

**Fenton Fire Protection District  
Citizens Advisory Committee  
Final Report  
2018**

**2018 Members**

Kevin Funke – 20 year resident  
Ginny Goede – lifetime resident of 84 years  
Lionel Goede – 53 year resident  
Gale Jamison – 38 year resident  
Tara McMahon – 25 year resident

**Introduction**

In April of 2018, the Fenton Fire Protection District placed Proposition F on the ballot. Proposition F was a 25 million dollar bond measure to replace and/or remodel all four existing fire houses and purchase new emergency equipment. The Proposition won the simple majority vote but did not receive the four-sevenths vote needed to pass. After the April election, members of the fire district were tasked to examine the failed bond measure. During this examination, several residents approached the fire district regarding questions, concerns, and needs of the proposed bond. This interest indicated the need for a voice from members of the fire district's community. In May, the Citizen Advisory Committee was established. The members of this committee represent many facets of the fire district's community from resident, local business owner, community volunteer, parent, and retiree.

**Presentations**

During the course of the four months, the Citizen Advisory Committee discussed and examined the Fenton Fire Protection District and its need for capital improvements. Meetings were held every two weeks and a variety of topics were analyzed.

The Citizen Advisory Committee participated in an open forum that covered the past 2018 April election for Proposition F. The conversation was led by Assistant Chief Romona Kaminski to provide the fire district with feedback and understanding from the citizen's point of view on why the bond measure failed. The results of the conversion provide clear direction and an outline for information and research needed in future meetings.

Chief Tom Steitz and the fire district's public accountant, Rognan & Associates, went over the fire district's finances and yearly budget. Accompanying the financial report was also the utilization of the thirty-nine cent tax approved by the voters in the April 2017 election. A representative from Stifel Financial Corporation provided an overview of how a bond works, what it can be used for, and how the debt is payed off. Property value and costs associated with the bond were also calculated.

The Citizens Advisory Committee toured all four fire houses in the district. Tours were conducted by the firefighter/paramedics of the fire district, allowing for one-on-one

interactions between the fire department's members and the citizens. Examining this critical infrastructure provided an insight on equipment utilization and asset protection. Representatives from Archimages Architecture Firm offered additional information and delivered a detailed need assessment. The committee was then taken to a neighboring district to tour a newer fire house in order to compare and contrast.

Deputy Chief Christopher McCarthy gave a detailed analysis of the Fenton Fire Protection District's services and response times. A computerized mapping system allowed the committee visual representation of the fire district's response reach and high call volume areas. Fire Marshal Christopher Thiemann continue the conversation by touching on the current and future development plans within the Fenton Fire Protection District.

### **Results**

This open forum allowed the Fenton Fire Protection District to capture a broader citizens' view of the 2018 April election for Proposition F. The Citizens Advisory Committee pointed out areas in need of improvement or enhancement. Suggestions include increasing time notification to the residents regarding the placement of a bond measure on the ballot, providing more opportunities to dispense information on need for the bond, and explaining use of the of the 39 cent tax increase passed in 2017. Other areas to consider are increasing face-to-face interaction with the residents and explaining the total cost of the bond.

Chief Steitz and Mr. Rick Rognan went over the fire district's financial report by presenting a monthly analysis of the fire district's revenues and expenditures. Mr. Rogan provided details on the fire district's budget and clarified the day-to-day operations. Chief Steitz explained that over the past decade, tax abatement strategies have included an increase in the frequency of property value appeals to the county and state tax commissions. Successful appeals have greatly decreased the fire department's operating budget. In an effort to provide continued transparency of tax dollar use, Chief Steitz has placed the district's financial report on the Fenton Fire Protection District website. Mr. Ghafoori from Stifel Financial reiterated that funds generated from Proposition F will strictly be used for capital improvements.

The Citizens Advisory Committee toured all fire houses of the Fenton Fire Protection District. At present, buildings do not meet current code standards with respect to regional natural disasters. Absence of a formal security and comprehensive sprinkler system was also evident at all fire houses. Buildings cannot adequately accommodate the increased number of staff and the physical size of modern emergency apparatuses. Lack of space hampers opportunities for growth as well as the ability to meet present day fire service facility standards. The fire district developed a website ([votefentonfire.com](http://votefentonfire.com)) to give a complete look at the fire district and the need for proposition F.

The Fenton Fire Protection District responds to an average of 4,500 calls a year and provides emergency service to Sunset Hills, the City of Fenton, and unincorporated Fenton. By using a computerized mapping system, Deputy Chief Chris McCarthy was able to indicate the potential response changes with the new placement of Fire House #2 at the Fenton Logistic Park. The

mapping system plotted the previous year's emergency calls using the new location and there was little to no change in response times. With the current and future development plans in the Fenton Logistic Park, an additional work force of 5,000 is estimated.

### Conclusion

The Fenton Fire Protection District presented the Citizens Advisory Committee with a thorough examination of the fire district's needs assessment, finances, and plans for future growth. Recommendations from the committee have been put into practice. The fire district announced the bond measure 12 weeks in advance of the November 6<sup>th</sup> election. The [votefentonfire.com](http://votefentonfire.com) website was developed to better disseminate information related to the November 6<sup>th</sup> bond measure. Three town hall meetings have been scheduled and will be advertised with large signs in front all fire houses. Members of the Citizens Advisory Committee will be speaking on behalf of their findings. In addition, the fire district will send out over 8,000 mailers with dates of the town hall meetings, what proposition F will be used for, cost of the bond measure, and the website address. Information on use of funds from previously passed proposition will also be included. Members of the fire district will be going door-to-door prior to the election to offer additional face-to-face interactions with the residents regarding this bond measure.

In summary, the Citizens Advisory Committee concluded that the Fenton Fire Protection District has provided all necessary facts regarding the bond measure and gives its approval of Proposition F. The fire stations are a critical part of a community's infrastructure because they provide ongoing protection, care and service. The committee recognizes that the fire district is a vital resource to the residents and businesses within its boundaries. Renovated and updated facilities as well as modern emergency equipment are needed to provide adequate protection and allow for continued growth.


The Citizens Advisory Committee fully supports Proposition F and is prepared to address any questions and/or comments that arise from this bond measure.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Kevin Funke

  
Ginny Goede

  
Lionel Goede

  
Gale Jamison

  
Tara McMahon