



North Country Emergency Medical Services

2021 Annual Report

Submitted to the Administrative Board on 3/24/2022

Message from Chief Ford

What can we say about 2021? It wasn't as bad as 2020? In 2021 NCEMS ran a record high number of ambulance calls and transports. Increases of 7% and 14% respectively.

Some of our activities returned such as our volunteer EMT program and CPR/First Aid training. Many of us became accustomed to the virtual learning platform and most of these programs still operate in at least a hybrid of these models. We were able to participate in the Yacolt National night out in August as well as the Yacolt 4th of July parade and the Amboy Territorial Days parade.

NCEMS members did their fair share to help in the COVID pandemic. NCEMS staff participated in many of the mass vaccination events around the county in 2021. NCEMS held two vaccination clinics on site in Yacolt to make sure our community members had a convenient opportunity to receive their vaccination.

In 2021 thanks to our very supportive community the request for an excess levy to fund ambulance operations passed by a wide margin. These excess levy funds will be collected in 2022 and expended over 2022-2024. Excess levy funds account for 23% of the annual operating budget.

In 2021 we completed the design process for a replacement station at our Fargher Lake Station. The request for bids for construction of the facility should be completed in early spring 2022. This 5000 square foot facility has an estimated cost of \$3,500,000.

2021 was a year of significant staffing changes as well. In February after 30 years of service to the citizens of NCEMS Tom Ryan retired. In July Office Assistance/Ambulance Billing Clerk Cheryl Hill retired and moved to a beautiful property in Montana. Lastly in January 2022 Office/Finance Manager Kim Pitts retired after 18 years of service to NCEMS and FD13.

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North Country EMS

Who We Are

North Country EMS is the Advanced Life Support ambulance serving NE Clark County, SE Cowlitz County, the Town of Yacolt and, by contract, NW Skamania County. NCEMS currently functions under an interlocal agreement between Clark County EMS District #1, Town of Yacolt, and Cowlitz County EMS District #1. These three taxing districts provide a portion of the funding for NCEMS operations. Fees for ambulance service provides the remaining operational funds.

Governance: North Country EMS is governed by an Administrative Board, the members of which are outlined in the interlocal agreement. The board currently has 10 positions and represents the following stake holders: Town of Yacolt, Yacolt rural area, Amboy rural area, Clark County Council, Cowlitz County Commissioners, Yale Valley, U.S. Forest Service, PacifiCorp, Skamania County Commissioners, and Skamania EMS Commissioners. The board meets six times per year (odd months) on the fourth Thursday at 2:00 p.m.

Staffing: North Country EMS has a full time Chief (shared on a percentage basis with Fire District 13), an Operations Battalion Chief, a Logistics Battalion Chief, a Finance & Administrative Manager, an Ambulance Biller & Office Assistant, 7 full time Paramedics, 3 full time EMTs, 3 part-time Paramedics, and 14 part time EMTs. The Chief and Battalion Chiefs are also Paramedics, as such they fill shifts as needed and respond to calls when needed on the third call ambulance.

Stations: North Country EMS operates two ambulances year-round from stations in Yacolt and Fargher Lake. Seasonally, the crews staff a station owned by the Forest Service located at Pine Creek in Skamania County. A project has been underway to replace the older mobile home currently used as the living quarters for the crews at Fargher Lake and build a new station with an enclosed garage for the ambulance.

North Country EMS did not always exist in the manner it does today. Originally North Country Ambulance was operated by the Yacolt Fire Department and served other areas by agreement.

In early 1976 the Yacolt Volunteer Firemen's Association began fundraising efforts to purchase an ambulance to serve North Clark County as well as portions of Cowlitz and Skamania Counties. By August 1976 the funds collected totaled \$15,000, enough to purchase the first ambulance, which went into service at noon on October 16, 1976. A fee of \$50 was set by the Town Council for ambulance transport with an initial budget of \$8,000. In the first year of operation the ambulance responded to 116 calls for service with an all-volunteer staff. In October 1978 the first 'ambulance levy' was passed within Clark County Fire Districts 10 & 13, the Town of Yacolt and Cowlitz County Fire District 7.



The vehicle on the right is the first ambulance purchased in 1976.
The ambulance on the left was purchased in 1979.

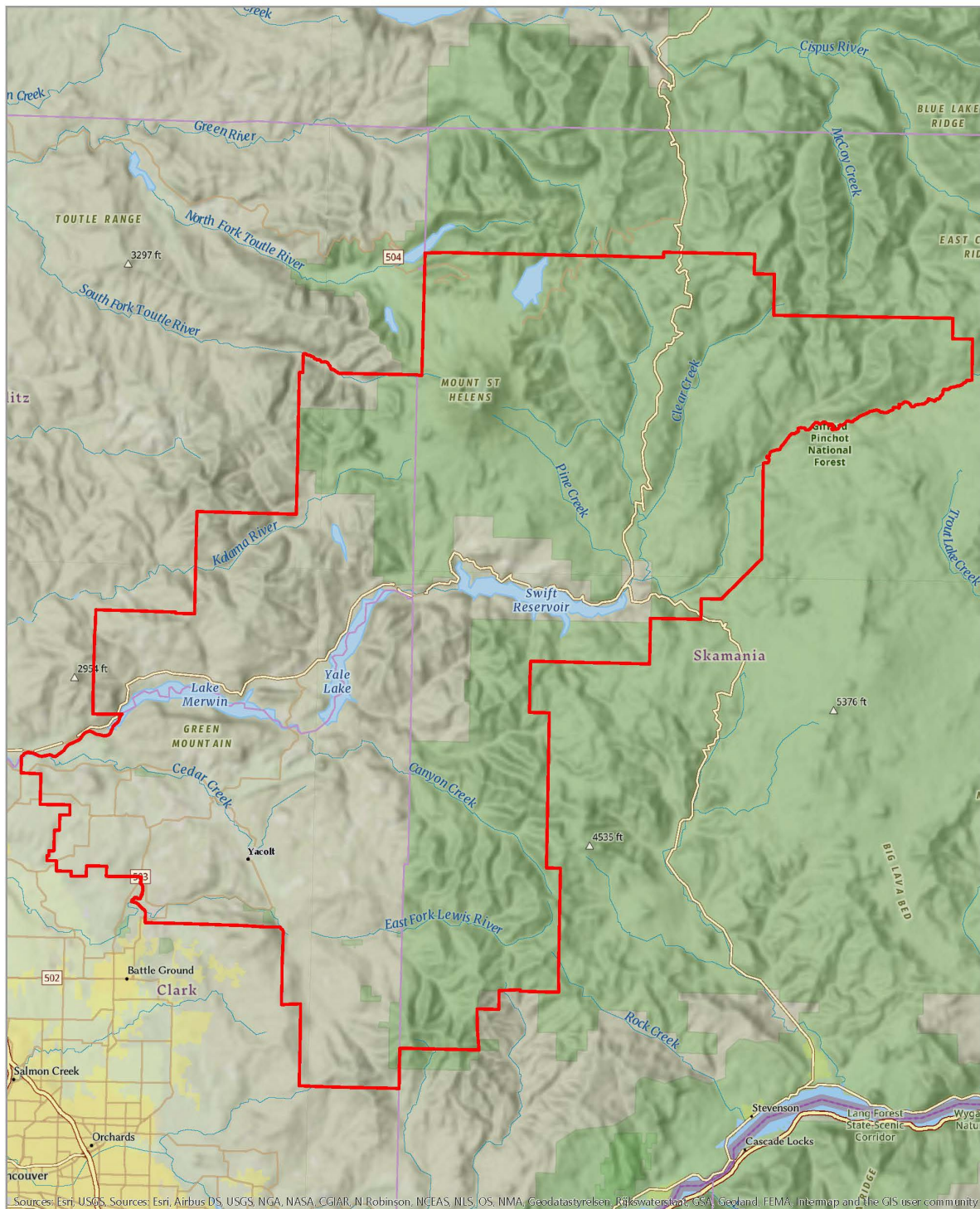
Volcano Rescue Team

In 1986 the Volcano Rescue Team (VRT) was formed to provide search and rescue operations primarily in the area on and around Mount St. Helens. The Skamania County Sheriff is ultimately responsible for any rescue activities in Skamania County and utilizes the VRT to provide that service in the St. Helens area. The team is comprised of 40 members, mostly volunteers, and in 2020 provided over 3400 hours of service.

The VRT is accredited by the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) and their abilities include hasty team searches, technical mountain rescue operations, snow rescue operations, cave rescue, avalanche rescue and crevasse rescue.

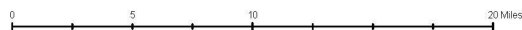


North Country EMS Clark, Cowlitz and Skamania Counties Washington



Sources: Esri, USGS, Sources: Esri, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N. Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodatastyrelsen, Kirkwaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and The GIS user community

Map Date: July 24, 2019



Funding

NCEMS maintains four accounting funds; they are the Operating fund, Excess Levy fund, Skamania Project fund and Capital Reserve account. The following page explains the funding sources for each of these accounting funds.

The Operating and Excess Levy funds provide the resources to pay for daily operations including salaries, benefits, medical supplies, vehicle maintenance, station maintenance, utilities, insurance, and training.

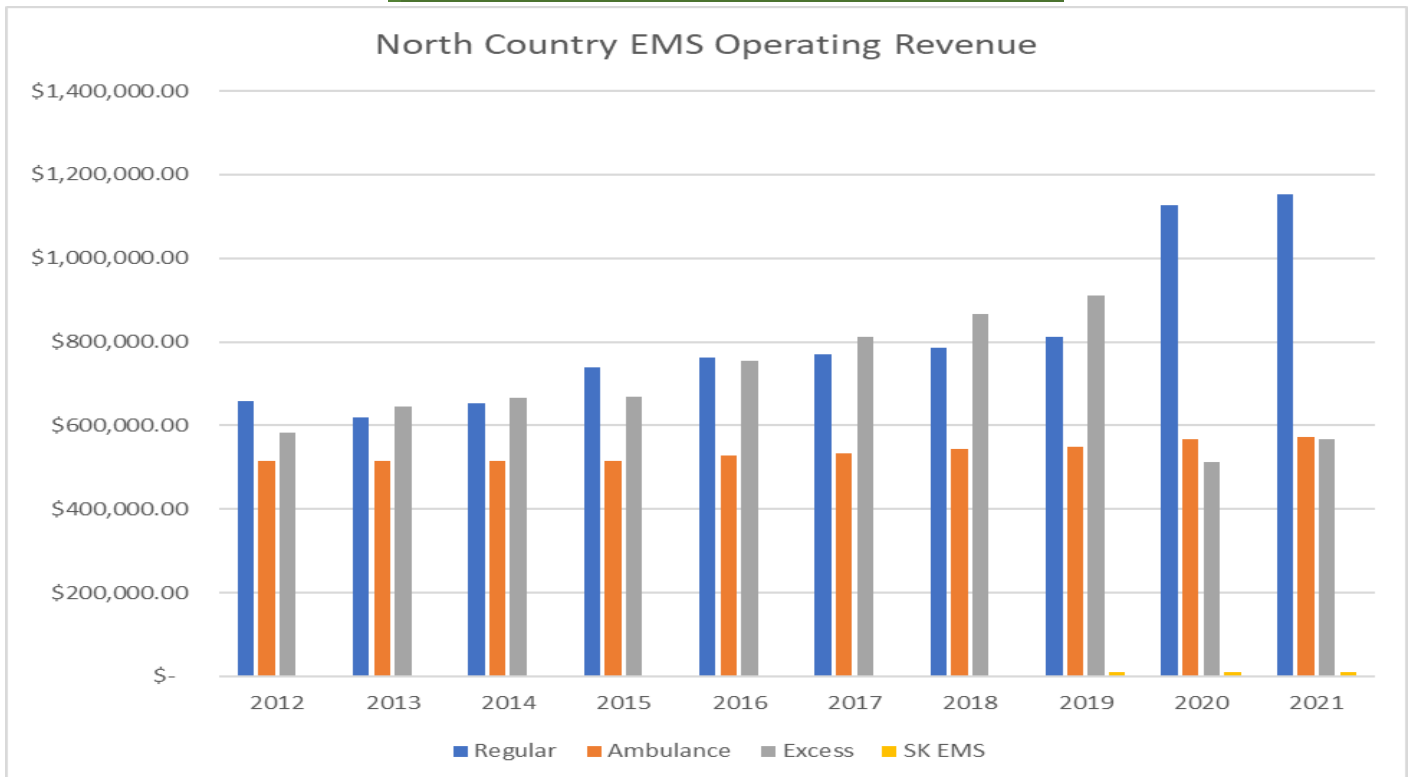
The Skamania Project fund pays for administrative and operational costs year-round in Skamania County as well as funding for the seasonal Pine Creek station which is staffed during the busy summer months.

The Capital Reserve account pays for capital purchases greater than \$5,000 which includes ambulances, medical devices, gurneys, building projects, support vehicles and I.T. components.



2019 Braun Ambulance

Operations Funding Sources



Funding for operating North Country EMS (NCEMS) comes from three primary sources: **regular property taxes, an excess levy, and ambulance transport fees.**

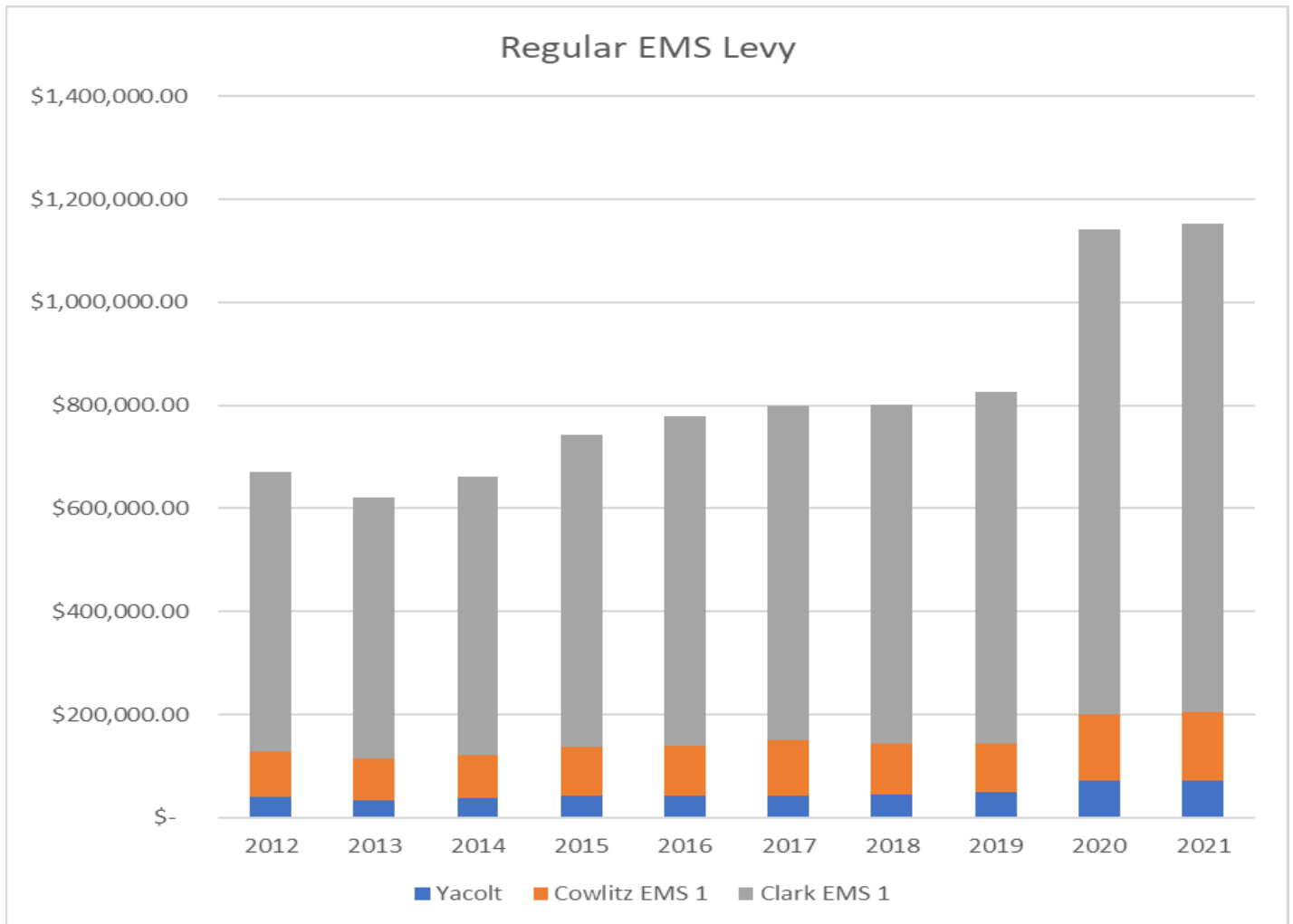
Regular property taxes have a statutory maximum rate for EMS levies of \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value, and are restricted by the 1% annual increase cap. This means that the total amount collected cannot exceed 1% more than the previous year, which results in the actual levy rate decreasing each year in an amount dependent upon property value increases. None of the three EMS taxing districts which fund NCEMS have a permanent levy, rather they have a 10-year levy which means that voters must renew the levy every 10 years. At that time the levy is usually increased back to the full \$0.50/\$1,000 unless a lower amount is specified by the district. The regular EMS levy alone is not sufficient to fund the operations at \$0.50/\$1,000 so an excess levy is needed to be approved by the voters at an interval of 3-4 years.

Excess levies are collected in addition to regular levies but only in one year, the year after they are approved. The excess levy rate is calculated in reverse based on the total dollar amount requested by the district. NCEMS forecasts the required funds for 3-4 years.

Ambulance transport fees provide the third source of revenue for the operating fund. These are the funds directed to NCEMS from insurance carriers including Medicare and Medicaid. Property owners within the NCEMS district are not required to pay the difference between the transport fee and insurance rates. Skamania EMS contracts with NCEMS to provide service to a portion of Skamania County.

Skamania EMS Contract with NCEMS was renewed in 2019 and provides \$10,000 per year for ambulance service in a defined service area within Skamania County.

PROPERTY TAX INCOME/REGULAR LEVY

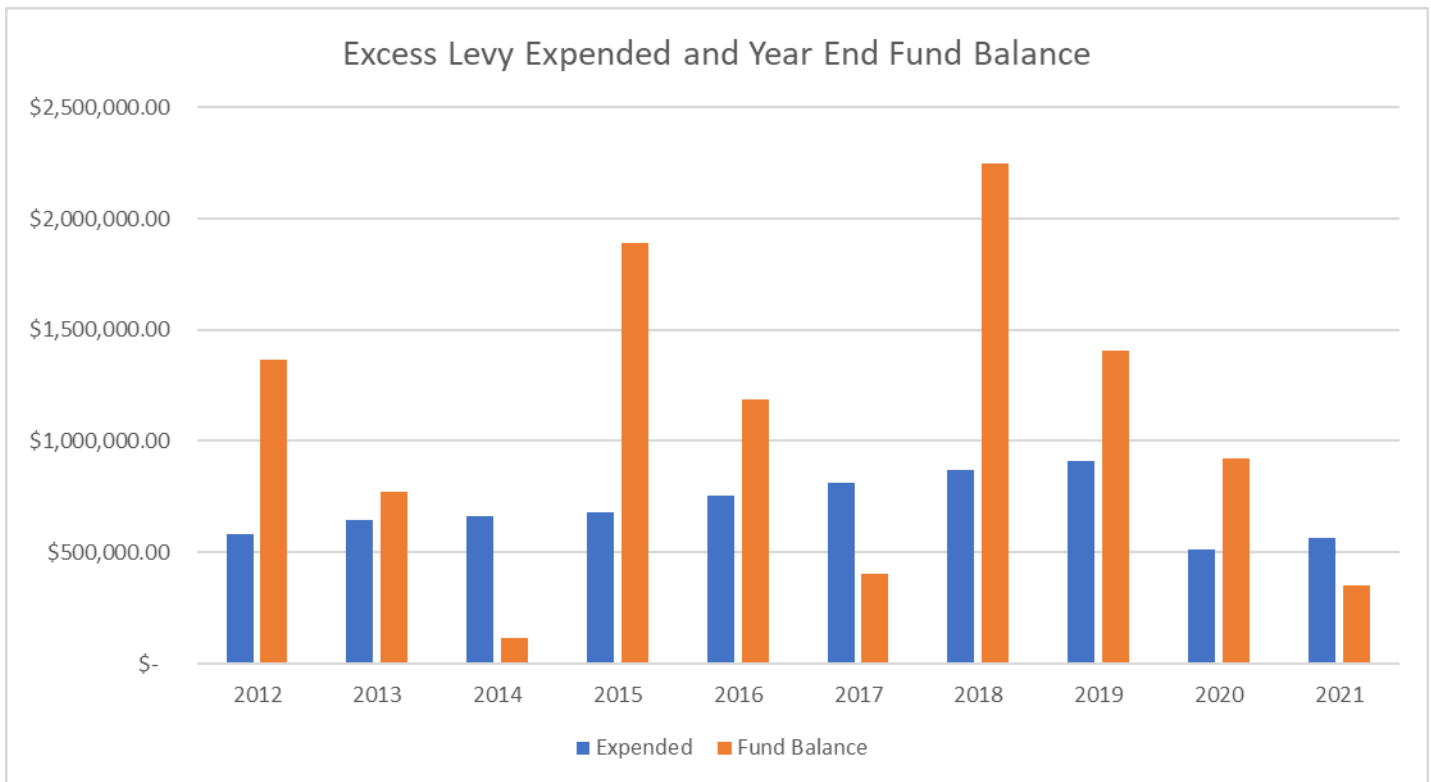


	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Yacolt	\$ 39,314.66	\$ 33,428.99	\$ 37,093.40	\$ 41,186.91	\$ 42,758.48	\$ 42,434.87	\$ 44,003.51	\$ 48,323.64	\$ 70,495.83	\$ 71,800.00
Cowlitz EMS 1	\$ 87,933.99	\$ 81,701.17	\$ 82,835.80	\$ 95,571.97	\$ 96,632.80	\$ 107,496.63	\$ 99,889.85	\$ 94,792.89	\$ 128,808.87	\$ 132,000.00
Clark EMS 1	\$ 543,185.29	\$ 506,760.62	\$ 543,018.44	\$ 607,076.87	\$ 640,724.23	\$ 649,688.36	\$ 658,054.52	\$ 683,620.88	\$ 943,089.12	\$ 950,000.00

Three separate EMS taxing districts provide funding for the operations of NCEMS. These three districts are Clark County EMS District #1, Town of Yacolt, and Cowlitz County EMS District #1.

The Regular EMS levy is a 10-year levy meaning it must be renewed by the voters every ten years. This levy makes up 51% of operational funds.

EXCESS LEVY FUNDS



The revenue in this fund is very cyclical. Because EMS levies are limited to \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, it is necessary to run an excess levy to make up the difference in funding for operating the ambulance service. NCEMS would need to be able to levy a regular rate of approximately \$1.00 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation to meet operational costs without relying on an excess levy for additional funding.

Generally, the excess levy is placed on the ballot for voter approval in three-year cycles. The taxes are collected in the first year of the excess levy as required by state law then expended over multiple years. The percentage of the operational expenses the excess levy funds varies each year with an average of approximately 23%.

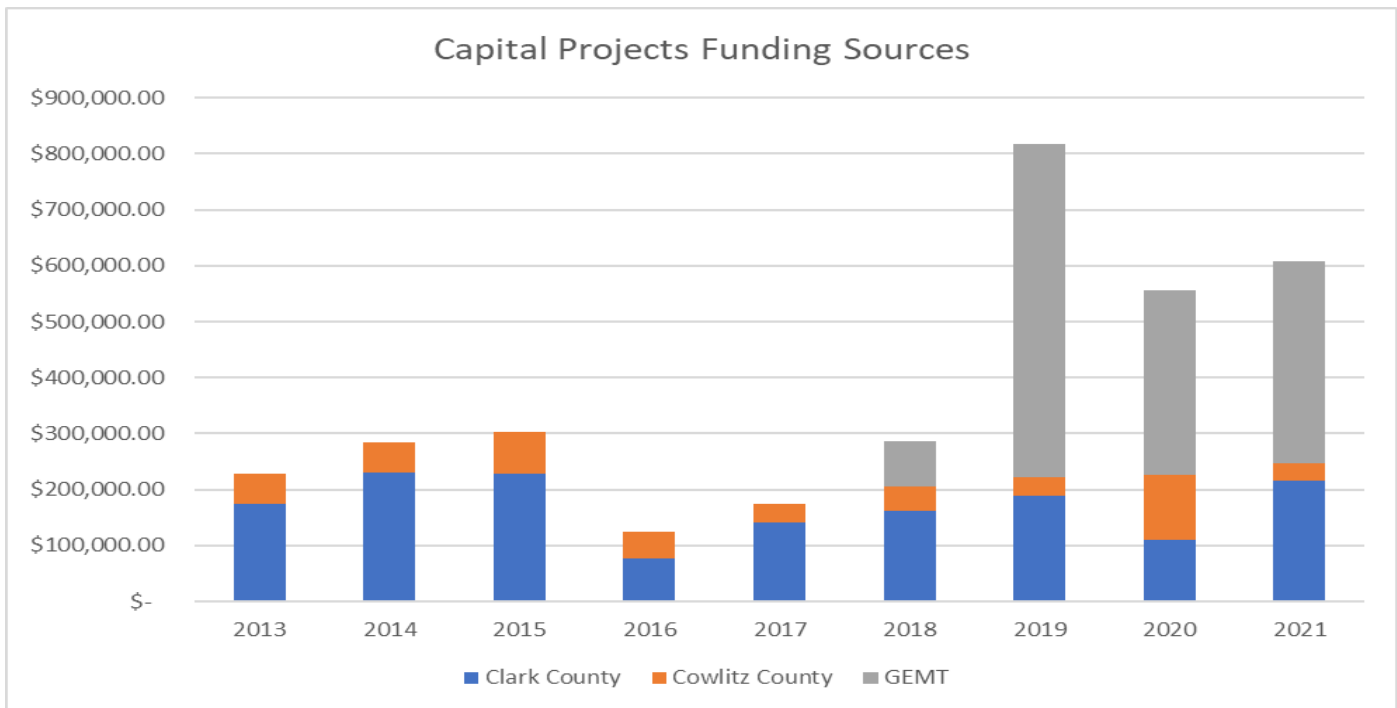
The excess levy passed by the voters in 2021 will collect an estimated 2,749,941 in 2022 to be expended from 2022-2024.

Collections by Payor 2017-2021										
	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
Description	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
Payment Auto Ins	36,536.34	6.0%	17,367.54	3.1%	23,249.00	4.0%	20,503.37	3.5%	13,407.57	2.50%
Payment Medicare	232,225.33	38.0%	226,212.27	40.9%	205,291.54	35.2%	208,134.13	35.3%	193,866.08	36.14%
Payment Medicaid	62,678.84	10.2%	51,773.87	9.4%	52,745.13	9.0%	53,201.62	9.0%	50,626.67	9.44%
Payment Private	14,187.78	2.3%	13,178.19	2.4%	20,967.03	3.6%	22,598.29	3.8%	11,768.54	2.19%
Payment Health Ins, VA, L&I	261,031.85	42.7%	236,829.18	42.8%	270,313.69	46.4%	273,625.73	46.4%	263,455.54	49.11%
Payment Secondary Ins	11,838.62	1.9%	11,063.67	2.0%	11,659.77	2.0%	11,351.53	1.9%	5,253.93	0.98%
Payment Special Source (Atty, Coll Agn	2,210.23	0.4%	343.50	0.1%	28.35	0.0%	819.27	0.1%	0.00	0.00%
Refund Insurance	-7,330.32	-1.2%	-1,838.08	-0.3%	-1,194.00	-0.2%	0.00	0.0%	-1,960.82	-0.37%
Refund Patient	-145.26	0.0%	-1,516.47	-0.3%	0.00	0.0%	-100.00	0.0%		0.00%
Non-sufficient funds	-1,437.58	-0.2%	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%		0.00%
Net Collections	611,795.83	1.00	553,413.67	1.00	583,060.51	1.00	590,133.94	1.00	536,417.51	1.00

Ambulance transport fees are the funds collected from health and auto insurance, Medicare, Medicaid and non-resident patients. These funds account for approximately 24% of our operations budget. For residents of the district no co-payments or deductibles are collected outside of insurance amounts. Non-residents are billed for the difference between insurance and the cost of the service provided. NCEMS calculates the true cost of transport based on operations costs and that amount is set by the Administrative Board as the billable transport rate.

Capital Projects Funding Sources

FOREST EXCISE, DNR TIMBER SALES, and GEMT 2013-2021



Historically, timber revenues have been used strictly for capital building and equipment purchases. As reflected in the chart above the forest excise and timber revenue stream is inconsistent and steadily decreasing. Fortunately, in recent years North Country EMS has been able to benefit from a federal entitlement program known as Ground Emergency Medical Transport (GEMT) to supplement the reduction in timber revenues in recent years.

Ambulances, ECG monitors, and gurneys are the most expensive items purchased by NCEMS. NCEMS ambulances have an expected service life of about 10 years; at that point it becomes cost prohibitive to maintain them at an emergency response level. Ambulances will operate as a first line vehicle for about 5 years prior to rotating to reserve status for the last five years. The current approximate cost of an ambulance, without the equipment it contains is \$300,000. NCEMS plans to start “re-mounting” ambulances, which is the process of buying a new chassis and moving the ambulance body from the old chassis to the new. This process saves about 1/3 of the cost of an ambulance. ECG monitors are the second most expensive piece of equipment next to the ambulance with a cost of about \$30,000 and a life span of 7 years. At 7-10 years, like any electronics, they become obsolete and difficult to maintain. Gurneys have lifespan of approximately 10 years and have a current replacement cost of \$22,000. A fully stocked ambulance has a value of approximately \$500,000, and the funds for capital equipment purchases do not come from EMS property tax revenue.

Fund Balances by Year

Year	Operating Fund 6270	Excess Levy Fund 6271	Skamania Fund 6272	Capital Outlay Reserves Fund 6273
2011	\$276,646.67	\$3,053.50	\$128,370.70	\$1,836,300.17
2012	\$299,989.08	\$1,363,768.51	\$143,738.01	\$1,735,692.57
2013	\$325,628.13	\$770,625.52	\$153,535.77	\$1,864,687.73
2013	\$352,163.69	\$117,664.19	\$157,789.57	\$1,719,393.95
2015	\$457,715.63	\$1,891,990.79	\$159,857.06	\$1,416,012.26
2016	\$586,582.77	\$1,187,128.08	\$161,074.13	\$1,063,024.65
2017	\$429,466.10	\$400,800.11	\$137,036.38	\$1,535,951.37
2018	\$397,274.40	\$2,247,926.54	\$116,189.65	\$1,608,338.63
2019	\$552,146.57	\$1,407,951.62	\$127,673.59	\$2,222,563.49
2020	\$638,826.32	\$924,417.39	\$132,566.93	\$2,592,638.23
2021	\$364,469.15	\$373,156.96	\$135,877.75	\$3,115,376.84

Operating Fund 6270

The revenue in this fund is generated from regular levy taxes, ambulance fees, and transfers from the Excess Levy fund. A small percentage of miscellaneous revenue is generated from interest earnings, tuition fees and donations.

Excess Levy Fund 6271

The revenue in this fund is very cyclical. Because EMS levies are limited to \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, it is necessary to run an excess levy to make up the difference in funding for operating the ambulance service. Generally, the excess levy is on the ballot for voter approval in three-year cycles. The taxes are collected in the first year of the excess levy as required by state law.

Skamania Fund 6272

The revenue in the Skamania Fund is generated from performing ambulance and search and rescue services in Skamania County and invoicing for Title III reimbursement based on calls in the forest areas. The area within Skamania County Fire District 26 is not eligible for Title III reimbursements. Ambulance revenue is very minimal as the ambulance crews from Yacolt perform the most of the transport services. NCEMS has a contract effective in 2019 to receive \$10,000 annually from the Skamania Hospital District (operating as Skamania EMS).

Capital Outlay / Reserves Fund 6273

The revenue in this fund is generated from timber and DNR revenue, carry over from the operating fund and from a federal grant program for transporting Medicaid patients (GEMT). This fund is used for capital purchases such as buildings, ambulances, rescue vehicles and other capital equipment.

Final 2021 Budget vs. Actual

Fund	Budget	Actual	%
Operating Fund Income	\$2,644,704.00	\$2,456,910.12	92.9%
Operating Fund Expense	\$2,644,704.00	\$2,344,690.28	88.7%
Excess Levy Income	\$0	\$14,654.03	
Excess Levy Expense	\$566,464.00	\$566,464.00	100%
Capital Fund Income	\$304,000.00	\$997,2711.78	328.0%
Capital Fund Expense	\$1,703,000.00	\$490,510.95	28.8%
Skamania Fund Income	\$36,000.00	\$76,311.83	212.0%
Skamania Fund Expense	\$93,850.00	\$72,703.40	77.5%

*The operating fund budgeted income includes \$300,000 in carry over.

2022 Budget

Fund	Budget	Change from 2021
Operating Fund Income	\$2,705,034.00	3%
Operating Fund Expense	\$2,705,034.00	3%
Excess Levy Income	\$2,749,941.00	--
Excess Levy Expense	\$598,182.00	3.4%
Capital Fund Income	\$350,000.00	14%
Capital Fund Expense *	\$2,090,500.00	**
Skamania Fund Income	\$36,000	0%
Skamania Fund Expense	\$93,850.00	0%

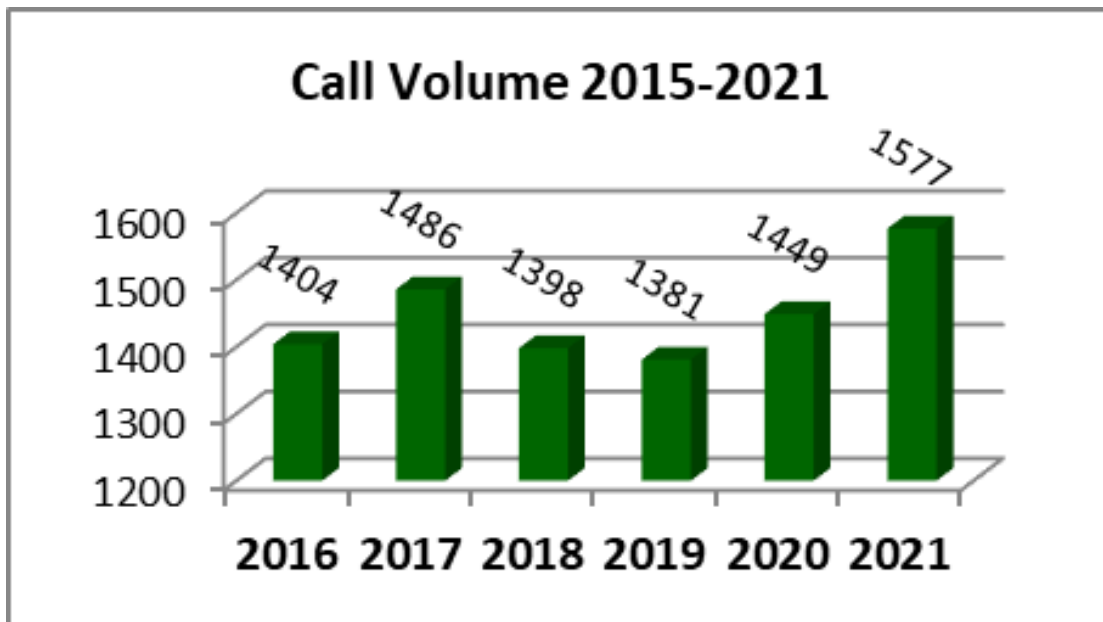
*Capital fund expense for 2022 includes \$1,740,500.00 for a possible new station construction project. This is only an estimated partial cost of the project.

2021 Responses

Total requests for service: 1577 8.2%↑

Total patients transported: 1055 14.2%↑

Total patient evaluated: 1595 7.6%↑



Average Response Times

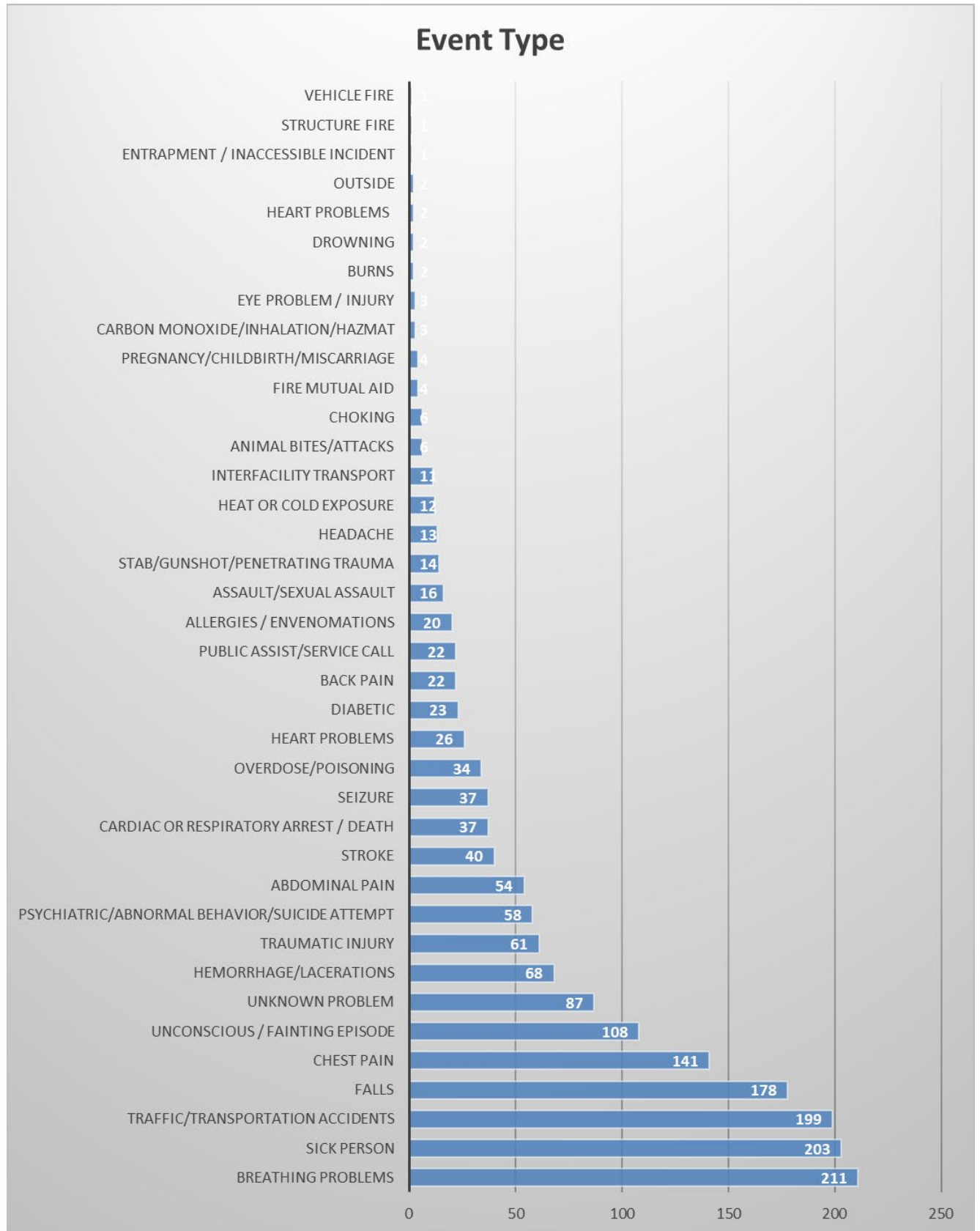
Clark County all calls: 11.43 minutes

Clark County priority 1, 2 or 3 calls: 9.44 minutes

Cowlitz County all calls 28 minutes

Priority 1 is the highest priority and 7 is the lowest

EMS Responses



Transports by Day of the Week

Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Totals	164	149	124	150	126	153	142

Transports by Hour of the Day

Hour	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Hour Totals
00:00 - 00:59	3	3	3	1	1	2	5	18
01:00 - 01:59	4	5	5	2	6	6	1	29
02:00 - 02:59	4	2	4	0	2	6	4	22
03:00 - 03:59	3	1	2	3	4	0	2	15
04:00 - 04:59	4	2	0	3	3	4	3	19
05:00 - 05:59	4	0	3	2	3	4	3	19
06:00 - 06:59	2	3	3	4	2	3	3	20
07:00 - 07:59	7	6	2	4	3	7	5	34
08:00 - 08:59	4	5	8	9	5	14	6	51
09:00 - 09:59	12	13	3	11	6	5	9	59
10:00 - 10:59	15	4	4	11	11	10	10	65
11:00 - 11:59	10	12	11	11	10	3	7	64
12:00 - 12:59	8	13	9	12	9	9	10	70
13:00 - 13:59	7	10	11	11	9	9	5	62
14:00 - 14:59	6	4	6	13	6	4	8	47
15:00 - 15:59	10	9	7	5	7	9	7	54
16:00 - 16:59	17	7	7	8	8	10	8	65
17:00 - 17:59	5	12	3	6	12	10	7	55
18:00 - 18:59	10	7	4	6	3	11	3	44
19:00 - 19:59	7	11	4	5	6	11	12	56
20:00 - 20:59	7	9	8	10	7	2	8	51
21:00 - 21:59	9	9	9	6	5	7	5	50
22:00 - 22:59	7	6	7	3	4	6	5	38
23:00 - 23:59	2	2	4	5	3	7	9	32

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Woodland Vaccine Clinic

