

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING TO APPROVE BUILDING A NEW EMERGENCY SERVICES BUILDING

At this meeting, each town's electorate will determine whether to pass a resolution to authorize their Town to assist in financing a new Birchwood Four Corners Emergency Services District Facility and to authorize their Town Officials to enter into a Promissory Note for the Town's share of the cost of the new facility.

The BFCESD provides fire protection and ambulance services in parts or all of the Village of Birchwood, Town of Birchwood, Town of Cedar Lake, Town of Doyle, Town of Edgewater, Town of Long Lake and the Town of Wilson. The current building housing the fire protection and ambulance services equipment is woefully cramped and outdated, preventing effective use of the equipment and creating serious safety concerns. Several years ago, the BFCESD decided that the needs of fire protection and ambulance services equipment would be best served by the construction of a new facility. The BFCESD purchased 3.3 acres in the village of Birchwood for the construction of the new facility. The BFCESD engaged the services of Northwest Builders to design the new facility. The current plans for the new facility were reviewed and approved both by the fire department and ambulance service and have received State approval.

David and Carolyn Cleveland generously presented the BFCESD in May 2019 with a \$500,000 matching grant to assist in the construction of the new facility. Efforts to secure the matching \$500,000 have yielded much success and commitments for the entire \$500,000 are planned to be obtained before beginning construction. The building is estimated to cost \$1,774,000 which leaves \$774,000 to be covered by the seven entities making up the BFCESD. The BFCESD is recommending a 2.6% buffer for the unexpected, so the total being requested from the seven entities is \$820,000. Attached is a chart showing each entity's portion of that \$820,000. If donations exceed \$1,000,000, the entities' shares will be reduced according to the %'s on the chart. The maximum being requested from each entity is listed on the chart.

The existing facility has been a workhorse for almost 50 years and BFCESD expects this new facility to provide another 50 years of service for the Fire and Ambulance services. Ken George, Birchwood Volunteer Fire Department Chief says, ***"The new building provides many benefits, but the major benefit would be the safety of our firefighters. The current building is way undersized as the trucks have become larger, the area inside the building is really minimal, and there is not a safe distance between moving trucks and firefighters inside. The demand for more services means more equipment to serve that need and less space to park that additional equipment. We currently do not have any parking area or work area outside of the building which means firefighters parking across the street and walking across traffic to get to the hall, or having to block off the street and use that for a work area for training."*** Our Birchwood Volunteer Ambulance Service Director, Don Bergstrom Jr. adds, ***"The new building is important for Birchwood Ambulance to continue to be a functioning part of the community. It has been difficult to recruit people to work and volunteer for shifts Ambulance Service from the local population so we have had to start to recruit EMT's that live outside of the response area. Currently, we have members from outside our area staying here to cover the schedule, but these members need a place to stay overnight and work from. As this will become the new normal, having non-area residents staying here, the new building will provide these employees a safe and clean place to work out of and will not incur more rent charges while also being able to utilize the employees for daily cleaning and maintenance of the building and grounds while they are on duty there."***

The special town meetings are: Town of Birchwood 9/9/2019 @ 6 pm, Town of Cedar Lake 9/9/2019 @ 6:30 pm, Town of Doyle 9/9/2019 @7:30 pm, Town of Edgewater 9/9/2019 @ 7 pm, Town of Long Lake 9/10/2019 @ 5:30 pm and Town of Wilson 9/3/2019 @7 pm.

The Village of Birchwood will vote at the September 10, 2019 @ 6 pm Monthly Board meeting

Please plan to attend your Town's meeting.