





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

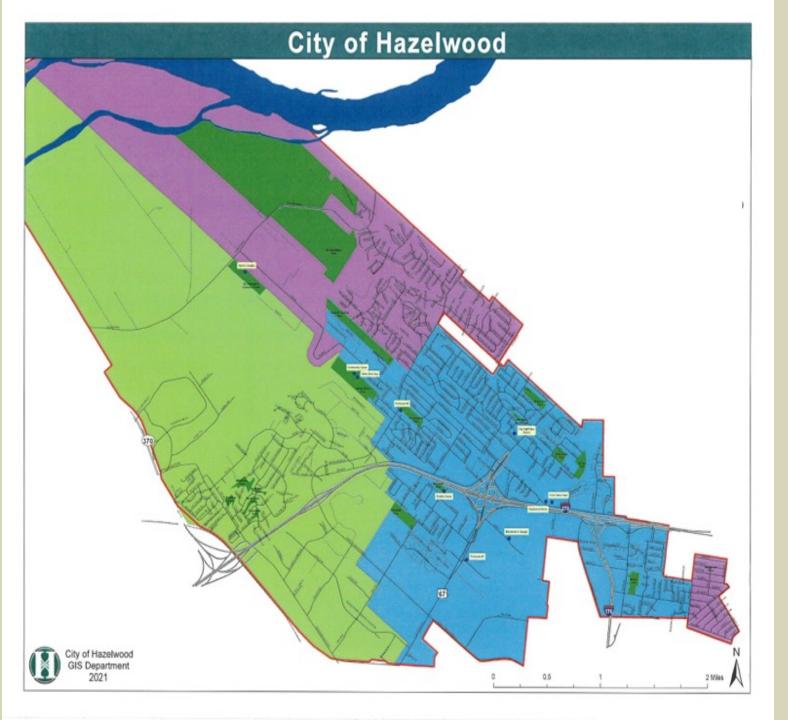
Ran and overseen by local government.

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.





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

BRIEF HISTORY

The Agreement

ROBERTSON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT - CITY OF HAZELWOOD

FIRE SERVICE AGREEMENT

WHEREAS, pursuant to an election held on June 7, 1994, voters living in a portion of Robertson Fire Protection District commonly called the Northwest Area approved the annexation by the City of Hazelwood of that area:

WHEREAS, Robertson initiated a civil action in Circuit Court of St. Louis County, MO, Cause No. 665090, secking to set aside this annexation election, inter alia, because no contemporaneous election was held allowing the voters to select whether Robertson would continue to provide fire, emergency and ambulance service in the portion of Robertson Hazelwood sought to annex;

WHEREAS, Cause No. 665090 was consolidated with other causes challenging the June 7, 1994, annexation election and was further litigated under the docket number 664631;

WHEREAS, the City of Hazelwood instituted a Sawyer Act declaratory judgment action under Section 71.015.1(5) RSMo, which cause was docketed as Cause No. 667811;

WHEREAS, the Circuit Court in Cause No. 667811, inter alta, found at Section III of its February 2, 1995, Order, Judgment and Decree on Annexation that Section 321,670.2 RSMo, is in full force and effect and that the evidence adduced at trial established that the exclusion of the area of Robertson the City of Hazelwood sought to annex would substantially affect Robertson's ability to provide adequate services in the remaining portion of Robertson to the extent that the Court would disapprove the annexation, and further, that Robertson was to provide fire, emergency and ambulance services in the portion of the annexed area Robertson previously served;

WHEREAS, the Circuit Court in Cause No. 667811 ordered that the City of Hazelwood pay Robertson fees for the services provided in the amount and in the manner specified in Sections 321,660 and 321,675 RSMo. and that the methods of computing fees specified in said sections shall also be applied to the computing of fees for the emergency and ambulance services provided by Robertson.

WHEREAS, the Circuit Court in Cause Nos. 665090 and 664631 found that it was not necessary for the City of Hazelwood to submit the fire service selection issue to the voters as a part of the June 7, 1994, amendation election and conditioned amendation election and conditioned amendation election of Hazelwood's compliance with the Court's Order, Decree and Judgment in Cause No. 667811;

WHEREAS, in March 1993, Robertson Fire Protection District and the City of Hazelwood previously entered into a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the implementation of the provisions of Sections 321.660 and 321.675 RSMo. and said agreement resulted in cooperative and constructive relationship between the parties—

NOW THEREFORE, in order to implement the Circuit Court's Order, Decree and Judgment in Cause Nos. 667811 and 655090, Robertson and Hazelwood through their respective authorized officers agree that fire protection service, emergency service and ambulance service in the annexed area previously in Robertson shall be provided by Robertson and payment therefore shall be made by Hazelwood upon the terms set forth below:

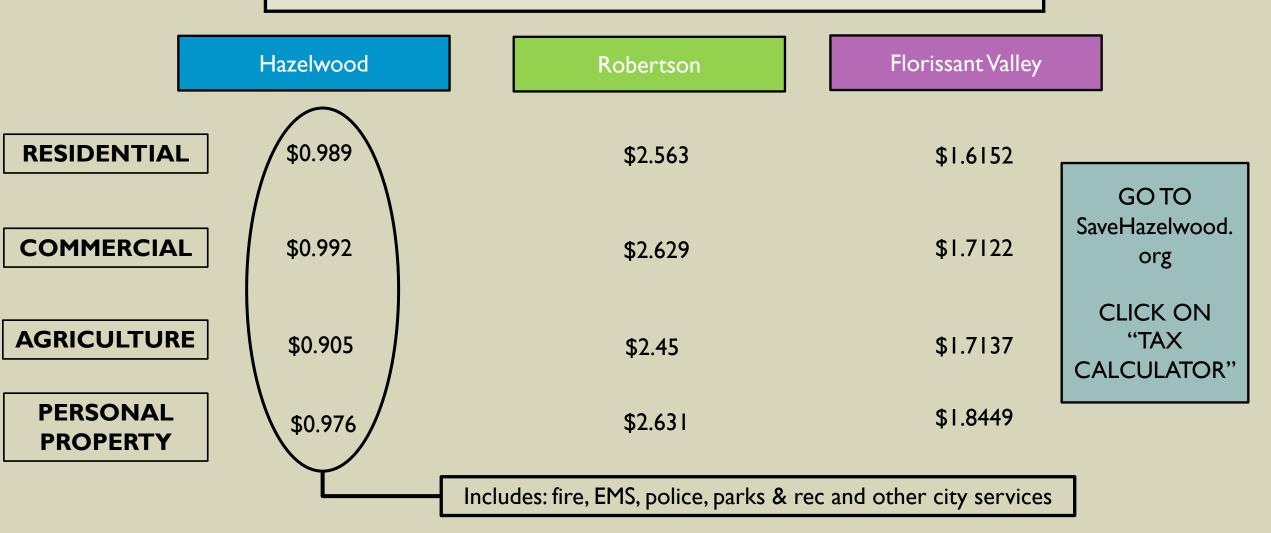
rfpd.org

Annexation of Land

- 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 contact.



OTHER FORMS OF REVENUE FOR FIRE DISTRICTS



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

- I. 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 I: Increase of "no more" 40¢ per \$100 assessed value

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

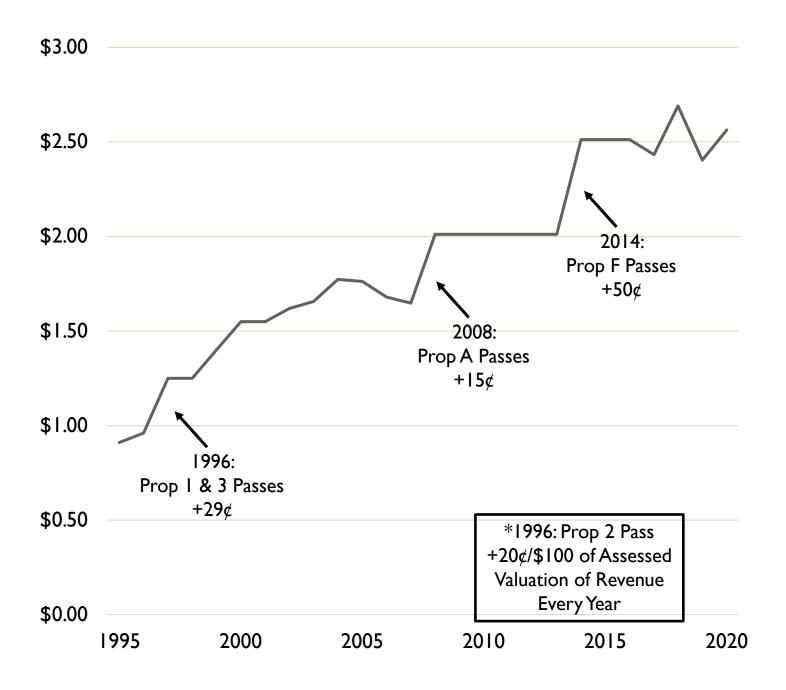
Proposition 3: Increase of 3¢ per \$100 assessed value

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:

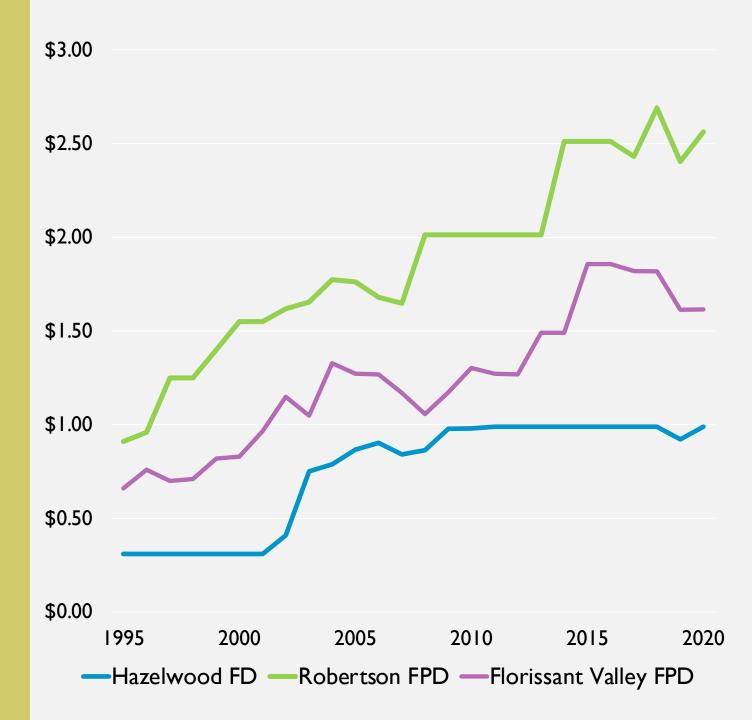
- Property values—as property values go down, tax rates go up to cover the lost revenue.
- Actual and/or perceived expense losses by the fire district—tax rates increase to cover the loss
- Union contract demands

FIRE DISTRICT & FIRE DEPARTMENT TAX RATES

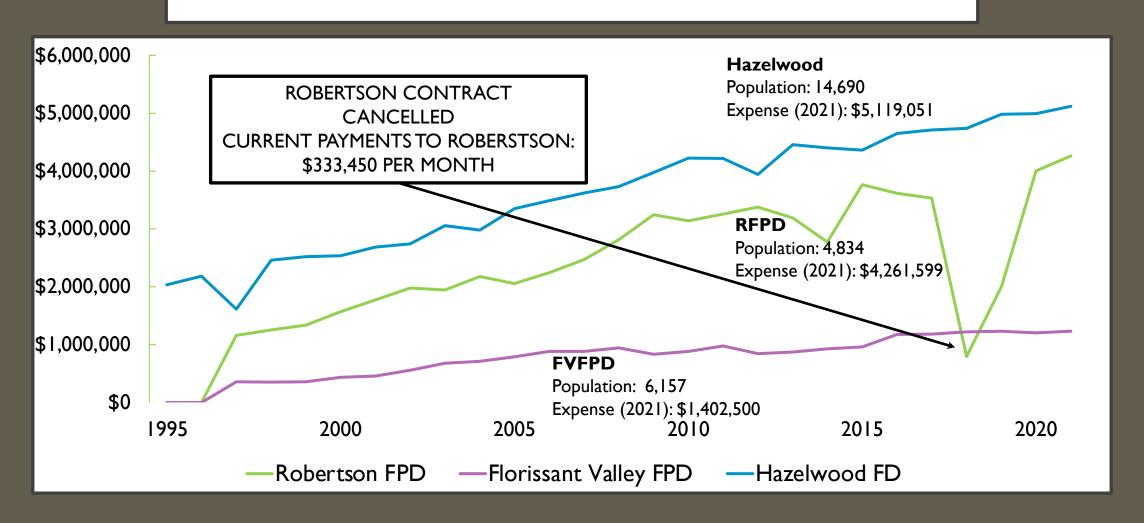
1995-2020

How to Lower District Tax Rates:

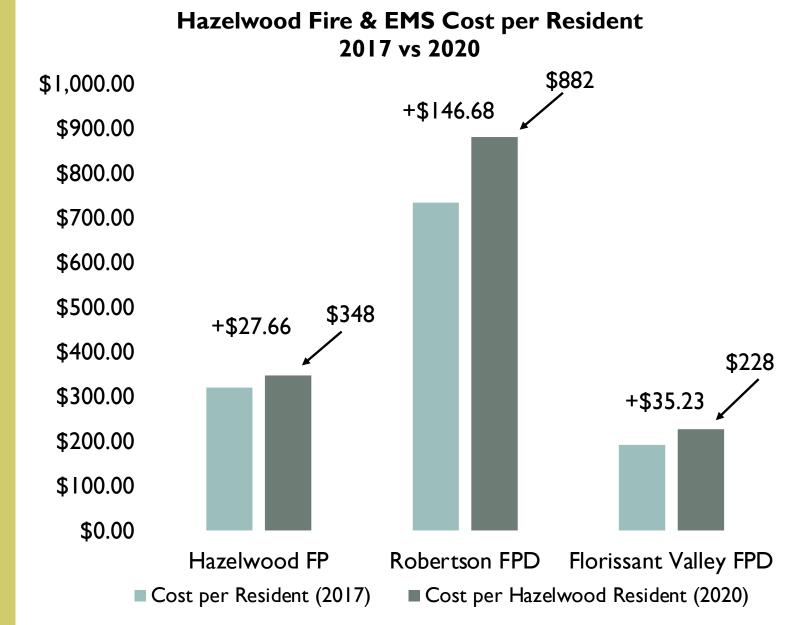
- Once a tax increase passes it can not be rescinded.
- Voters can only vote to have tax rates lowered for I year.
- The Fire District Board has the power to lower tax rates—no one else.



CITY OF HAZELWOOD EMS & FIRE SERVICE PAYMENTS 1995 TO 2021

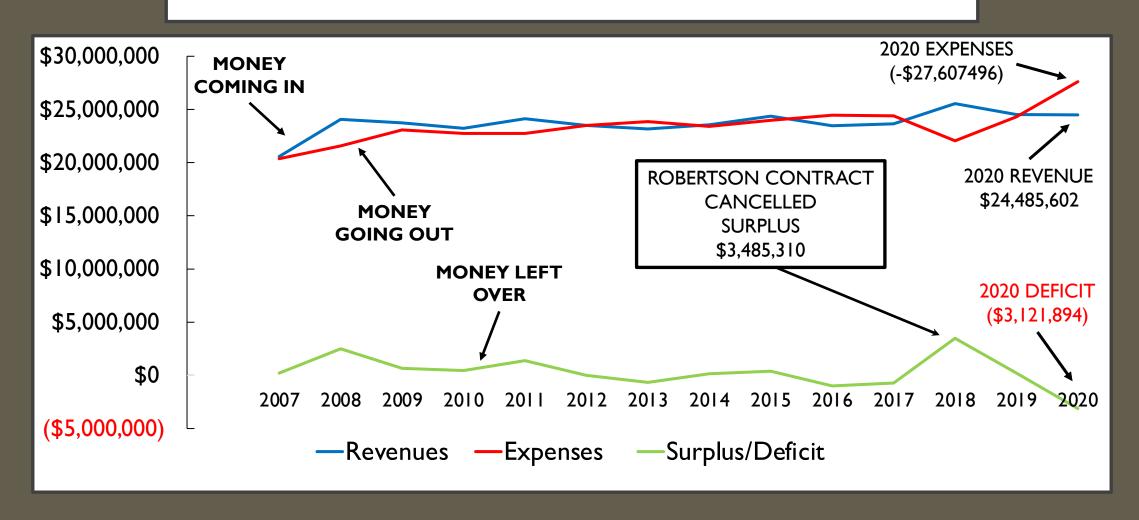


COST PER RESIDENT 2017 vs 2020





CITY OF HAZELWOOD ACTUALS REVENUE VS EXPENSES 2007 TO 2020



HAZELWOOD BANKRUPTCY

WE ALL ARE AWARE HAZELWOOD HAS CUT OUR SERVICES BANKRUPCY 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 UNCORPORATED ST. LOUIS COUNTY.



ROBERTSON & HAZELWOOD HAVE GIVEN RESIDENTS TWO OPTIONS:

I. 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

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POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- I. 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 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



GET INFORMED!

GET MOTIVATED!

GET INVOLVED!

SaveHazelwood.org

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

This issue impacts everyone, including YOU!

