

The Cullowhee Fire Department has been serving with pride and professionalism the residents and visitors of Cullowhee and of Jackson County for over sixty years. What started as a small station on the grounds of WCU and have grown to one main station and three substations. We currently have six (6) engines, four (4) tankers, three (3) brush trucks, one (1) ladder truck, three (3) service trucks and four (4) other fire department owned vehicles. Our department currently has 34 members.

This growth in our department is based on the needs of our community. From 2014 to 2020, we have responded to 4,944 calls for service, requiring over 24,820 hours from our volunteers. These hours do not include the over 25,072 training hours they have also participated in. On a daily average, the fire department responds to approx 2.5 calls per day with an average of three (3) hours per day given by the volunteers. We ask this of our volunteers on top of their already busy life with jobs and family. Currently 1/3 of our members have served the community for over 20 years with several of them approaching the 40 year mark. With this type of demand, people are not volunteering at the rate they have in the past and with the average training time of 5 years to be fully certified to professionally handle the required job, the rate of turnover of certified members is not keeping up with the demand.

Our continuous hard work over the last decade, led us to obtaining a class 5 rating which we achieved last year. This rating is done by the State Fire Marshalls Office. Prior to this rating, Cullowhee was a class 6 and prior to that was held at a 9s. The significance of this rating relates directly to what our residents pay in home-owners insurance. The class 5 rating reduced the cost of these insurances. But keeping this rating every year does require many things that must be documented and maintained. We are required maintain a certain number of stations and sub stations, a required amount of maintained fire apparatuses, required number of certified members, response times, required number of training hours that each member must meet, testing of the 236 fire hydrants in our district, as TWSA does not perform the required testing, testing and maintenance of 24 water points that are located in our rural areas and the maintenance of 626 pre plans per year.

The Fire Department currently has one paid member that works during the week. When a call for service is paged out this person usually has a truck enroute within two (2) minutes. On nights and weekends when the station is unmanned the average response time for the first truck out the door is approximately ten (10) minutes. This is due to the members having to come from home or work. Eight (8) minutes can mean the difference between life and death or the difference of losing one room to fire or the whole house. Having full time paid members will also allow us to serve the community better by giving us the staff to respond to all emergency medical calls whereas now we respond only to the dire medical calls.

Our goal for the last sixty years has been to serve the community to the best of our ability and with the utmost professionalism. We as a department have accomplished that goal, however, to continue to serve the community in the fashion that they deserve we feel we have no other choice but to request your approval in allowing us to receive a fire tax. We understand the true financial magnitude that this tax will have on our residents and we are not making this request without our due diligence and extreme thoughtfulness. By having a paid/volunteer department we will not only be financially able to maintain our current service but we will be able to improve on it. Our paid members will be available to our community 24/7 365 days a year. The response times will significantly be lowered and maintained at a minimal. It will also ensure that the required maintenance of stations and equipment, certified personnel and training is met to ensure that we maintain or improve our class 5 rating from the State. Our volunteers are and will continue to be the backbone of this department and this will allow them to continue to serve the community without the excessive demand of their time and families.

Cullowhee Volunteer Fire Department

Fire Tax Budget Proposal FY 2021-2022

Building		Grand Totals
Utilities (electricity/nautral gas)	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Telephone	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00
Building Maintenance/Repairs	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Department Custodial Supplies/Meals	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
All Vehicles		
Fuel	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Maintenance	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Radio Maintenance	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Special Equipment		
Uniforms	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Fire Equipment	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
Equipment Maintenance	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00
Employment Expenditures		
Salaries and Wages	\$ 340,000.00	\$ 340,000.00
Social Security Contribution (6.20%)	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 21,000.00
Medicare Tax (1.45%)	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
Retirement (4.00%)	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 14,000.00
Health Insurance	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00
Paid Holidays	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00
Employment Insurance	\$ 4,600.00	\$ 4,600.00
Part-Time Employment	\$ 27,000.00	\$ 27,000.00
Overtime	\$ 44,000.00	\$ 44,000.00
Insurance		
Firefighter Cancer Insurance	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Liability, Building, Directors and Officers	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 35,000.00
Vehicle	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Workers' Compensation	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,500.00
Debt Service		
Vehicles	\$ 116,000.00	\$ 116,000.00
Building	\$ 54,000.00	\$ 54,000.00
Air Packs	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 35,000.00
Miscellaneous		
Grant	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Professional Services (Legal/Accounting)	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Training/Travel/Seminars	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Fundraiser Supplies/Expenditures	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Volunteer Pay Per Call	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Office Supplies	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Dues/Retirement For Volunteers	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Capital Outlay	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
	<u>\$ 668,500.00</u>	<u>\$ 544,600.00</u>
		<u>\$ 1,213,100.00</u>

These calculations are based on 8 full-time employees to staff Cullowhee Fire Department 24-7.