

KMPUD Temporary Advisory Committee Survey Results

The Temporary Advisory Committee on Fire and Emergency Medical Services drafted and sent a survey, with an accompanying FAQ, to the Kirkwood Community in order to solicit their feedback on the level of service and how to fund fire and emergency medical services in Kirkwood.

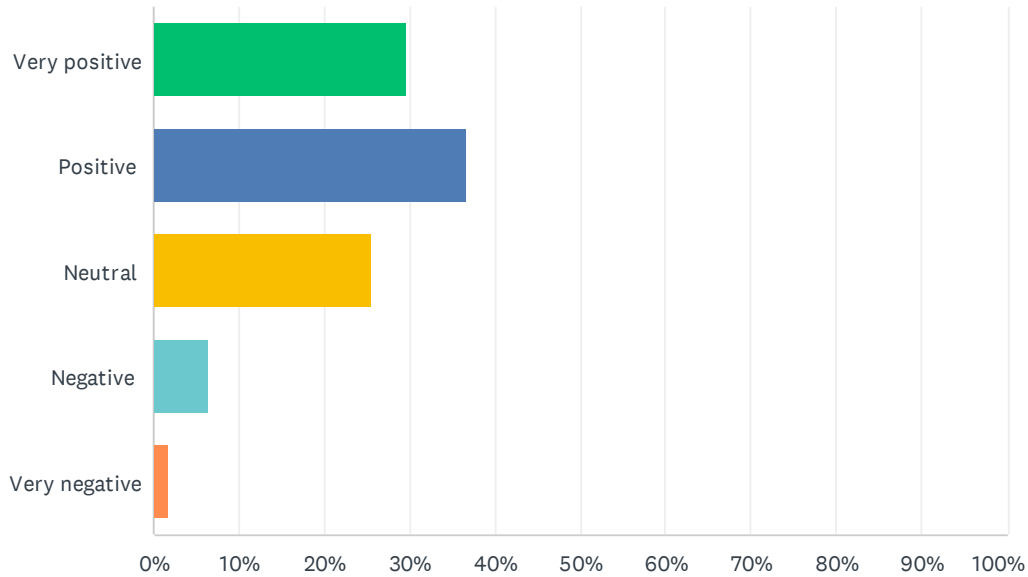
Residential and commercial customers who registered an email at kmpud.com received a unique survey request link if their account is currently charged a fire assessment fee. This represents 594 unique accounts out of the total of 662 accounts that pay a fire assessment fee. The survey and linked FAQ was sent by email on the morning of Friday, February 16, 2024. Reminder emails were sent to the Kirkwood community on February 23, 2024 and February 28, 2024. The survey remained open for two weeks, closing in the evening of Friday, March 1, 2024, with the District receiving survey results representing 174 unique properties (26% of total assessed properties).

The survey consisted of eight questions, two of which were open for extended responses. The following pages show:

1. The questions and a summary of the responses.
2. The extended responses for Questions 4 and 8 (responses are listed in the order they were received).
3. The current version of the FAQ.

Q1 What is your perception of the current services provided by our fire department with regard to fire protection services?

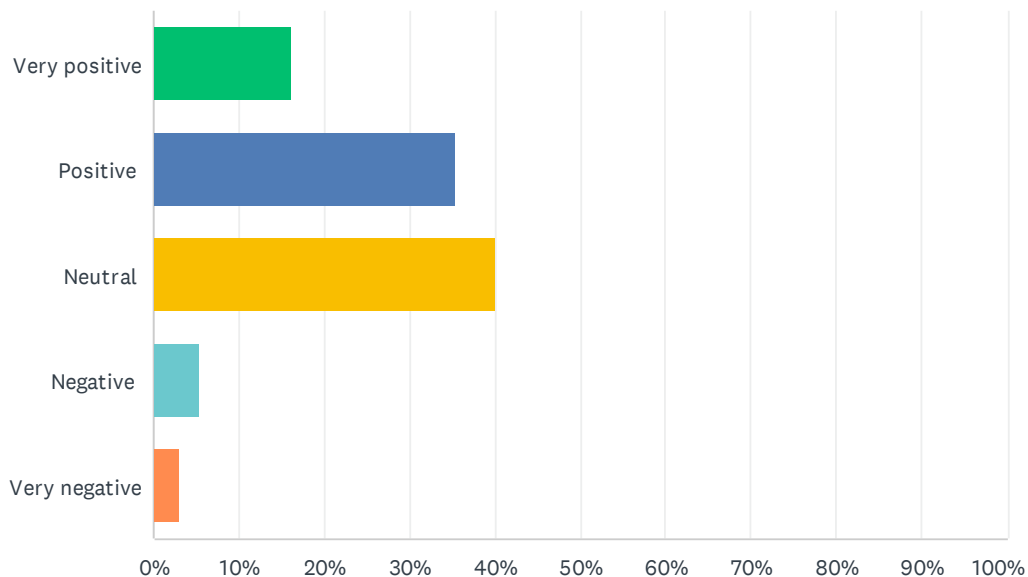
Answered: 172 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very positive	29.65%	51
Positive	36.63%	63
Neutral	25.58%	44
Negative	6.40%	11
Very negative	1.74%	3
TOTAL		172

Q2 What is your perception of the current services provided by our fire department with regard to emergency medical services?

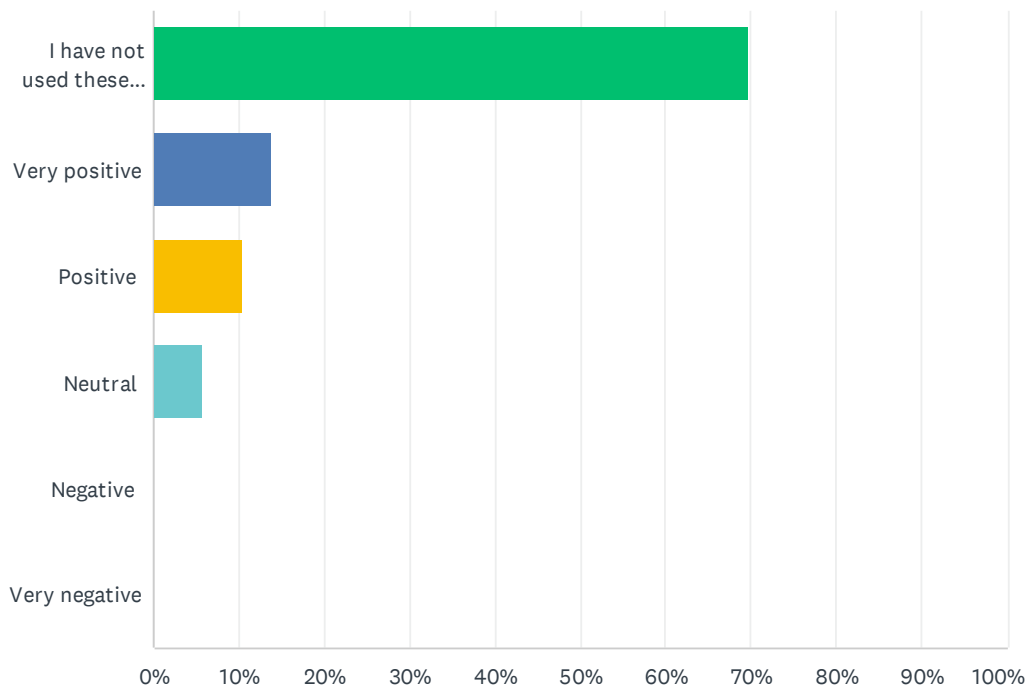
Answered: 172 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very positive	16.28%	28
Positive	35.47%	61
Neutral	40.12%	69
Negative	5.23%	9
Very negative	2.91%	5
TOTAL		172

Q3 Have you ever had to use the services provided by our fire department and if so, what was your perception of the services provided?

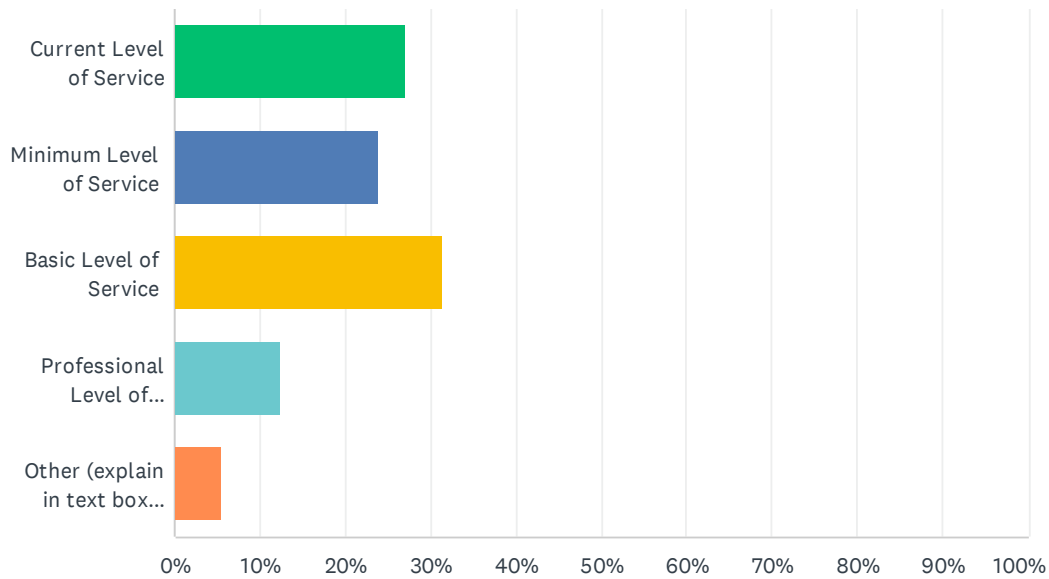
Answered: 172 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I have not used these services	69.77%	120
Very positive	13.95%	24
Positive	10.47%	18
Neutral	5.81%	10
Negative	0.00%	0
Very negative	0.00%	0
TOTAL		172

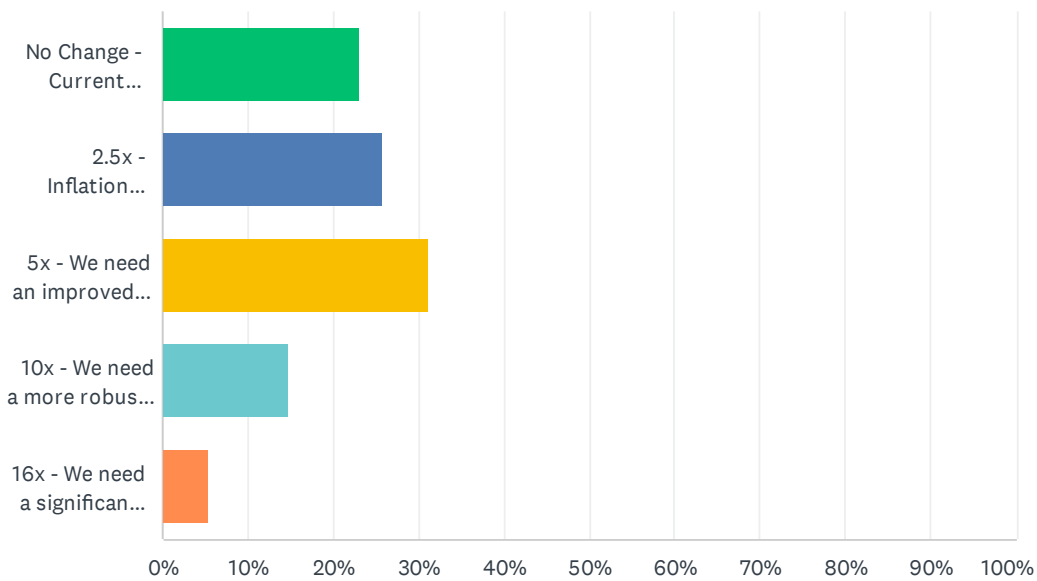
Q4 The next question is based on the levels of service summarized in the table below (more detail here) “Contingent” means contingent on trained volunteer availability. Service Level Current Minimum Basic Professional STAFFING All Volunteers 1 Paid Fire Chief/EMT and Volunteers 1 Paid Chief, 3 Paid FF/EMT’s and Volunteers 1 Paid Chief, 6 Paid FF/ Paramedics and Volunteers FIRE SERVICES - External structure fire and initial wildfire response Contingent Yes Yes Yes FIRE SERVICES - Enter structure fire Contingent Contingent Contingent Yes FIRE SERVICES - Rescues Contingent Initiate Search Most types of rescues All types of rescues EMS SERVICES - First Aid Contingent Contingent Yes Yes EMS SERVICES - Basic Life Support Contingent Contingent Yes Yes EMS SERVICES - Advanced Life Support No No No Yes EMS SERVICES - Ambulance No Contingent Contingent Yes ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST \$365,000* \$600,000 \$1,000,000 \$1,600,000 *Current expenses include an increased on-call stipend provided by the KVFD 501(c)(3).

Answered: 163 Skipped: 11



Q5 In order to raise the needed funds for KVFD, multiple funding strategies will be necessary (including non-residential sources). Raising the current Fire Assessment (or Special Assessment) rates is one of the options we are investigating. If funds for the fire department were to be raised in this method, which level of increased Assessment (or Special Assessment) would you support? Please note that a new Special Assessment will be based on benefit received, which may differ from the current square foot.

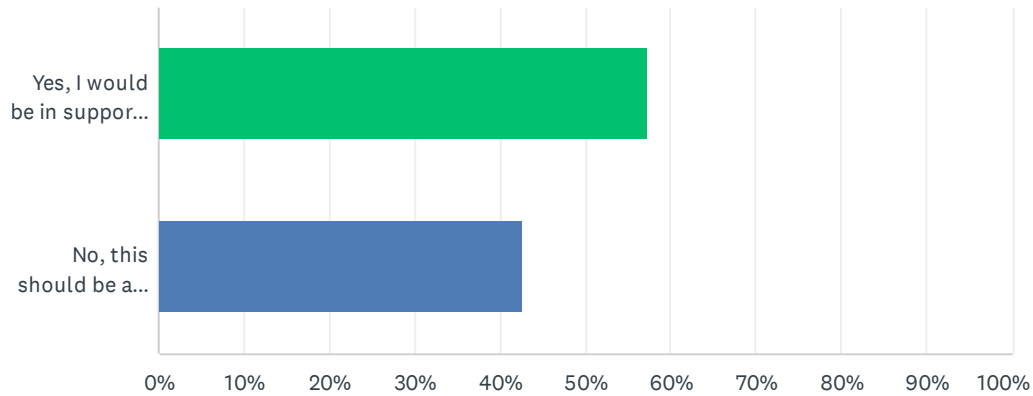
Answered: 170 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No Change - Current assessment fee set in 1988: \$0.04 per combustible square foot, resulting in about \$65k per year (other funding sources could be additionally raised).	22.94%	39
2.5x - Inflation adjustment: \$0.10 per combustible square foot, resulting in about \$163k per year (other funding sources could be additionally raised).	25.88%	44
5x - We need an improved department: \$0.20 per combustible square foot, resulting in about \$325k per year (other funding sources could be additionally raised).	31.18%	53
10x - We need a more robust department: \$0.40 per combustible square foot, resulting in about \$650k per year (other funding sources could be additionally raised).	14.71%	25
16x - We need a significantly more robust department of operating costs: \$0.64 per combustible square foot, resulting in about \$1M per year (other funding sources could be additionally raised).	5.29%	9
TOTAL		170

Q6 If changes are made to the existing Fire Assessment (Special Assessment) would you be in support of modifying the tax structure for it to be adjusted on a yearly basis for inflation?

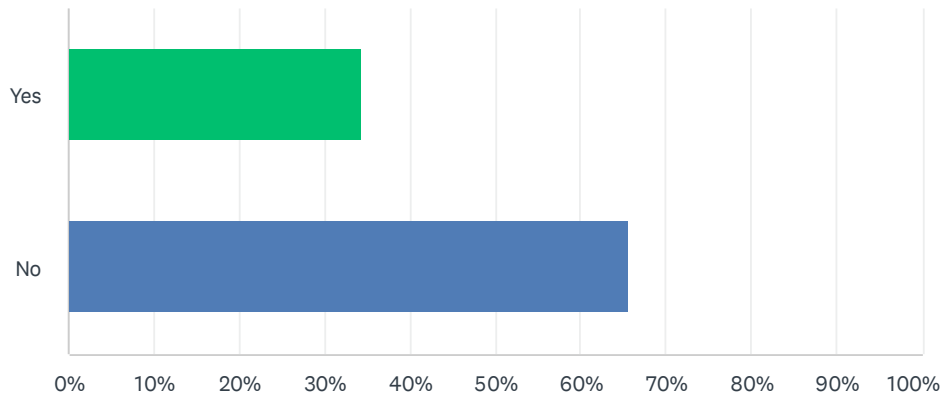
Answered: 171 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, I would be in support of including inflation adjustments	57.31%	98
No, this should be a fixed fee	42.69%	73
TOTAL		171

Q7 Currently, property taxes returned to KMPUD by Alpine, Amador, and El Dorado Counties are used to offset some utility department expenses. Would you support shifting up to \$250,000 per year of property taxes from the utilities to fund a portion of the fire department budget, which would raise your utility rates? Please note this amount of property taxes is not enough to fund some of the potential KVFD staffing models (see Question 6) and additional funding may still be required.

Answered: 169 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	34.32%	58
No	65.68%	111
TOTAL		169

“Other” Comments on Question 4 - Level of Service

Minimum level of service less ambulance service. 2x current assess should cover - not an option below so selected no change.

Assume you meant to ask us to choose our preference here? If so, somewhere between Basic and Professional.

Assume the question is what level of service do you support? Obviously, more would be great, but hard to raise that amount of \$

Full time, salaried fire chief and EMS training for volunteers; purchase of ambulance

I selected minimum level of service, but I would also be supportive of a basic level of service or something in between minimum and basic (eg, 1 chief + 2 paid FFs/EMTs)

Minimum level preferred.

Minimum level if we can have a Fire Chief who is a paramedic. If not, Current Level

We need high-level Fire and Emergency services, period. My perception is that we do not have enough coverage. My experiences have always been positive with what we have, but I fear a real emergency with no one to help.

Would also support Professional level of service

Integrate Other State agencies..

I would like to have a Paramedic (advanced life support), Fire Chief and maybe 1-2 paid FF's. EMS seems to be the missing variable.

Instead of adding three FF/EMT's, consider adding two. Maybe the Chief can cover one shift with volunteers

I would suggest 2 FF/EMT's instead of 3

Would like to know what comparisons are to similar remote mountain communities. The community forum listed other communities but did not give meaning full info like levels of service and funding. Might consider minimum funding as appropriate but would still like to see meaningful comparisons. This info has been asked for early in the Meas E process and still has not been examined or provided.

The KMPUD is totally inept at managing what it is currently supposed to manage.

Basic services should include paramedic training and ambulance The chief and 1-2FFs should be paramedics

There are SAR groups available in Alpine, Amador and El Dorado counties to assist with searches. Didn't Rick Ansel used to be a paid fire chief/captain?

I do not see a question associated with Item 4, only a table of possible service levels and choices to select. If the question is asking to select the desired service level, then our answer is “minimum level of service”.

Basic if we can get more money from the counties but otherwise Minimum

So far we are doing fine.

The question is not showing up on my computer so I can't answer

You didn't ask a question but I see nothing wrong with what we currently have

Revisit Professional level in 3-4 years

Service needs to be perceived by insurance companies as at least adequate. So we need Basic or Professional per best value for money and getting home insurance to insure our homes.

We don't need more services

Additional Comments: Is there anything else the KMPUD should know about your household's perspective on fire or medical emergency services?

Increase current assessment 2% to cover minimum service. Kirkwood needs to get additional funds from counties to take on their responsibility for accidents, road emergencies and fire fighting outside Kirkwood - all great services; but, not ones Kirkwood homeowners should have to shoulder. We already get very little from the counties for some of the highest property taxes in those counties.

County, State and Federal funding should be utilized due to the response coverage area of KVFD

Having an ambulance based here is important.

There needs to be increased dialogue with Vail in regards to the services provided solely to Vail's recreational draw to Kirkwood. Be fair also if more of the ST rental tax (AirBnB, etc.) came back to Kirkwood

You should have counter-sued the people whose home blew up for negligence and endangerment instead of caving to their lawsuit, and then imposing one size fits all poorly spec'd meter enclosures for which many home owners were egregiously charged to build.

fire and EMT services are essential

I think that if we agreed to increase the fire assessment 10x then asking if we would also change the utilities is confusing. Are you hoping both can be done?

Stay volunteer at lowest cost

We have not used the KWFVD. The service is critically important and it needs to be supported.

Shouldn't Vail provide a significant funds for this?

Overall, I believe the current volunteer staff are able to handle most situations we face in the valley. I advocate funding a full time chief, and getting everyone EMS training, as first steps. I also advocate for extensive outreach to the counties, state/national park services, and Vail for collaboration/partnership in sharing the costs and shaping the development of KVFD. I would also like to see research on what services other comparable communities have and how they fund them (remote rural examples, ski resort examples). I don't know enough to be able to judge what is reasonable for a community like Kirkwood, and I don't agree with the premise that a fully paid dept will offer better services, for our needs than a largely volunteer department. And, why don't we start by raising funds for the relatively modest expansions, which seems more feasible.

I attended the meeting in Dec 2023 in person and was very impressed with the whole Team and presentations. I had to call fire dept to our unit in the past and the firefighter that responded was very quick, decisive, and helpful. Our family supports KVFD!

Cost of electricity is too high, cost of fire insurance is wildly outrageous. Because we are locked into these two extreme costs already, I would be very reluctant to vote yes on any increases that go beyond inflation adjustments. Seems changing our Class 4 rating to improve insurance costs is unlikely - or would cost us just as much but paid to another agency.

Would love to learn more about where our property and any other local tax dollars are allocated. What percentage is coming back to valley and how does this compare to other small communities. Would like to learn more about pros and cons of incorporation and incremental costs associated with this. Given multiple months of very low response rate, just really hard to justify a massive build out. Big draw of Kirkwood is the remote isolated feel. We've lasted 50yrs with a volunteer fire dept and while 100%volunteer might not be sustainable indefinitely, I'd caution against over-investing. Great presentation by Fire Department.

My base rate just went go up again!

Our household accepts that there is a certain level of elevated risk that individuals accept when they live at Kirkwood due to its remoteness, which is one of the reasons why we love this place and chose to live here. This is similar to the heightened risk that we accept when skiing, hiking, backpacking, and engaging in other wilderness activities. We do not expect or want extensive fire and medical services at Kirkwood, and don't think that the call volume justifies a professional level of services. We are grateful for the services provided by the current and past volunteers at KVFD.

Homeowners are currently disproportionately charged with funding PUD and FD services for the use of the entire community including the Vail resort. Seek out of valley funding with county and state government and fee for service for FD on out of valley emergency response.

anything serious you need a helo from south lake anyways. like last week. would having more paid staff kept that guy from sleeping at silver lake for a night? glad he was found...

As a homeowner of one of the larger homes, basing the increased tax on square footage alone seems unfair, especially since they will be offering EMS Services which has NOTHING to do with square footage and should be shared more equally by all households. I'm mostly interested in EMS services because they are life saving and more likely needed than fire services. So, while I said I'd support a hire tax, it really depends on how the tax is charged. Hopefully not solely on square footage.

Can efforts be made to work with county, state and federal government agencies to provide funding/services? I'm not aware that investigation has been done in this area. Isn't this just rehashing what we voted on and did not pass?

I am very impressed by KVFD but I am most concerned about medical emergency services being available.

The district is already paying interest on over \$50M of debt, increasing soon because of the waste treatment plant. The debt is 5 to 6X annual revenues. Adding expenses for a fire department is similar to increasing our annual fixed costs, a questionable decision given the size of the district and the existing financial burden.

The biggest fire risk at Kirkwood is due to propane. We need a fire tax on propane. Has this been investigated?

Having had a very sick family member here, my worry was always that there was not enough coverage in case of emergency. We just need it to be excellent and we have to pay for it. Not sure where the road maintenance gets paid from but that has to happen too!

Vail should be contributing significantly as the anchor entity in the valley and a business that depends on KVFD emergency services for their employees and patrons.

My utility rates are already excessively high even if I don't use a drop of water or a kw of electricity. I would I refer property tax increase to fund the KWVFD. Additionally, as a well trained and 20+ years experienced Physician Assistant, please consider adding people like me to the team. I live here. The FD saved my unit in 2015. I'm willing to commit what I can do and can afford.

Don't see a need for much change

Vail needs to be more financially involved. Vail should be responsible for ALL trauma response to their injured customers. Why is KVFD having to coordinate helicopter transfers in parking lot? Can't it be Vail security, ski patrol, and clinic staff?

Yes. Alpine county is getting away with ripping of Kirkwood. We are the largest funder of the county budget but not getting concomitant services. The county is getting millions in property taxes just from East Meadows and needs to cough up some money to partially fund this.

Despite the best efforts of the KVFD, I believe the current system and level of funding is unsafe and inconsistent. The community needs to recognize this and provide more realistic funding.

get direct access to TOT from Amador and Alpine

The survey is poorly structured. Tables do not show. The District focus seems to have a paid chief. Why didn't the District include a question about trying to station CalFire here or USFS instead of KVFD. If volunteers are such a problem getting then why is the District not pushing for Additional Dwelling Units (ADU's) in the community to provide affordable housing for employees in valley and increase the volunteer pool. There were plenty of volunteers years ago. Additionally, the funds currently spent on KVFD are not well managed. It seems that the KVFD wants new equipment all the time instead of using funds for operations. Why does the KVFD roll to helicopter evacuations? Are they compensated for this? I don't see the Fire Department at the hospitals when the helicopters land. It makes sense when setting up an LZ out of valley but Kirkwood has security to handle in valley LZ's Go after the KCA public tax money that is being used for private benefit of a few land owners.

Most of these questions are based on Fire needs vs Emergency Service needs. The current Fire Chief, 1-2 paid FF's and volunteers should be more than sufficient for fires but lacking in EMS. Could a Paramedic also be a volunteer FF?

Vail must pay their fair share especially for EMT services. The daytrippers are a huge portion of the EMT services needed. The community forum did not address this issue when questioned about it. Why not? This is unfair and Vail is taking advantage of property owners.

It seems that there is a trend for increasing demand for EMT services, for which the current budget is inadequate to cover. It would seem prudent to upgrade to Basic EMT services, but the increased expense can't just be the Fire Assessment. Vail needs to participate; they benefit if resort attendees have a higher level of service.

As an owner of a studio condo, I have one of the smallest places in the valley. I need to keep my expenses as low as possible as I do not want to sell my place. With rising costs everywhere, I am not sure what the future holds. And while I appreciate the nearness of emergency services, it seems to me you are there more for the visitors during ski season. I would love to see a chart of your calls shown on a monthly basis to see when you are most active.

I would look at fire/medical responses in the last five years and consider a FLEX schedule of on call firefighters/EMT's. It would be a cost saving approach but not a final solution.

No decision should be made until serious discussions are had with Vail. As the main economic driver in the valley, Vail needs to be included. KMPUD should have a meaningful relationship with Vail that allows discussions about this topic. It is unbelievable that the community session did not have an update regarding communications with Vail, other than alluding that discussions should happen.

Thank you for the helpful background, FAQs, current cost per unit, etc. This approach makes a survey meaningful! Tough decisions!

Our POV is we're in a remote location. The need for a non-volunteer service (both fire & medicat) is not clear until you ACTUALLY need it. While our household does not have a clear need, a minor step up in service available makes sense (ie, Paid chief). However it would be helpful to know how other communities similar to ours handles this - how do we compare ourselves to others?

EMS services are much more critical than structural fire fighting Think: people's lives over property

Property owners in Kirkwood pay huge property taxes and yet none of that is returned to the community. No police, fire, schools, road repairs. Nothing! That is what needs to change!

The county should be required to use our property taxes to provide a working staffed fire station. We are being robbed by the county!

Why don't you recruit for volunteers? Did the Fire Chief/Captain position used to be paid? Why did you leave out of the FAQ's that Vail funds the medical clinic during the ski season. The medical clinic is open to all visitors and residents. I would only be in favor of a rate in crease if the KMPUD restructured the rates. We are paying more now than prior to the outvalley line installation.

To us, there already is a mechanism for funding the fire department and it is the fire assessment. In combination with the current property tax allocation, the fire assessment should be set to a level that funds the desired level of service. For example, our wastewater bill should not go up to fund the fire department.

We're grateful for services provided.

New resident, so limited perception of current operations. Current assessment seems low definitely room for increase. Minimum service seems correct for a rural community - Current service seems unreliable, at no ones fault Thank you to all the volunteers!

I believe alpine and amador county should be providing fire services. I pay \$15,000 a year in property taxes to amador county and I struggle to understand what/any government services they provide to kirkwood property owners.

Thank you. Well done, clear survey and supporting information.

If the PUD provides services in the Hwy 88 corridor, we must ensure a mechanism to collect revenue from those non-residents/non-ratepayers to fund the services received.

Affordable housing for workers in Kirkwood Valley is essential for Kirkwood to have any future. It makes little sense to raise LOS if staff are 30 minutes away.

If political avenues have not worked, are there any judicial avenues that could be pursued to get more money out of the counties? Are the counties being negligent towards the residents of Kirkwood? Can we pursue higher than county level politics to force the counties to send us more?

1.Keep KVFD all volunteer. Compensate the volunteers better if needed. Be more aggressive with the county: most Alpine county residents pay far less in property taxes than Kirkwood residents, and do not have additional assessments for fire services.

I support having a volunteer dept. However, the money out of homeowners required to make it sustainable isn't realistic. We receive emergency services from other sources. CHP, sheriff, etc. Yes the response times may be extended however, they are available. The limited basic life support (BLS) services an EMT can provide is minimal. Any civilian can learn advanced first aid and activate the 911 system for transport. I think the average homeowner is oblivious to this. Additionally, much of the construction is sprinklered and will suppress a fire but cause water damage. I would suggest building more (or modifying) employee housing for firefighters since this is lacking in all areas of employment @ kirkwood. Make the dept more sustainable through recruitment and tap the junior colleges for aspiring firefighters in the firefighter 1 programs. Tap into the local resources (surrounding agencies) for training and advice on how to make the dept sustainable and trained in an age of accountability and firefighter shortage. Federal and state grants?

Would be good to give some examples what the increase would mean. E.g. two apartment sizes, two house sizes.

This should be paid for by our taxes. I don't see why this is such a big issue right now. We been fine for 50 years if more is needed it should come out of what we give the count since they just take from Kirkwood residents and give very little back.

one person on the mountain that residents can call if needed is all that is needed.

Thanks for soliciting feedback on this. It sounds like KMPUD is working as hard as they can, given current funding, and they are responding to a number of calls across three different counties. I think that additional funding should come from the state, or the three counties that they're serving.

Too many upgrades in too short a time. We are rural and knew that when we bought or built.

I appreciate the time to put together an FAQ to describe the problem statement and the this survey to get community feedback. This is a complex problem and will require multiple creative solutions to solve in a cost effective way. I like the idea of having a basic fire department but not it's paid primarily with a fire assessment.

KMPUD should encourage residents to be more self-sufficient, such as learning CPR, first aid, and the location of the closest AED. Also, survey homeowners who have completed Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training and publish the list (given their permission).

Necessary actions to maintain home insurance options are a minimum - rates are skyrocketing and many insurers are dropping customers, leaving fewer (and thus more expensive) options

Other sources of funding should be explored. Kirkwood village is not very busy during summer months and full fire department is not needed for good part of the calendar year.

I can not answer questions 5,6,7 due to the fact that there should be more research in funding the fire department. Not just increasing our property tax. The suggestion to find other departments that are funded in small towns should be investigated. Or adding additional sales tax to the area and billing out to people who are in the accidents. Since a lot of calls are on the highway.

Quickly please. Insurance goes up each year as more and more companies refuse to renew. I fear we will not see a drop in insurance costs/prices once we have a fire department to their liking.

We need to fund at least a paid chief to administer the department. I think it will be difficult for such a small population to support 4 full time firefighters. At the same time, dissolving the department would be very costly for us as homeowners. Partnership with Vail ski patrol seems like something that should be explored.

I'd like to see a clearer split between the fire and EMS services, especially when it comes to funding. I would be helpful to better understand how much/often KVFD is called upon to provide fire services vs. EMS services on a yearly basis. And for EMS services, it could be useful to tease out what percentage of EMS services can be attributed to daytime Vail Resorts operations vs. full-time and/or part time residents. This distinction between fire and EMS services may help come up with different funding mechanisms that could then be perceived as fair by most people.

Regarding number 6, we would want inflation adjustments only made if approved by the full board of KWPUD on an annual basis. I see no mention of KVFD fees being charged based on parking spaces which was a contentious item during Measure E. What happened to that (not that we were supportive of that proposal as it stood)?

We live in a rural area, we knew that when we bought so why should we expect more services

My support for an increase is ultimately dependent on the specific total increase to my unit's increase in costs.

Please look into cooperation with Cal Fire and National Forest Service Fire Protection. Both those agencies did a great job during Cal Fire. Our household feels that the Measure E funding amounts from our household were way too high. Thus I think that is why the community soundly rejected it. Approx funding amount of about \$200 per household is a more manageable amount for our household. Then index it to CA CPI with a max increase of 5 percent per year. In my opinion that level of funding with a max 5 percent per year increase may be acceptable by the community and get

Utility rates/costs are already excessive. Would like to see this as a separate item. It sure why the county isn't providing more funding for this with our tax base. Does Markleeville have a paid FD from property taxes?

The counties need to provide more support of the fire department. This requires a lot of work.