
Fire fees would cover growth in Minturn

Eagle River Fire District expects to expand service in Minturn, Eagle County

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MINTURN, Colorado – In preparation for an expected boom in growth and development, the Eagle River Fire Protection District has presented a set of one-time impact fees that would be charged to any new development in Minturn, Colorado.

The fees, if adopted by the Town Council, are intended to help pay for increased services by the district, which is expected to add a new station, equipment and personnel in the coming years.

“They’re only intended to pay for infrastructure, the tangible items,” said Tom Pippin, whose company put together the impact fee study. “They can’t be used to pay anything but hard costs.”

The report shows that the district is expected to see an increase of 7,200 “single-family equivalents” in the county – development projects where the water meters equal the same size and capacity a single family would use. That’s a 45 percent increase.

Most of that growth, an estimated 2,180 single-family developments, is anticipated to stem from the proposed Ginn Co. resort. Avon and Eagle County have already adopted the district’s fee proposal, which is expected to equal about \$12 million by 2026.

The individual fee for any new development is estimated at \$1,671, and would be charged with the approval of a development permit.

“That’s what we think the district is going to need buy or build over the next 20 years to maintain its service,” Pippin said.

In a letter from district fire chief Charlie Moore to the Town Council, the district says it intends to build a fire station at Gilman and Battle Mountain, make improvements to the Minturn station and add trucks to the stations.

In Avon’s case, Town Manager Larry Brooks said after much deliberating and weighing the town’s options, he and Avon officials felt adopting the fees was the most responsible choice for the community and the district.

“The impact on the fire department would be fairly dramatic if we didn’t adopt these fees,” he said. “It helps to manage better. We feel we became a safer community.”

And it’s not as if the fees are unfair, Brooks said.

“What they are paying is their fair share,” he said. “The new development should not and is not going to pay the impacts of past development.”

The fees aren’t all the money the district will need to maintain its services in the future, though. There are other costs not covered by impact fees – about \$16 million worth – that would help the district reach its goal of being able to respond to a fire quickly and without problems. The rest of the money will be made up in property taxes, grants and other funding.

However, all those numbers could change depending on what development actually does occur in the next two decades, Pippin said.

It’s up to Minturn’s town council to decide whether to adopt and implement the fees, which is expected in the coming weeks.

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