



Cooper Landing Emergency Services
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Cooper Landing Emergency Services

Forming a Service Area – What does it mean?

Who We Are: CLES is a small fire and rescue agency in the heart of Alaska's Kenai Peninsula. As a volunteer service, CLES is responsible for Fire, EMS, and Extrication responses from the Borough Boundary at MP 75 of the Seward Highway to MP 58 of the Sterling Highway.

What We Do: We are a Volunteer fire and emergency medical agency with 1 part time Operations Coordinator, 2 Part Time Employees as well as a crew of 20 EMT & FF volunteers. Of the 20 volunteers, 12 are certified as Paramedics, EMT 1's, EMT 3's or as Emergency Trauma Technicians. From its roster of volunteers, the agency staffs two basic life support (BLS) ambulances. We occasionally operate as advanced life support (ALS) service with certain extended scope practices. From one central location, CLES is responsible for these 2 ambulances, 2 structure fire/BLS engines and 2 tanker/tenders.

How We Operate: Currently CLES is a 501c3 Non-Profit Organization. This means that the agency cannot levy property taxes towards its annual budget. We rely on Ambulance Billings, Personal Donations, Grants, Corporate In-Kind Gifts and surplus through the State.

What's Happening? Since 1973 Cooper Landing ES has operated this way, pushing year to year with the reliance and grateful appreciation of the community and the businesses that have supported us. After 50 years of dedicated service, we have managed to be successful in running this agency into the present day. Approved major grant applications in the last few years, fundraiser turnout, and State/Borough support has allowed us to get here. To move forward though, we cannot continue to rely on these options alone. Faced with rising operating costs, new equipment overheard, dwindling grant opportunities and other circumstances, CLES finds itself in a position where our normal budget must come from a new source. As a result, we are petitioning within the community and the Borough to become an established Service Area.

What does that mean? As a Borough Service Area, we would essentially become a part of the Kenai Peninsula Borough's structure. Our 501c3 status would dissolve after establishment. Apparatus, Gear, Equipment would become assets of the Borough and Volunteers would be the same Volunteers, answering under Borough policies.

How Does it Impact You?

You still call 911 in the event of an emergency.

Ambulances and Firetrucks will still respond.

Donations will no longer be accepted; property owners will have tax adjustments to pay for services.

Ambulance Patients will still have their insurances billed.

Grants will continue to be pursued for new equipment.

The Community of Cooper Landing will still have volunteers on the trucks responding when you call.

What's the cost? In 2022 our annual operating budget was a little more than \$216,000 compared to just 3 years prior in 2019 when it was just over \$136,000 total. Replacement of decades old vehicles, worn out gear, and upgrading equipment was all provided through grants, your donations and other sources. Despite the support, it still costs us this additional amount to keep the doors open.

The Borough will determine a mill rate per thousand of assessed value that would contribute to our annual budget. For example, it could be 2.75. What does that mean?

Calculating Property Taxes Using the Mill Rate

Property taxes are calculated by multiplying the assessed, taxable property value by the mill rate and then dividing that sum by 1,000.

The calculation formula is rendered as follows:

Property tax levied on property = (mill rate x taxable property value) ÷ 1,000

For example, if the mill rate is 2.75 and a taxpayer's personal residence has a taxable value of \$200,000, then, using the calculation formula, the homeowner's service area property tax bill for his residence is \$550. So that means that for every \$1,000 of assessed value, \$2.75 is owed in property taxes.

How will this get used? You might think \$550 is a lot to contribute to Emergency Services annually. When a \$100 donation is received, it is appreciated but it does not cover much.

One Set of Turnouts (Pants and Jacket Only) costs \$3,000.

One Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus with Mask costs \$6,800

One new Stretcher costs \$12,000

Training a Volunteer EMT (at 180 hours) or Firefighter (at 140 hours) can cost over \$1,200 per course, plus reimbursable mileage and other expenses

A New Ambulance costs over \$220,000 and a new Fire Engine can range over \$750,000 today.

We aren't asking for the world; we're asking to move forward.

We will add information to our website as we receive it. Check it out for more information cooperlandings.org

If you would like to see the petition or have questions, please contact Mitch Dickinson (907)-202-1795, Dan Osborn (907)-598-0310, Clay Adam (512)-695-4499 or any CLES board member