

E-911 Monthly Surcharge Referendum

Included on the ballot for the **Tuesday, April 7, 2015**, Election will be a referendum question regarding the E-911 Monthly Surcharge. The City of Highwood is seeking direction from Highwood citizens, based on the results of the referendum.

The City of Highwood currently has an E-911 (Emergency Telephone System) Monthly Surcharge of \$1.00 per month. This amount is assessed on residential and commercial land lines. The \$1.00 surcharge was established in 1991 when Highwood residents approved the rate via referendum. The revenue collected through this surcharge is used to maintain the Emergency Telephone System that provides dispatching services.

The City recently proposed this referendum question on the November 4, 2014 ballot that resulted in 452 voters in favor of the referendum and 458 not in favor. The City is once again requesting voter consideration of this referendum question for the Tuesday, April 7th election.

Dispatchers serve a critical role in directing emergency response personnel 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Around the clock, these highly trained dispatchers answer 9-1-1 calls and send fire and police units on their way to a life safety call or the alarm of criminal activity. All dispatchers are certified in Emergency Medical Dispatch. This allows them to provide pre-arrival, "self help", instructions to citizens during medical emergencies in the critical few moments while fire fighters, paramedics, ambulance or police are on their way to the emergency.

In the twenty three years since the initial surcharge was passed, costs have continued to escalate while improvements have been made to staffing and technology. Meanwhile, the E-911 Surcharge revenue has declined, especially over the past several years.

The City's estimated cost of dispatching is \$215,000 for the current year. With only about \$52,000 in surcharge revenues, the City's support of this dispatching service is more than \$163,000. These dollars come from the City's General Fund, or property taxes collected from residents.

On the April 7, 2015 ballot, residents will be asked to increase the emergency telephone system surcharge from \$1.00 to \$2.00 per month, per phone line in each home or business in the community. The additional revenue will be used to continue to provide residents with the highest level of dispatching service and alleviate the financial strain on the City's General Fund.

“Shall the City of Highwood impose an increase of one dollar (\$1.00) per month to raise the current monthly surcharge from one dollar (\$1.00) per month to two dollars (\$2.00) per month per network connection, which surcharge will be added to the monthly bill you receive for telephone or telecommunications charges, for the purpose of improving and maintaining the 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone System?”

April 7, 2015 Referendum

"Shall the City of Highwood impose an increase of one dollar (\$1.00) per month to raise the current monthly surcharge from one dollar (\$1.00) per month to two dollars (\$2.00) per month per network connection, which surcharge will be added to the monthly bill you receive for telephone or telecommunications charges, for the purpose of improving and maintaining the 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone System?"

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a referendum?

A referendum is a question proposed to the popular vote. The Illinois Compiled Statutes provides municipalities authority to make decisions, enact changes, and increase taxes. Anything beyond the defined scope of authority requires the municipality to gain permission from their voters prior, via a referendum question.

Who provides dispatch to Highwood?

Regional Emergency Dispatch (R.E.D.) Center in Northbrook provides Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) dispatching to Highwood.

The Village of Glenview Public Safety Dispatch Center provides police dispatching services to Highwood.

Why does the City need to do a referendum?

The City needs to receive permission from Highwood residents in order for the increase to be established.

Why is the City requesting an increase?

The cost associated with dispatching services continues to increase while there has been a significant decrease in revenue from the E911 monthly surcharge.

What will the money go towards?

The revenue generated from the surcharge will be used to offset expenses related to dispatching service as well as the purchase of necessary equipment for the purpose of responding to emergency/non-emergency calls.

How will the increase affect me?

The surcharge will be included on your monthly invoice from your telephone or wireless service provider.

What happens if this referendum fails?

The City will continue to provide dispatching services but will need to utilize revenue from the General Fund which is funded primarily by the Property Tax Levy.

For more information please visit www.cityofhighwood.org/