

Fire and Police Levy

2025 Report

Fire and
Police Levy

MEETING A NEED



Prepared by the
Public Safety Levy Advisory Subcommittee

CITY OF GRESHAM

Meeting a Need

For many years, Gresham has had too few firefighters and police officers for a city our size – fewer than smaller cities like Beaverton, Tigard and Hillsboro – creating challenges in effectively responding to emergencies and maintaining public safety.

In May 2024, however, 56% of Gresham voters united behind our police and fire departments to pass **the first funding levy for public safety in more than**

30 years. Thank you!

This report marks our first year of incremental progress.



For more information about Gresham's Fire and Police Levy

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Purpose and Work

The Levy Advisory Subcommittee was formally created in January 2025, as an independent body providing oversight for revenues collected for the 2024 Fire and Police Levy. In 2025, the subcommittee met five times:

May 27: At the initial meeting of the group, seven members of the community voted to formally establish the subcommittee and elect a chair and vice chair. The group elected Heather Coleman-Cox as Chair and Mike Schultze as Vice Chair.

June 25: During the second meeting of the subcommittee, members heard from Gresham Fire Chief Derik Minard. Chief Minard provided an overview of fire services to the subcommittee and upon completion of the formal portion of the meeting, led the group through a tour of Fire Station 71.

July 23: At the third meeting, Gresham Budget and Finance Director Elizabeth McCann provided an overview of Fire and Police Levy budget, including a breakdown of levy revenues collected between November 2024 and June 30, 2025. Director McCann also provided a staffing update to the subcommittee detailing progress made on filling Fire and Police positions added via the local option levy.

Sept. 24: At the fourth meeting, Gresham Police Chief Travis Gullberg provided an overview of police services, as well as an update on recruitment and staffing for the department in 2025. After concluding the formal meeting, Police Public Information Officer Jarom Sweazey led the group on a tour of the Gresham Police Department and the Real Time Information Center at City Hall.

Oct. 29: At the fifth meeting, the subcommittee reviewed its report ahead of presenting to City Council in November 2025, asking questions of and providing feedback to City staff for this report.

“The Fire and Police Levy has begun delivering on the commitment made to voters. Year One demonstrates clear progress in staffing, service restoration and enhanced community access. [The Public Safety Levy Advisory Subcommittee] will continue to provide transparent oversight, detailed reporting and open communication as we move into the next phase of levy implementation. On behalf of the entire Public Safety Levy Advisory Subcommittee, I want to thank the community for their support.”



— *Heather Coleman-Cox, Advisory Subcommittee Chair*

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Taking the oath of office.

Hiring Progress

For the Gresham Police Department,

40 positions were paid for through the local option levy in the 2024-2025 budget. Of these:

- 25 of 26 positions previously paid through General Fund and retained through the Levy are staffed.
- Nine positions previously paid through limited-duration American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding have been retained, with seven currently filled.
- All five new sworn levy-created positions made available for the fiscal year were filled.

For the Gresham Fire Department,

33 positions were paid for through the local option levy in the 2024-2025 budget. Of these:

- All 18 positions previously paid through General Fund and retained through the Levy are staffed.
- All four positions previously paid through limited-duration ARPA funding have been retained and are filled.
- All 11 new positions made available for the fiscal year have been hired and completed Fire Academy training.



Levy Budget

The Subcommittee heard from Budget and Finance Director Elizabeth McCann at the July 23 meeting. Among the topics that were particularly interesting to the Subcommittee, of special note was the thorough reporting on positions in both departments created or retained through the levy.

History and Revenues Collected

The Fire and Police Levy was voted and approved as a five-year operating levy beginning in Fiscal Year 24/25, following voter approval of the levy in May 2024. Levy funding will sunset on June 30, 2029, unless it is renewed by voters at some point before that date. Renewal of an operating levy can happen at any time within the duration of the existing levy.

The levy collected \$12,549,898 in Year 1, which spanned July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. During that time, the amount collected \$98,010 in interest. Together, Police and Fire spent \$11,094,890, leaving a total unaudited cash balance of \$1,553,018 as of June 30, 2025. External auditors will complete the financial audit in December, at which time the City's Budget and Finance team will make that report available to the public.

Gresham Police Department Levy Updates

While the Gresham Police Department has been successful this year in its retaining and recruiting efforts, some of the greatest community impact has been felt through the strengthening of the department's Community Safety Specialist (CSS) team and the re-opening of the Rockwood Police Station. These successes have created more opportunities for Gresham residents to file a police report, have personal property returned to them, and connect to police services.

As with most metro police departments throughout the country, the Gresham Police Department continues to have roster vacancies. This is due to many factors, including retirements, promotions, and a rigorous onboarding process.

The process of hiring and training police officers from recruitment through solo status is a long road designed to prepare officers for a difficult job. The time encompassing a lengthy background check, the oath of office, police academy training, and field training can take up to 18 months. Occasionally, this long process and the high standards of the department create an environment where a candidate — as passionate and dedicated as they are — might not make it through to solo status. The Gresham Police Department continuously reviews the hiring and training process to improve outcomes for new officers.

Though the journey to a fully staffed police department is ongoing, the department has seen a substantial increase in the number of applicants and hires since voters approved the 2024 Fire and Police Levy.



Hear from a new police officer on solo patrol.



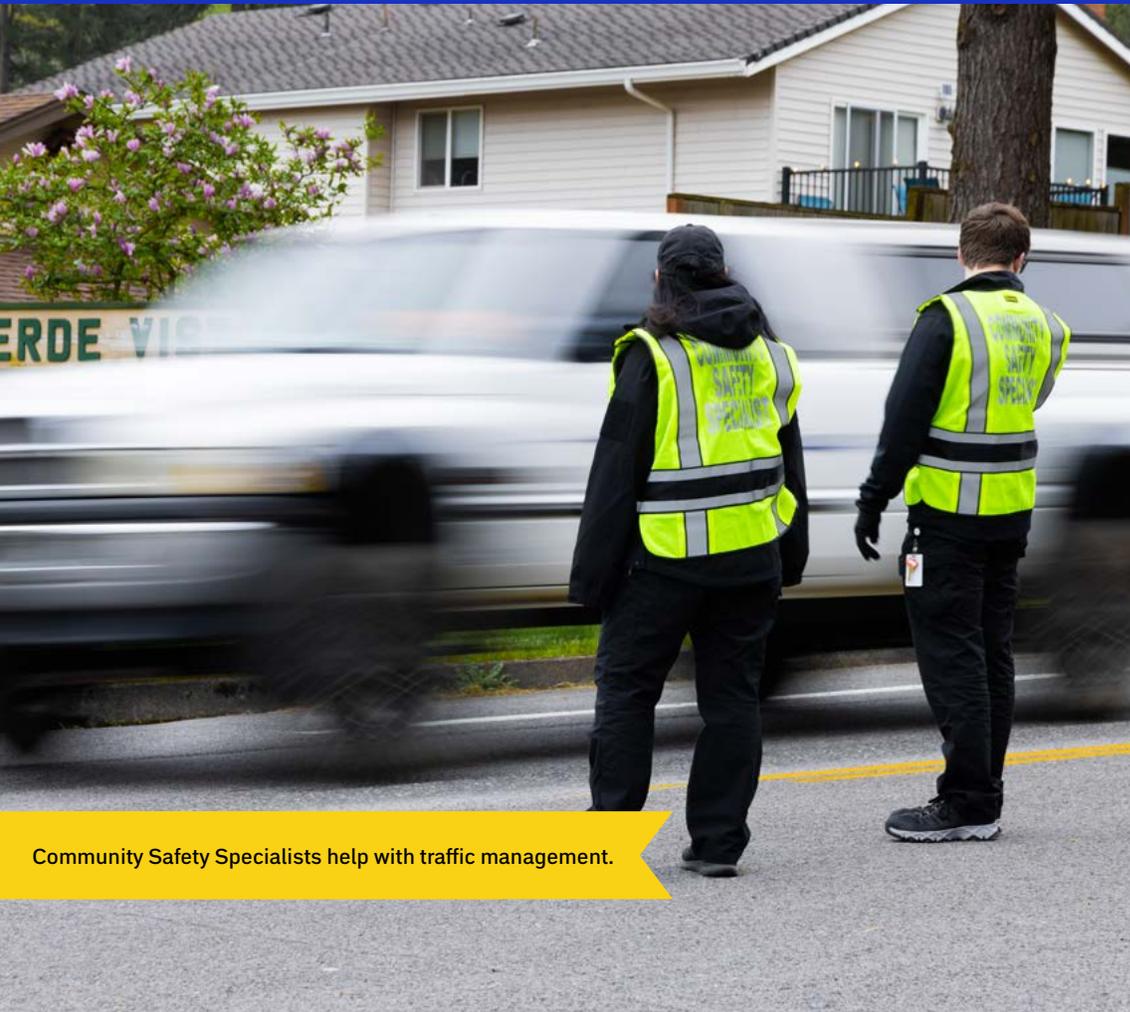
Recent Gresham Police graduates of the Basic Police Academy.



Investing in Community Safety Specialists

The Gresham Police Department has added five Community Safety Specialist (CSS) positions and, as of November 2025, had four of the total six positions filled, allowing the department to focus on managing more serious crime issues. Community Safety Specialists support the department with a variety of important tasks, ranging from report intake and response to assistance with traffic management.

Their efforts supporting the department with non-sworn duties allow our officers to focus their time and energy on critical crime reduction and public safety duties.



Community Safety Specialists help with traffic management.





Police Officer and Community Safety Specialist responding to abandoned auto reports.



Watch CSS Lynette in action during a 2025 retail theft mission.

“I want to recognize CSS Lynette Fay, whose leadership and partnership have been instrumental in coordinating [retail theft prevention] missions and advocating for the retailers in the shopping center. Thanks to these collaborative efforts between your department and local businesses, we’ve seen measurable progress. Our store’s shortage has steadily decreased, a testament to the positive results of this partnership.”

— Jayke, former loss prevention specialist at a Gresham retailer



The Rockwood Public Safety Facility, commonly known as the "Rockwood Police Station."

Rockwood Police Station Re-opens

The Rockwood Public Safety Facility — often referred to informally as the “Rockwood Police Station” — has reopened thanks to the additional Community Safety Specialists hired through the Fire and Police Levy. The station’s presence helps rebuild relationships between the police department and the community, particularly in one of Gresham’s most diverse and high-need neighborhoods.

Re-opening the Rockwood Police Station was identified as a high priority for our community leading up to the election, and now residents and visitors can stop in to file a police report or talk with welcoming Community Safety Specialists.

The re-opening of the Rockwood Police Station helps the City of Gresham meet its commitment to police accessibility and community engagement, and provides a clear, tangible example of how levy dollars directly enhance public services and safety infrastructure.



“When working at the front desk of Rockwood Station, there are some days where I have three or four parties waiting to file a police report. The demand is clearly there, and we usually hear about how appreciative the community is to have the station open again for these services.”

— **Community Safety Specialist Zach Jefferis**

“The opening of the Rockwood Police Station has been a great asset to the Rockwood and Wilkes East neighborhoods. We have been asking for the opening since it closed during COVID. I appreciate all of the work that the police do for Rockwood and for the City of Gresham.”

— **Catherine Nicewood, Rockwood resident**



Gresham Fire Department Levy Updates

The 22 positions retained through the Fire and Police Levy (18 previously funded through the General Fund and four previously funded through ARPA) equal the staffing needs to fully operate one fire station providing a fire engine and a rescue vehicle 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Without this staffing made possible through the levy, Gresham Fire would have one less station, engine, and rescue crew to respond to fire and medical emergencies in the cities of Gresham, Troutdale, Fairview, Wood Village, and parts of unincorporated Multnomah County.

The Gresham Fire Department enjoyed an incredibly successful 2025 thanks to the voter-supported Fire and Police Levy. In 2025, Gresham Fire added nine new first responder positions and two fire inspector positions, filling these positions with graduates of two Fire Academies hosted this year. Those graduates are now on the line serving the community.

Additionally, thanks to the levy, the Fire Marshal's Office was able to revive its School Safety Inspection program. Resuming the program, which had been dormant since 2009 due to staffing shortages, was considered a top priority for the community upon the successful passage of the levy.



Watch as a newly minted firefighter completes his required apparatus operator certification.

Recruits from Gresham Fire Academy Class 25-02.





Rescue 72, the first new 911 response vehicle added in over 30 years.

Fully Staffing Engine & Rescue 72

With increased staffing, the Gresham Fire Department is now able to fully staff Engine and Rescue 72, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in east Gresham. This station had previously operated with reduced staffing and operability. The rescue vehicle itself was paid for through federal ARPA funds.

According to Chief Jeffrey Hairston, call volume increased by more than 9 percent over the past five years. This unit has allowed Gresham Fire to respond faster and more efficiently to emergencies across the communities it serves.

At the time this report was written in late 2025, the crew of Fire Engine 72 was staged at Fire Station 71 on the Civic campus at 1333 NW Eastman Parkway while additions were being made to Station 72 to accommodate the full crew. During this time, Rescue 72 was being staged and operated out of Station 76.



Based on trends, Rescue 72 was expected to respond to **nearly 1,850 calls for service during its first full year of operation.** The department anticipates both 72 units will return full time to the station in early 2026. Engine 72 maintained expected response times during its stay at Station 71.

The School Fire Safety Inspection Program Returns

In a win for kids and safety, passage of the levy means school fire-safety inspections have once again resumed. The levy allowed Gresham Fire to hire two new fire inspectors in the Fire Marshal's Office which perform school inspections and public education outreach. The Fire Marshal's Office will inspect more than 70 schools throughout several school districts in the department's footprint. By November 2025, the Fire Marshal's Office had conducted

31 school safety inspections

across multiple school districts and will conduct more than 70 of these inspections before the end of the 2025/26 school year.

This is a critical program that allows Gresham Fire to identify potential safety issues at schools. Inspectors check for electrical hazards, safe pathways and exits, proper storage, fire extinguisher readiness, student fire drill practice times, and more, noting deficiencies where they find them and then working in partnership with local school districts to get them corrected.

"Safety is our top priority in the Gresham-Barlow School District. Thanks to funding from the public safety levy, we're able to partner with fire marshals who carefully inspect our schools. Their expertise helps us identify potential hazards so we can take quick action. This work helps ensure our schools remain safe, secure places for students to learn and grow."

— *Dr. Tracy Klinger, Superintendent, Gresham-Barlow School District*



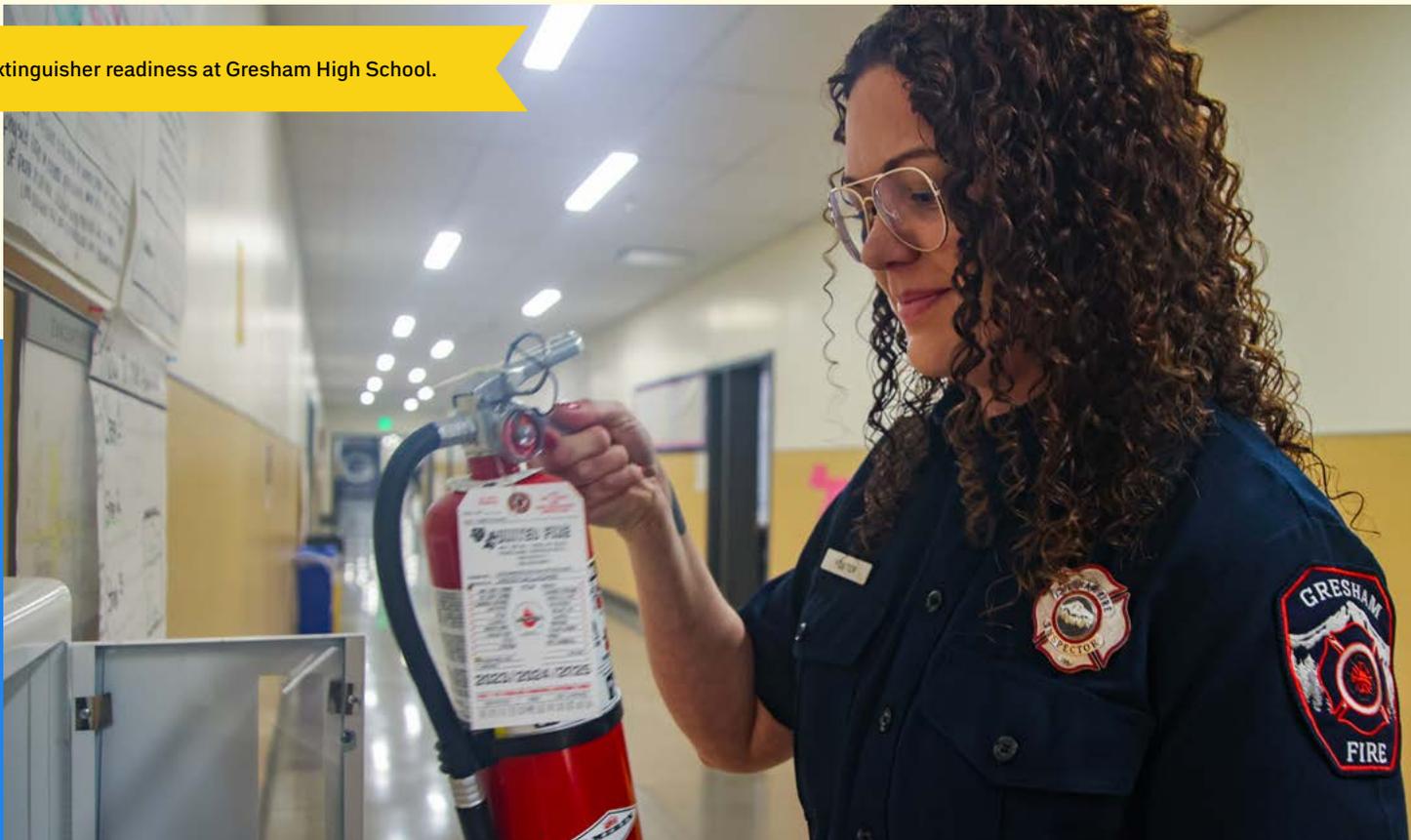
"I was overjoyed when I found out that school fire safety inspections were happening again in our schools after years of inactivity. I believe that fire safety in schools is extremely important because it protects students, teachers and staff from the dangers of fires and helps ensure a safe learning environment."

— *Lindsey Strasburg, Gresham-Barlow School District parent*



Gresham Fire Marshal's Office inspectors checking for electrical hazards.

Fire extinguisher readiness at Gresham High School.





GreshamOregon.gov/
Levy for more info.



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