

Grassy Knob Volunteer Fire Association Dues Collection Petition
Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the GKVFA Dues Collection Petition?

To list the GKVFA Dues onto the Annual Real Property Tax Statement for collection by the County Collector. GKVFA dues are currently billed by the State of Arkansas through a separate billing statement. Dues will be consolidated onto your annual tax statement as a separate line item to have one bill handle both taxes and dues simultaneously.

Will my taxes increase due to adding the fire department dues to my tax statement?

No. The fire department dues will simply be listed as a separate line on your annual tax statement and have absolutely no effect on your taxes.

Will adding my dues to the Annual Real Property Tax Statement open a door to my property being assessed and increase my dues based on worth?

No. The County Collector has no input into what your dues must be. The GKVFA informs the County Collector of your current dues amount. Any change to the established dues rates requires a vote of GKVFA members.

When I pay my fire department dues billed in July 2022, does that mean I am paying my dues twice for 2022 when I pay my 2022 Annual Real Property Tax Statement this coming March 2023?

No. When you pay your dues billed in July 2022, you are paying for the GKVFA fiscal year running from 01 Jul 2022 to 30 June 2023. When you pay your taxes next year, the GKVFA dues shown on your 2022 tax statement will be credited to your 01 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 fiscal year fire department dues.

Since I received my fire department dues bill in July 2022, can't I just wait to pay my dues when I get my 2022 Annual Real Property Tax Statement because the county collects in arrears?

No. Even though the county collects in arrears, the fire dues bill you received this July 2022 covers the period 01 Jul 2022 to 30 June 2023. Not paying until you receive your 2022 tax statement means you have not payed your dues for the 01 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 period. Remember, when you pay your 2022 tax statement, the GKVFA dues on that statement are credited to the 01 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 fiscal year fire department dues.

What are the consequences if an owner decides to not pay their dues?

Failure to pay your fire department dues or assessments can result in an increase in your insurance rates, a lien being place on your property, or in extreme cases, foreclosure proceedings being initiated on your property.

Do other fire protection districts use the Annual Real Property Tax Statement to collect their dues?

Yes. In fact, Grassy Knob is currently the only fire district not using the Annual Real Property Tax Statement to collect dues.

Why bother with this petition to add fire department dues to the Annual Real Property Tax Statement if dues are already collected by a separate billing method?

Currently 25% of Grassy Knob owners refuse to pay their dues. This results in a loss of at least \$15,000 annually, which jeopardizes the continued ability to provide you with fire protection and emergency medical services.

What is the advantage of adding the fire dues to my Annual Real Property Tax Statement?

Other fire department districts using the Annual Real Property Tax Statement have a dues collection rate of over 99%. Dues are the life blood of any volunteer fire protection and emergency medical services provider. With the continued rising costs of materials, equipment, supplies, fuel, insurance, maintenance, to name a few, the lack of dues collection threatens the very existence of your fire protection and emergency medical services.

How can adding my dues to the Annual Real Property Tax Statement help the Fire Department if Carroll County charges a fee?

Carroll County charges a processing fee of only 3.1%. Considering the \$15,000 minimum lost annually because 25% of owners refuse to pay their fire department dues, it will cost the fire department only \$465 to collect the lost dues.

What signatures can be counted on the petition?

As per Arkansas Code 14-20-108, only registered voters in the Grassy Knob District voting in the immediately preceding general election will be counted.

How many signatures are required for the petition to be approved?

As per Arkansas Code 14-20-108, a majority of voters in the Grassy Knob District voting in the immediately preceding general election are required to approve adding the fire department dues to the Annual Real Property Tax Statement. A majority means at least 50% plus one signature is required. So if there are 200 qualified to be counted on the petition, there must be at least 101 signatures for the petition to pass.

If the petition is approved by the County, will there also be a special election held where all registered voters in the Grassy Knob District be allowed to vote on adding the fire department dues to the Annual Real Property Tax Statement?

No. As per Arkansas Code 14-20-108, once the petition is signed by a majority of registered voters in the Grassy Knob District voting in the immediately preceding general election, the quorum court will dispense with a special election on this issue and add the fire department dues to the Annual Real Property Tax Statement and collected by the county collector at the same time and in the same manner as real property taxes.

Why bother with a petition and just have a Special Election to add fire department dues to the Annual Real Property Tax Statement?

The cost of a Special Election must be paid by the GKVFA at a cost of approximately \$45,000. Your fire department does not have the funds to pay the cost of a Special Election. The continued ability to provide fire protection and emergency medical services is already in jeopardy due to available funds.

Are the 25% who refuse to pay their due still considered members?

No. Fire Department dues bills are sent out 01 July (start of fiscal year), and if dues are not paid by 01 October, that owner is considered a non-member.

What happens if the fire department responds to a fire at the property of a non-member?

If the fire department responds to any type of fire on non-member property, that non-member will be charged up to \$5,000, which is set by the State of Arkansas.

Is there an advantage to being a member in good standing?

Yes. Besides the benefit of fire protection and emergency medical services, all members in good standing have the benefit of a no fee response to any fire on their property as well as emergency medical services.

Besides a no fee response to fires, are there any other benefits to being a member in good standing?

Yes. An owner of developed property (containing a structure under construction or completed) and is a member in good standing is considered an Active Member who can also speak, vote, make and second motions at any annual or special meeting. A Patron Member (landowner of undeveloped property) and member in good standing may obtain voting rights by paying active member dues.

How can I sign the petition if I am gone or a part timer?

You must sign the petition in the presence of the Canvasser. We will do everything possible to arrange a time and place to allow you to sign the petition.

How do I resolve an incorrect membership dues charge listed on my tax statement?

Contact the Grassy Knob Membership Chairman, which will be listed in the Fire Call publication or Grassy Knob website. Do not try to resolve the issue with the County Collector since the county is only processing the bill and has no input into the Grassy Knob dues amount.