



# Sunshine Proposed Mill Levy Increase

v.8/10/25

Your Sunshine Board of Directors is proposing a 6.1 mill levy increase to be effective in the 2026 tax year. This would result in an annual tax increase for our residents of approximately \$365 for each million dollars of assessed value for your home. The Board takes any increased tax levels seriously and only with very careful consideration. In this case, the increase will fund two expenditures considered critical to the continued safety of our district.

## Rationale for Proposed Increase

### Funding Infrastructure - Water Supply and Cisterns

- This has been a long-unmet need recently clarified with the completed analysis and draft plan.
  - The recommended plan is for well-distributed water supply resources to be located throughout the district. The current system is incomplete and inequitable. A complete system will better protect the entire district.
  - [The recommended plan proposes 7 new cisterns + 1 hydrant costing \\$980K-\\$1.1M for buildout in 8-10 years.](#) The revenue generated by the mill levy increase would allow at least one new cistern to be built every three years. It is the board's intention to focus efforts to accomplish construction more quickly by utilizing all possible resources: the new funds, the Don Dick Fund, CWPP fund, and pursue grants or other revenue or approaches.
  - The current insurance "crisis" emphasizes the urgent need to expedite the cistern plan and ensure that more homes in the district will be closer to a community water supply source. The additional water resources protect the entire district, as they help prevent structure fires from becoming wildfires.

### Funding a Salary for a Part-Time Fire Chief

- Our current Chief, Michael Schmitt, has served the district as an unpaid volunteer Chief since 2016. He has done an amazing job and we are grateful for his dedication. His service has made it clear that the time, expertise, and leadership skills required to lead the district require more than a typical volunteer can provide. We want to ensure the district is well-positioned to maintain high-quality leadership into the future.
  - We are a small district and do not expect to be able to fund a full-time position. It is hoped that, at a minimum, a part-time salary will ensure the position remains competitive and attracts highly qualified individuals to serve as Chief. The funding would support a minimum compensation package (salary plus benefits) of approximately \$70,000.

- The reasons for moving to a paid position from a volunteer position include:
  - Increased fire risk
    - Insurance rates are increasing dramatically, which reflects increased risk. The district needs to demonstrate adequate / aligned readiness and resources.
    - Increased EMT / Medical need - increased traffic, bikes, and aging of neighborhood population.
  - Demonstrated benefit of consistent, strong leadership
    - Sunshine staffing, training, and response levels are at an all-time high, and the district is a model to other districts.
    - Increased technical requirements of the job (apparatus familiarity and complexity, increased state and federal training and reporting requirements, increased local coordination requirements, etc.)
  - Trend for paid leadership/chief staffing in neighboring districts
    - Gold Hill and Fourmile have recently moved to a paid Chief. Other neighboring districts already have paid staff. Sunshine must maintain a comparable level of readiness.

**Table of annual cost increase per residence to achieve the target revenue**

Item	Target per year	Current tax income per mil levy	Millage increase to raise the needed amount	Estimated cost per mill per \$1M actual value	Total cost increase per \$1M actual value
Compensation package for the Chief (salary + benefits)	\$70,000	\$17,221	4.065	\$60	\$244
New cistern every 3 yrs	\$35,000	\$17,221	2.032	\$60	\$121
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$95,000</b>	<b>\$17,221</b>	<b>6.097</b>	<b>\$60</b>	<b>\$365</b>

**Note:** The total cost is an estimate based on 2025 property tax assessments. This amount will change from year to year as property assessments by the Boulder County Assessor change.