



CITY OF HAZELWOOD
ROBERTSON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
TOWN HALL MEETING

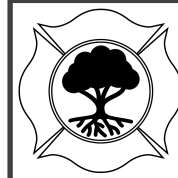


Citizens to Save
Hazelwood & Fire Services



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS'
OF METRO ST. LOUIS

WHO ARE
WE?



Citizens to Save Hazelwood & Fire Services

This is a nonpartisan event meant to inform the public and encourage discussion about the Robertson Fire Protection District & EMS Tax Rate Dispute

- Not a debate
- Allows both sides explain their position
- Opportunity for the public to ask questions
- Mediated by Dr. Kathleen Farrell with:



HAZELWOOD FIRE SERVICE STRUCTURE

Fire Department—“the department of a local or municipal authority in charge of preventing and fighting fires.”

Oxford Languages

Ran and overseen by local government.

Fire Protection District—“A Missouri fire protection district is a political subdivision of the state. That means it is a kind of government. It is also a “municipal corporation” meaning that it acts a lot like any other corporation.”

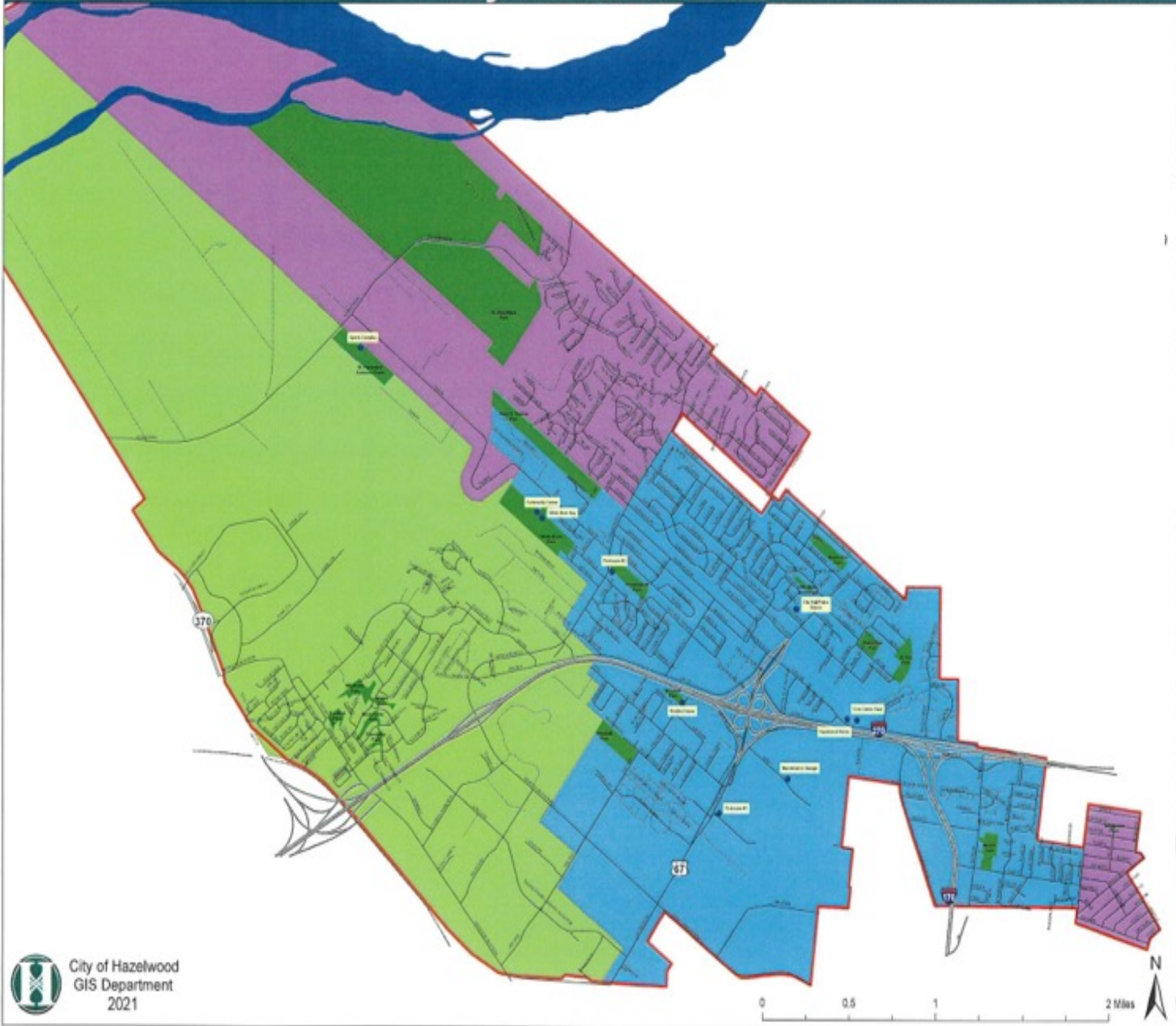
mafd.org

Ran and overseen by itself as a corporation-like government.






DEPT.
VS
DISTRICT

City of Hazelwood



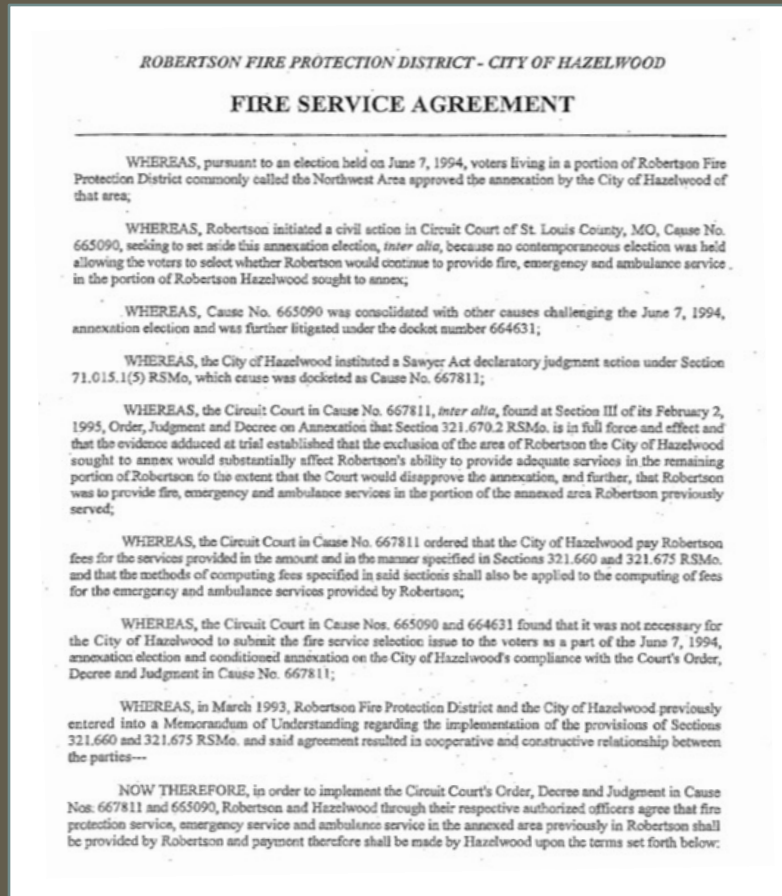
HAZELWOOD FIRE SERVICE STRUCTURE

-  Hazelwood Fire Department
Population: 14,690
-  Robertson Fire Protection District
Population: 4,834
-  Florissant Valley Fire Protection District
Population: 6,157

Annexation of Land

BRIEF HISTORY

The Agreement



rfdp.org

- In the 1990's the City of Hazelwood began annexing surrounding land.
- 1995: City of Hazelwood enters into an agreement with the RFPD and FVFPD
- Hazelwood would charge residents a property tax that goes into a general fund used to pay for all services (police, fire, parks and recreation, etc.)
- The Agreement states Hazelwood would pay Robertson and Flo.Valley's tax rates for the residents through this general fund.
- The Agreement lacks an end date.
- 2017: the City of Hazelwood terminated their agreement with Robertson Fire Protection District citing increasing payments impact to the deficit.
- 2018: Robertson FPD sued Hazelwood for breach of contract.



TAX RATE DISPUTE

OTHER FORMS OF REVENUE FOR FIRE DISTRICTS

Hazelwood

Robertson

Florissant Valley

RESIDENTIAL

\$0.989

\$2.563

\$1.6152

COMMERCIAL

\$0.992

\$2.629

\$1.7122

AGRICULTURE

\$0.905

\$2.45

\$1.7137

PERSONAL PROPERTY

\$0.976

\$2.631

\$1.8449

GO TO
SaveHazelwood.
org

CLICK ON
"TAX
CALCULATOR"

Includes: fire, EMS, police, parks & rec and other city services

WHY ARE
ROBERTSON'S TAX
RATES SO HIGH?

TWO ARGUMENTS FOR ROBERTSON'S
HIGH TAX RATE

4th highest in St. Louis County out of 24 fire districts

1. Tax Increment Financing (TIFs)
2. Tax rates voted in by the residents of Robertson Fire Protection District

I. TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Public financing where companies and developers receive subsidies (tax breaks) for redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects. Can last 20 years or more.

Theory: Trade off; Loss of tax revenue up front from investors results in employment opportunities, increased sales tax revenue, and overall economic growth.

Pros: It's effective for new business, companies love TIFs....they are more likely to invest in an area when they can get a tax break.

Cons: It diverts funds away from municipalities such as fire districts. Business moves out when TIFs run out.

I. TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Robertson Fire Protection District argues that its residential tax rates are high due loss of commercial revenue resulting from TIFs.

- **St. Louis City & County have been criticized for for their use of TIFs.**
- **As a result, Senate Bill 870 was passed:**
 - Since 2018 Fire & EMS can no longer be included in TIFs
 - Unless developers negotiate directly with the fire districts

https://www.senate.mo.gov/18info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=71153467

https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/galloway-sharply-criticizes-st-louis-use-of-tax-increment-financing-incentives/article_ac48cb34-2aa5-5386-b8ad-0d1e2dd33d3f.html

<https://themissouritimes.com/galloway-says-city-of-st-louis-management-of-tif-needs-improvement/>
<https://dor.mo.gov/business/tif>

2. TAX RATE INCREASES VOTED IN BY RESIDENTS OF THE RFPD

TAX RATES PROPOSED BY ROBERTSON AND VOTED IN BY RFPD RESIDENTS

1996:

Proposition 1: Increase of “**no more**” **40¢** per \$100 assessed value

Proposition 2: Annual Increase of **20¢** per \$100 assessed valuation of revenues

Proposition 3: Increase of **3¢** per \$100 assessed value

2008:

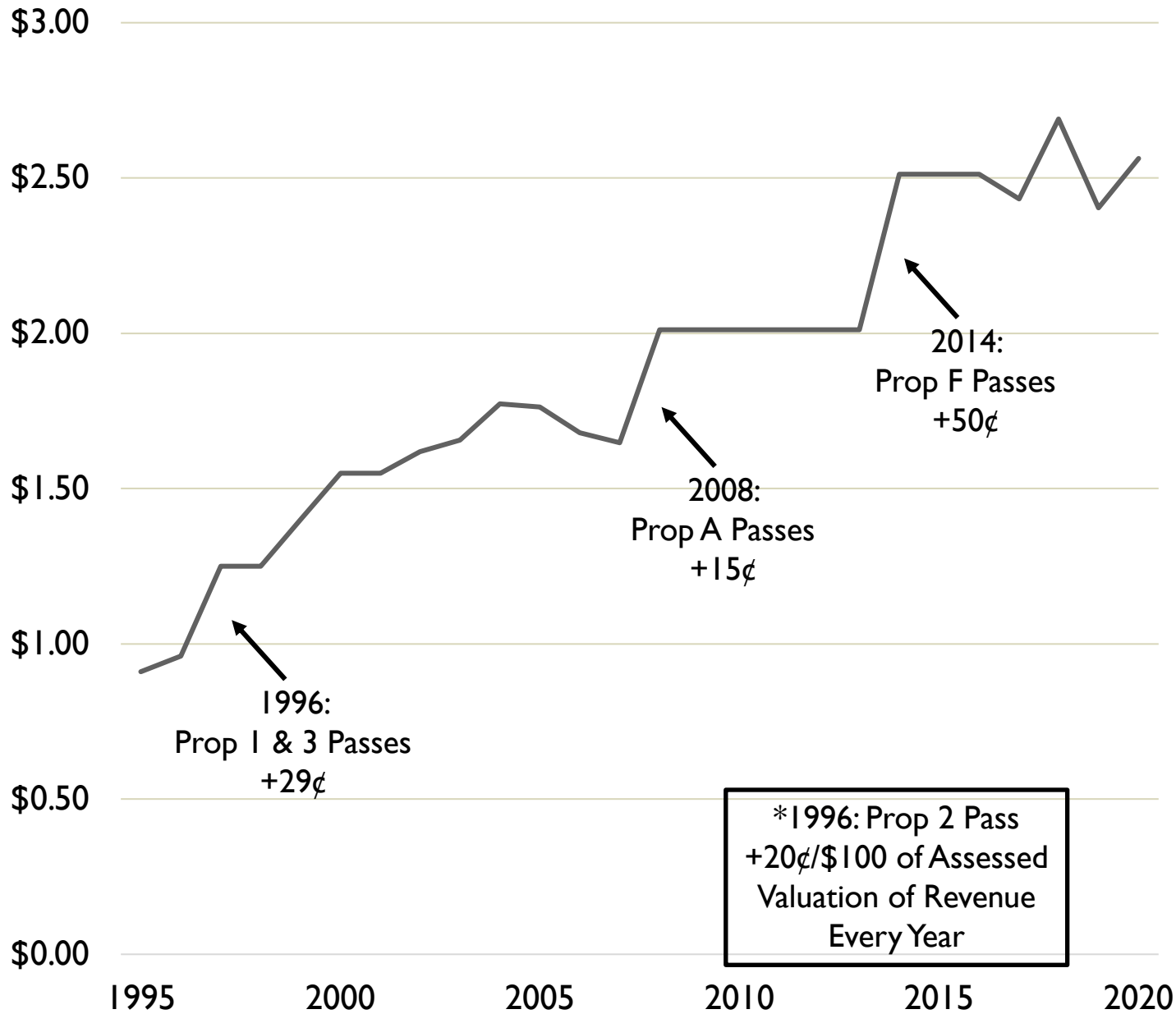
Proposition A: Increase of **15¢** per \$100 assessed value

2014:

Proposition F: Increase of **50¢** per \$100 assessed value

ROBERTSON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT TAX RATES

1995 TO 2020



Other Impacts on Tax Rates:

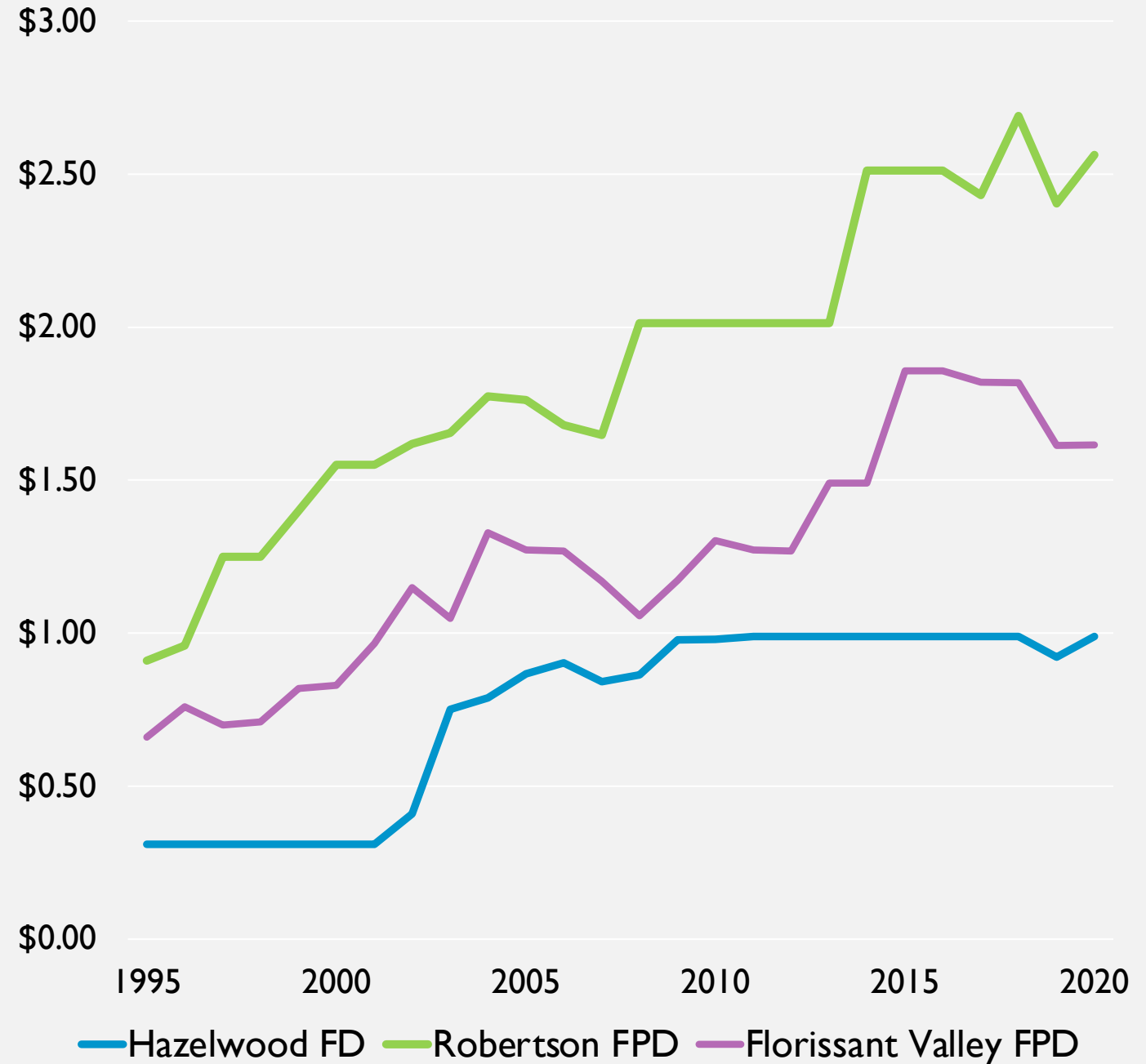
- Property values—as property values go down, tax rates go up to cover the lost revenue.
- Actual and/or perceived expense losses by the fire district—tax rates increase to cover the loss
- Union contract demands

FIRE DISTRICT & FIRE DEPARTMENT TAX RATES

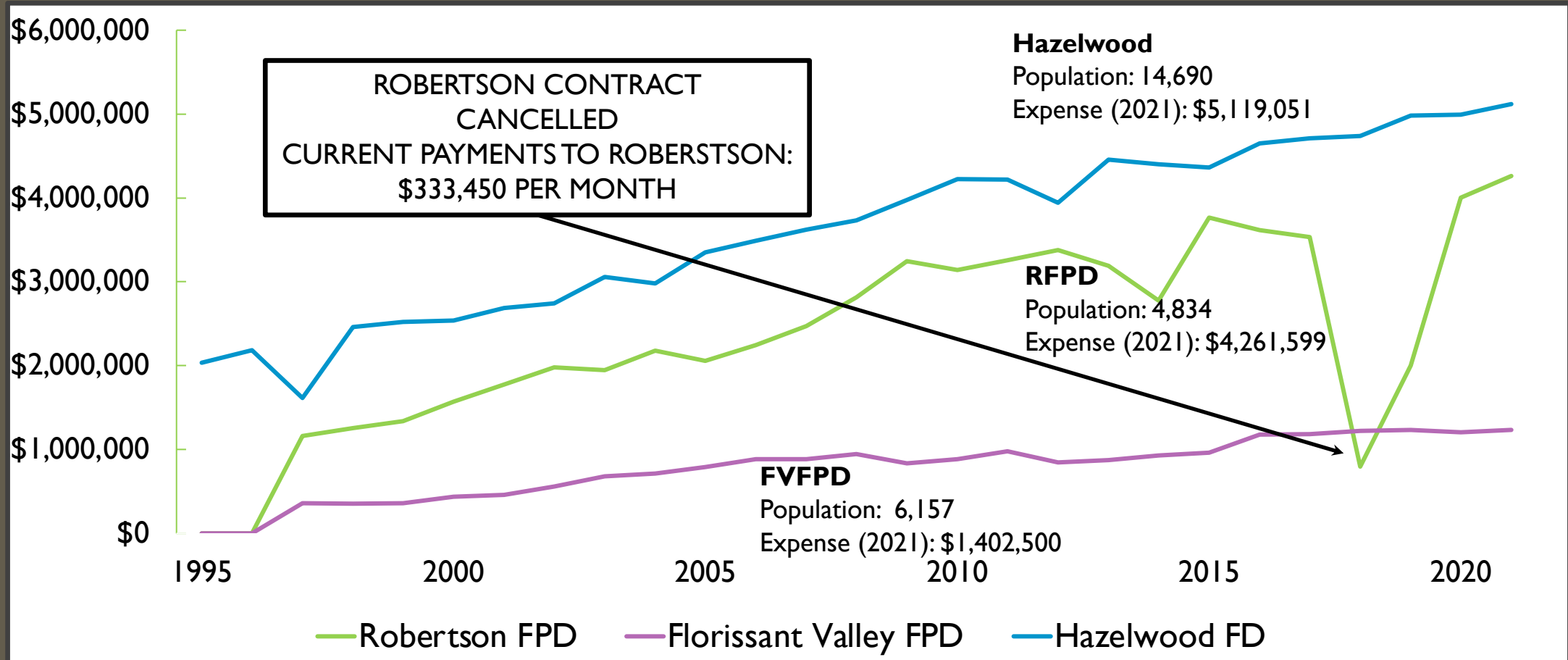
1995-2020

How to Lower District Tax Rates:

- Once a tax increase passes it can not be rescinded.
- Voters can only vote to have tax rates lowered for 1 year.
- The Fire District Board has the power to lower tax rates—no one else.

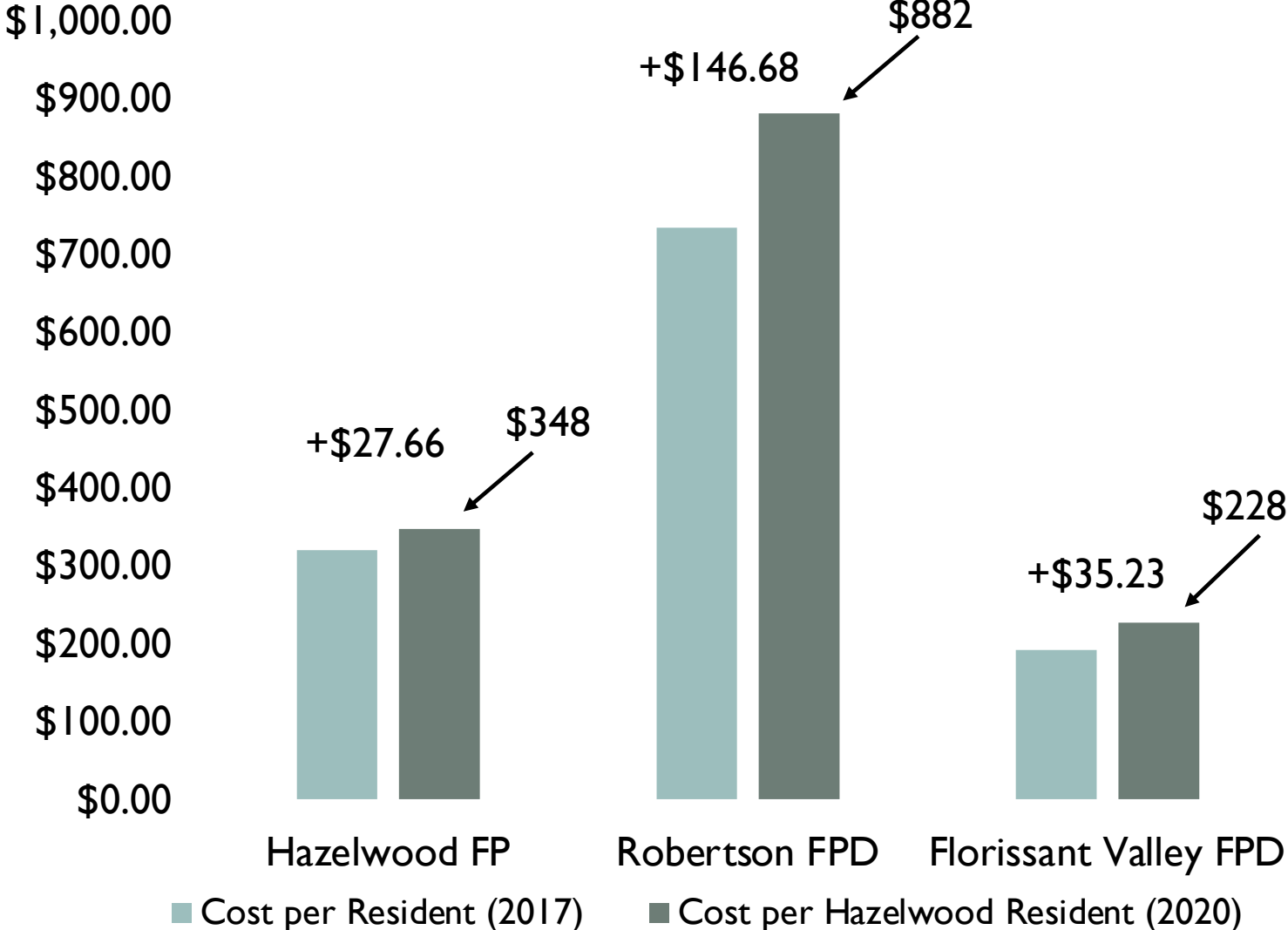


CITY OF HAZELWOOD EMS & FIRE SERVICE PAYMENTS 1995 TO 2021



**COST PER
RESIDENT
2017 vs 2020**

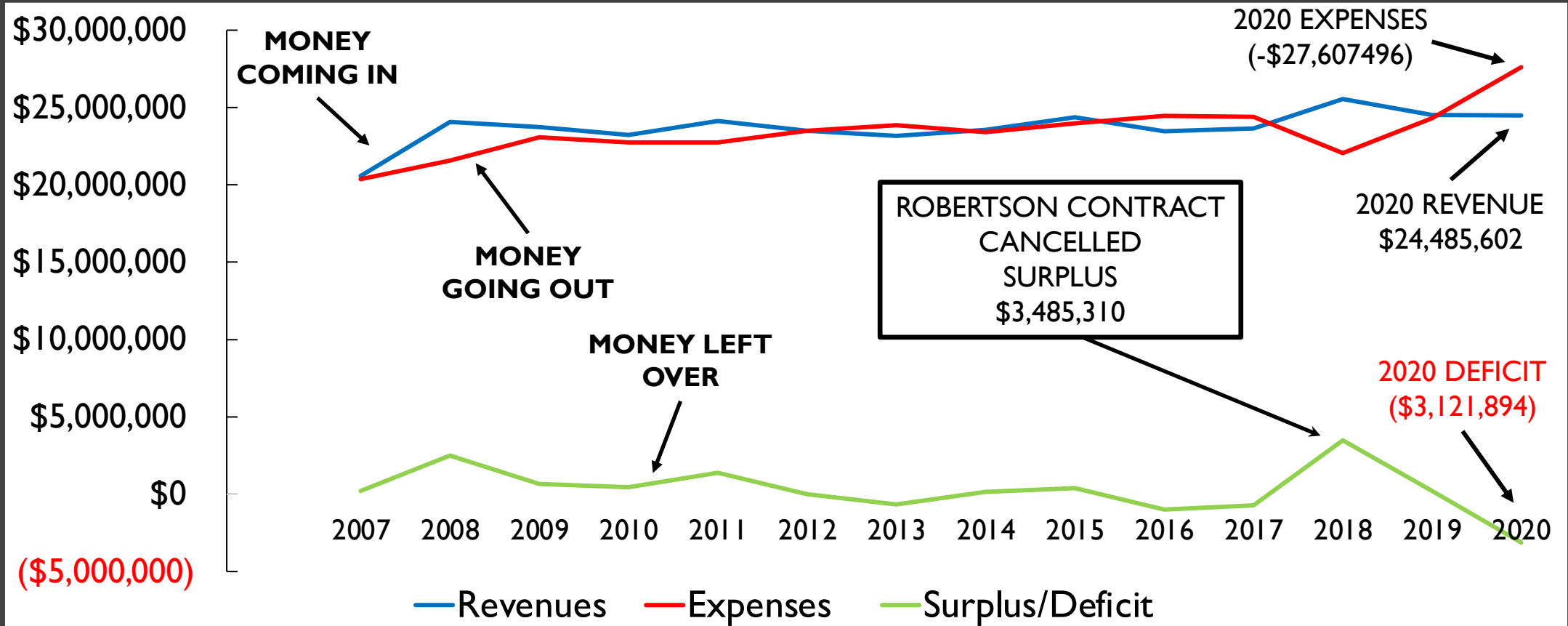
**Hazelwood Fire & EMS Cost per Resident
2017 vs 2020**



HAZELWOOD BUDGET CRISIS



CITY OF HAZELWOOD ACTUALS REVENUE VS EXPENSES 2007 TO 2020



HAZELWOOD BANKRUPTCY

WE ALL ARE AWARE HAZELWOOD HAS CUT OUR SERVICES
BANKRUPTCY WILL RESULT IN MORE CUTS

Hazelwood states that if the Robertson FPD payment dispute is not resolved:
Bankruptcy in 2024

Hazelwood states that if court rules in Robertson's favor:
Bankruptcy in 2022

RESIDENTS OF THE RFPD: IF HAZELWOOD GOES BANKRUPT YOU WILL NOT
RETURN TO UNINCORPORATED ST. LOUIS COUNTY.



WHAT CAN WE DO AS RESIDENTS?

ROBERTSON & HAZELWOOD HAVE GIVEN RESIDENTS TWO OPTIONS:

1. Increase the tax rates on the RFPD residents by 13.7-26%

Both options have major consequences to the residents and the city.

2. Let the City of Hazelwood go Bankrupt



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. RFPD can decide to review and cut budget to make it more affordable to the city.
2. RFPD residents become proactive and vote in members to the RFPD board that will work with the city in trying to reduce cost in hopes of being able to lower the cost to Hazelwood.
3. Voters accept a tax increase for all residents to help pay RFPD.
4. A citizen's petition to de-annex from the RFPD that will allow the city and residents to renegotiate for a better fire rate for the area.



WE ARE A COMMUNITY!

We are more than the name of our city or fire district we live in.

Our schools, our police, our street services, our businesses, our families are all impacted by this issue.

OUR FAMILIES AND LIVELIHOODS ARE WHAT MATTER

We need to stop fighting and come together as a community



Citizens to Save Hazelwood & Fire Services

GET INFORMED!

GET MOTIVATED!

GET INVOLVED!

SaveHazelwood.org

- Contact us.
- Sign up to volunteer.
- Donate to the cause.

This issue impacts everyone, including YOU!

