

We urge you to vote “NO” on Measure E; it is rushed, poorly analyzed and planned, and the proposed implementation cost is not only beyond our means but unnecessary and unfair. Measure E will not provide stable Emergency services and it may be a significant risk to our valley.

Measure E was drafted by a small KMPUD group working with a \$50K consultant, literally following NONE of the essential strategies recommended by the Committee to Preserve Kirkwood’s Fire Department (see at the end of this document). The approved resolution is for a headcount of 12 Full Time people funded by a tax of \$1.9M growing at least 2% and up to 6% per year FOREVER (For reference, the approved tax would grow to at least \$2.32M and up to \$3.4M in 10 years).

The feedback from the community regarding Measure E has been mostly negative. The Board may now propose a different implementation at a much lower cost. What does not change is that Measure E still authorizes a large tax allocated in an unfair manner.

Measure E and the process to draft it were poor, but at least the community has a possible check on it when we vote in July. If it passes, this check is gone and if a similar situation occurs in the future, the Board will have the unrestricted ability to tax us to the maximum amount. We already know that at least three existing Board members believed that a large, professional fire department was the best option. Any Board commitment or any approved resolution can easily and legally be reversed by a vote of the same Board or a future Board at any time. These changes could happen without any consideration for community input as demonstrated with Measure E.

**Please consider the following facts before voting on an irreversible taxation of the Kirkwood community:**

- First, let’s address the fear factor recently introduced that Kirkwood may have no or a greatly diminished fire department. The Fire Department has operated this way for many years, and we do not know of criteria or regulations which would push this to happen. Current volunteers in the FD mention that the last serious recruitment effort was approximately 10 years ago. Shouldn’t we attempt a recruitment effort before we claim that the fire department is dying? Vail offered to help (see Matt Jones ‘memo [Here](#)), shouldn’t we at least talk to them?
- It is difficult to understand why an analysis of the historical calls justifying the need for this level of expenses was not the absolute first step in this process. It seems that the number of calls (between 100 and 120/year) does not support a drastic change to our current strategy. It would be helpful to know which major disasters would have been avoided if we had a better/larger/professional department.
- Is KMPUD the optimal organization to manage a professional fire department? Does the General Manager and the Board have the right expertise to know how to do it? Have we asked in the last 6 months (not 5/10/15 years ago) the Amador Fire Protection District, the

Eastern Alpine Fire and Rescue Department, or the Forest Service to run a remote station in Kirkwood subsidized by the Valley? What are their objections? Could we address them?

- If KMPUD is the optimal (or only) organization, do the 17 employees have the bandwidth to run another large project? The proposed Measure with an approximate Present Value of \$26,000,000 would be the second largest project ever undertaken by KMPUD. We all know that snow removal, propane storage, propane distribution and wood chipping are difficult in our harsh environment. There are also additional large and expensive challenges in the coming years: new wastewater treatment plant, water wells, propane management, etc. Some of these items are core to KMPUD and existential to the Valley. Should we focus our attention and most of our funding to fix these first?
- KMPUD has not provided a detailed 5-year project plan supporting an expense of this magnitude. We hope that it exists.
  - We have only seen a high-level summary of the operating budget for the first year. There is no detail regarding lodging and transportation costs for the firefighters, administrative and management expenses as charged by KMPUD, a list and cost of the capital equipment (ambulances, firetrucks, personal breathing equipment, communication, furniture of the apartments, etc.) required to support a professionalized fire department
- Piling large expenses that we must finance with borrowing (wastewater treatment, wells, etc.) or additional taxation (Measure E) on top of existing large debts (\$50M+) is a huge risk for the Valley.
- Vail Resort's operating costs will increase by around \$500,000 in the lower budget assumption and around \$1,200,000 in the budget authorized by Measure E. They have had no input and no say on this issue. Assuming that they will not react to control their costs in some manner detrimental to the Valley is a risky assumption.
- The allocation of the tax to parking spaces is unfair. A 1200 sqft cabin with no parking space will pay the same as a 4000 sqft mansion with a garage and reserved parking area nearby. Owners renting their condos all winter on Airbnb will pay half what the small cabin with no allocated parking will.
- The Committee to Preserve Kirkwood's Fire Department believes that an acceptable result can be achieved with a solution less than half-as expensive. They developed it in 3 weeks after the Board approved Measure E. What does it tell us about the process that was followed to get to Measure E? Why are we even voting for it when even its supporters support a much lower cost and different implementation?

Instead, we advocate for a committee with an array of representatives from the Community to explore other alternatives. The 6 essential strategies proposed by Sandy Goldberg and Eric Richert

are a great start and this is the process which should have been followed to develop the Measure in the first place:

(From the "Committee to Preserve Kirkwood's Fire Department")

1. Hire the minimum level of paid firefighter professionals.
2. Improve volunteer recruitment focused on people willing to be certified EMT and Firefighters.
3. Partner with Vail to encourage volunteer participation.
4. Increase the current fire assessment fee that is based on square footage.
5. Continue fundraising at the annual Kirkwood Summer Festival and other events to help fund needed firefighting and emergency response equipment and vehicles.
6. Set the fire department budget annually, only after public discussion about desired level of service versus cost.

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