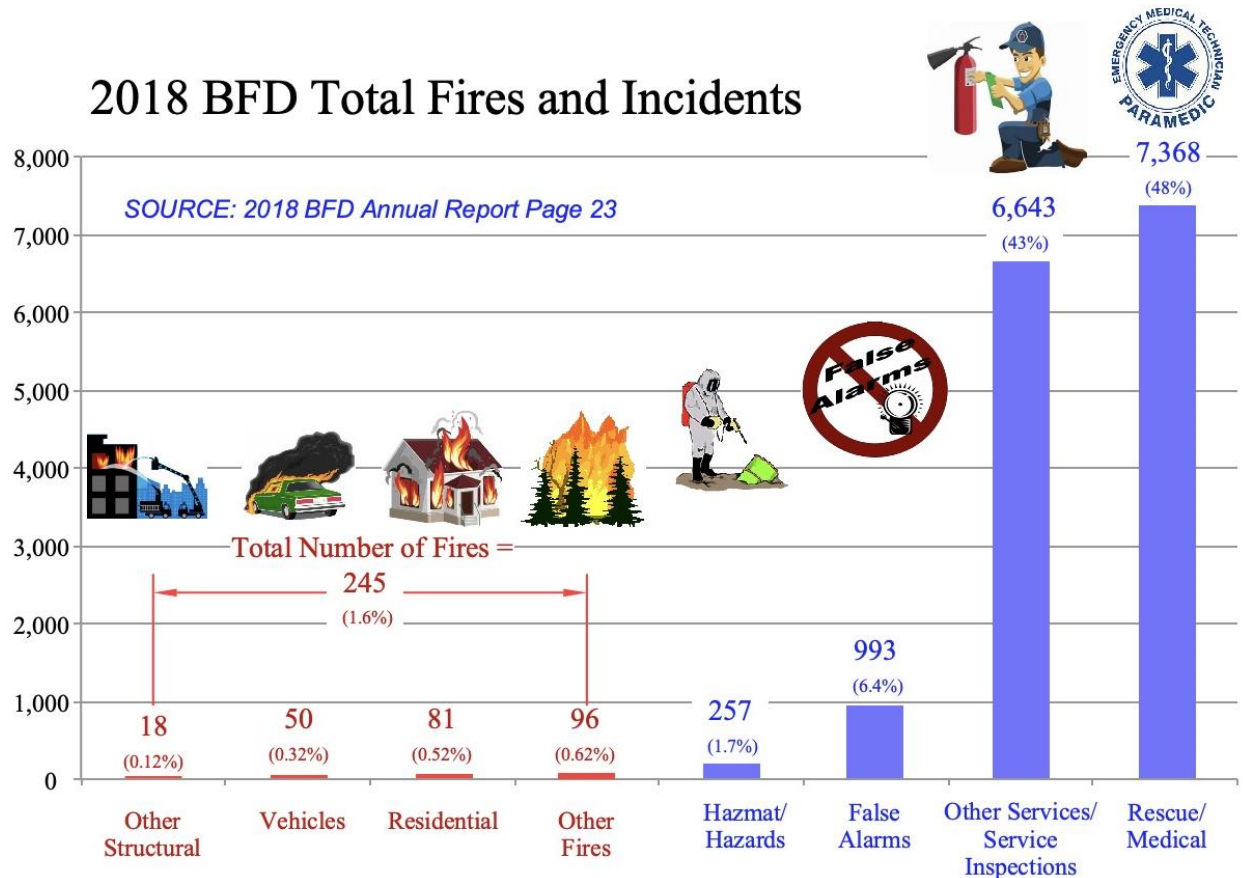
1. What are the other real alternatives besides the one being presented?
2. What are the additional costs and increased benefits of each alternative?
3. How much have the Fire and Police budgets increased yearly for the last 5 years?
How do these compare with:
 - A. The rates of inflation?
 - B. The increases in population? and
 - C. The increases in the valuation of the City?
4. How has the \$4 million dollar increase in the Public Safety mill levy passed last year been utilized?
5. What percent will the proposed Public Safety Mill Levy increase the average citizens tax bill? For instance the maximum 2020 proposed PS Mill Levy increased our taxes by 97%
6. Will the recent dramatic increase in Billings home appraisal rates also increase the homeowners taxes? How much?
7. 71% of the City's General Fund finances the Police, Fire, Municipal Court, Code Enforcement and Legal expenses. Will this percentage of the General Fund be decreased if the Mill Levy is passed? If so, by how much? What would that savings be used for?

POLICE

1. It has been reported that 93 individual chronic high utilizers use \$10.4 million dollars in public services each year. That does not include "unreimbursable care delivery" expenses of \$2.6 million for St Vincent and \$5.1 million for Billings Clinic.
 - A. How will adding 28 more police officers and 10 Judges and legal staff reduce any of these "chronic" expensive (\$195,000 per person per year) individuals?
 - B. Since it appears these "utilizers" are increasing rather than decreasing, are we heading towards becoming another Portland, OR?
2. Is it true that we have not been able to fill many of the funded vacant positions we presently have in the Police Department? If so, why? Will we be able to fill another 28 highly capable police officers? Is the Academy capable of handling that many prospective officers at one time?
3. How much funding did the City receive from the Federal Government for the COVID-19 pandemic? What are the plans for those funds?

FIRE

1. The main reason stated for increasing the Fire Department budget is “Calls for service to the fire department has risen faster than firefighters can keep up.” The question is: “What are the types of calls for service? Do they all require the response of a fully staffed fire vehicle?”



2. A graphic created from the 2018 BFD Annual report is shown below. This shows that only ±1.6% of the calls require fire fighting equipment. ±1.7% require hazmat equipment. ±6.4% are false alarms. ±43% are for other services and service inspection. The greatest amount of calls, ±48%, are for paramedic. rescue and medical services.

- This clearly shows that if we need to add any additional support, it should be for 2-person rapid response medical teams rather than relying on 4-persons in large fire engines? Should we be cooperating with or contracting with AMR?
- What can be done to reduce the large number of false alarms?
- What is actually required to perform minor service and service inspections? (±43%)

3. Our Billings Fire Department has a PPC (Public Protection Classification) of 3. (1 is the best, 10 is the worst.) We are rated in the top 12% of the fire department’s in the

United States! This is very good! This includes the City of Billings and the BUFSA (Billings Urban Fire Service Area.)

4. We have the second highest number of fire staff per 100,000 city population (144) compared to our peer cities. We are higher than Boise (81), Sioux Falls (110), Fargo (112), Rochester (117), Pueblo (130), Missoula (133), and Bend (140). Only Fort Collins(145) has more than Billings (144). We are way above average in comparison with our peer cities.

5. What is the Fire Fighters Union proposing to insure we keep our Fire Department with its high rating and efficient use of manpower without increasing the cost to the city taxpayers? It appears from the information given (increased calls) that all that is being proposed is to increase staffing and costs without any real, needed and visible improvements!

SUMMARY

Before we support a costly Public Safety Levy, it is important the the Police Department, the Fire Department and our City Council honestly answer the above questions so we the citizens of Billings know we are getting a good value for our funds.

Many of us are on fixed incomes and it appears that we are moving into a period of high inflation. We value a “Safer Billings!” We also value an “Efficient Billings!”