



FIRE SERVICES OPTIONS FOR UNINCORPORATED CHATHAM COUNTY

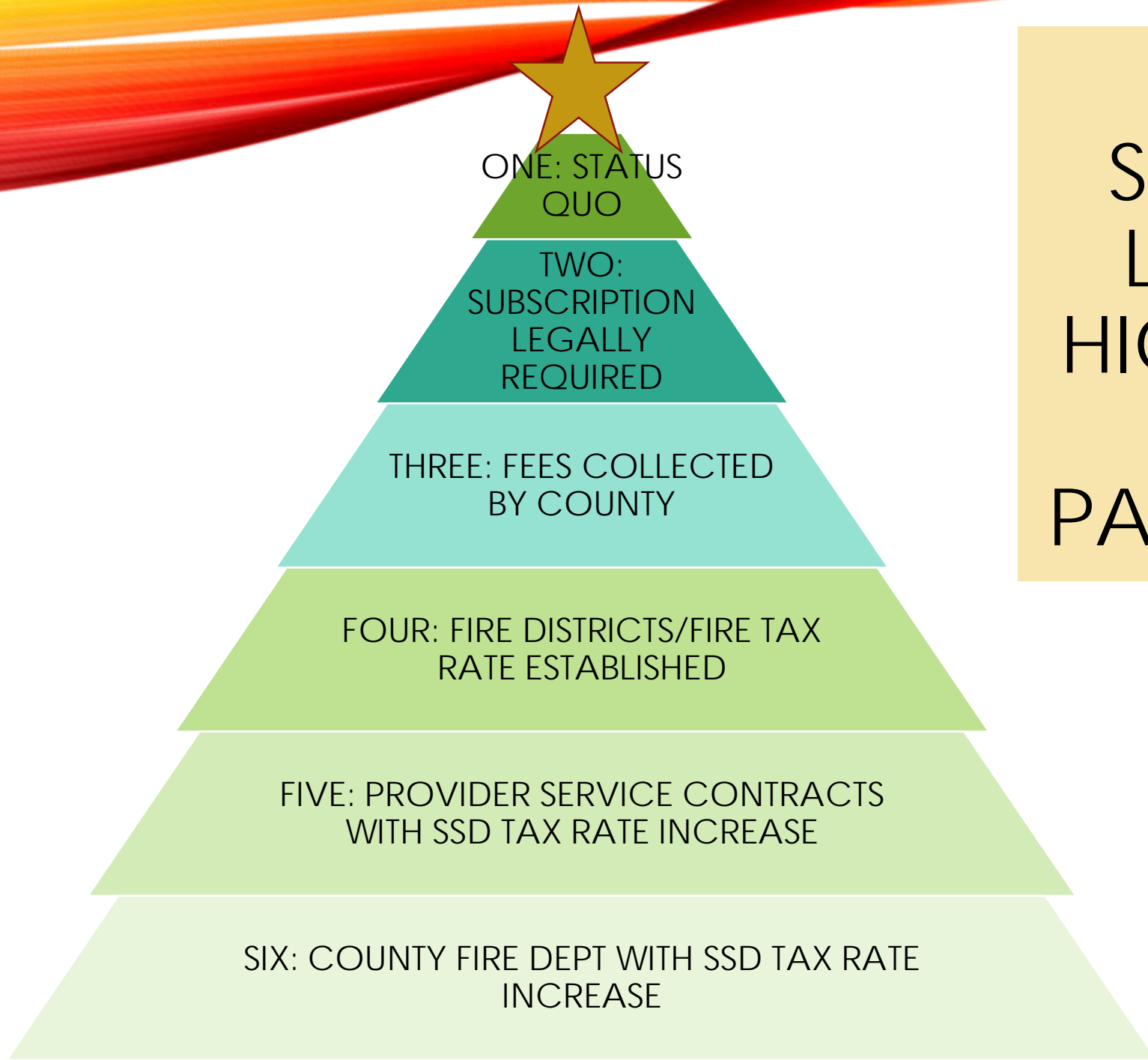
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORKSHOP

DECEMBER 18, 2020



FIRE SERVICES IN UNINCORPORATED CHATHAM

- 9 PROVIDERS (7 municipalities, 2 nonprofit entities)
- VARIOUS ISO RATINGS
- SUBSCRIPTION BASED
- SUBSCRIPTION AMOUNT VARIES
- COLLECTION CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY TWO PROVIDERS
- COUNTY NOT LEGALLY REQUIRED TO PROVIDE FIRE SERVICES
- WHAT ARE COUNTY'S OPTIONS?



OPTIONS
SUMMARY –
LOWEST TO
HIGHEST LEVEL
OF
PARTICIPATION

COUNTY LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT – OPTION ONE

OPTION ONE: STATUS QUO

- LEAST CHANGE FROM CURRENT PROCESS
- COUNTY MAINTAINS CURRENT SUBSCRIPTION-BASED SYSTEM
- PROVIDERS COLLECT SUBSCRIPTIONS
- DEVELOP CONTRACTS WITH EACH PROVIDER TO ALLOW OPERATIONS IN UNINCORPORATED COUNTY
- UPDATE FIRE DISTRICT MAPS TO ENSURE COVERAGE
- DOES NOT RESOLVE PROVIDER COLLECTION ISSUES

COUNTY LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT – OPTION TWO

OPTION TWO: SUBSCRIPTION LEGALLY REQUIRED FOR EVERY PARCEL

- ADOPT ORDINANCE REQUIRING A FIRE SERVICE SUBSCRIPTION
 - PROVIDER COLLECTS SUBSCRIPTIONS
- PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION OF ORDINANCE ENFORCED BY COUNTY
 - ADMINISTRATIVE AND JUDICIAL PROCESS
 - MAY REQUIRE COUNTY STAFF FOR ORDINANCE ENFORCEMENT
- DEVELOP CONTRACTS WITH EACH PROVIDER TO ALLOW OPERATIONS IN UNINCORPORATED COUNTY
- UPDATE FIRE DISTRICT MAPS TO ENSURE COVERAGE
- HELPS RESOLVE PROVIDER COLLECTION ISSUES

COUNTY LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT – OPTION THREE

OPTION THREE: FIRE FEE CHARGED ON COUNTY TAX BILLS

- FEE SCHEDULE AND SERVICE CONTRACTS NEGOTIATED WITH PROVIDERS
 - FEE COULD BE CAPPED OR OTHER
- TAX COMMISSIONER BILLS AND COLLECTS FEES ON PROPERTY TAX BILL
 - BILLING AND COLLECTION CONCERNS ABOUT FEES:
 - **NOT LIENABLE ...COULD BE ENFORCEABLE AS A JUDGMENT**
 - STATE LEGISLATURE COULD DELETE FEES FROM TAX BILLS
 - GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES LEGALLY EXEMPT FROM FEES
 - POLICY DECISION TO IMPOSE FEE ON TAX EXEMPT ENTITIES (CHURCHES)
- COUNTY PAYS OR PASSES FEES THROUGH TO PROVIDERS

COUNTY LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT – OPTION FOUR

OPTION FOUR: ESTABLISH FIRE DISTRICTS & LEVY TAXES

- ESTABLISH SPECIAL TAX DISTRICTS FOR FIRE SERVICES
- DEVELOP SERVICE CONTRACTS WITH FIRE PROTECTION PROVIDERS
 - COUNTY PAY PROVIDER DIRECTLY
- TAX RATE ASSIGNED TO THE FIRE DISTRICTS (JUNE 2021)
 - REPLACES THE SUBSCRIPTION INVOICE
- TAX COMMISSIONER INVOICES AND COLLECTS TAXES ON PROPERTY TAX BILLS
 - SEPARATE LINE ON TAX BILL
- NO TAXES WOULD BE PAID BY TAX-EXEMPT ENTITIES
- NO WAY TO “CAP” A MILLAGE BASED TAX

COUNTY LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT – OPTION FIVE

OPTION FIVE: FIRE SERVICE CONTRACTS & SSD TAX RATE INCREASE

- DEVELOP SERVICE CONTRACTS WITH FIRE PROTECTION PROVIDERS
 - COUNTY PAYS PROVIDERS DIRECTLY FROM THE SSD FUND
- ADJUST SSD FUND TAX RATE TO PAY FOR SERVICE CONTRACTS (JUNE 2021)
 - REPLACES THE SUBSCRIPTION INVOICE
- TAXES INVOICED AND COLLECTED BY TAX COMMISSIONER ON PROPERTY TAX BILLS
- NO TAXES WOULD BE PAID BY TAX-EXEMPT ENTITIES
- NO WAY TO “CAP” AMOUNTS COLLECTED ON A MILLAGE BASED TAX

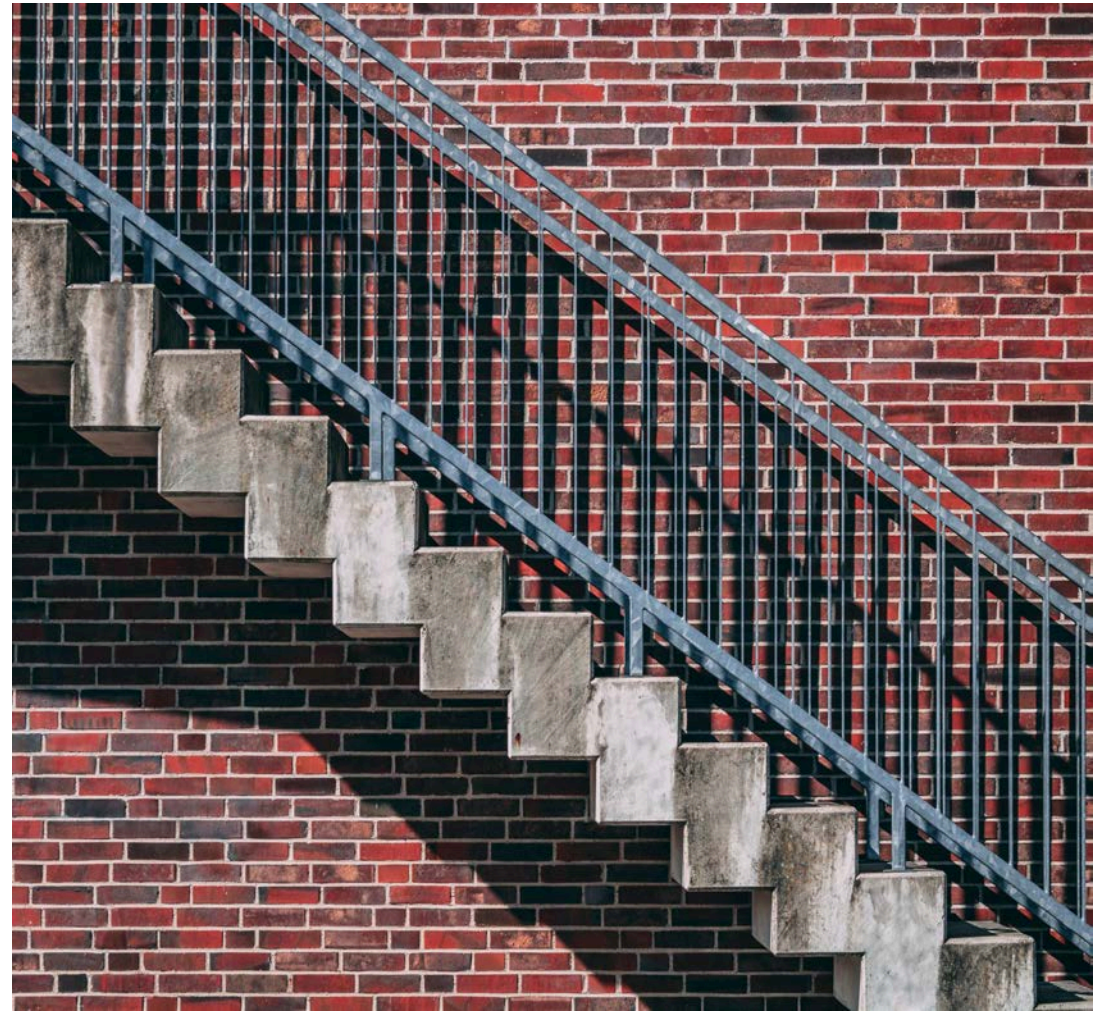
COUNTY LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT – OPTION SIX

OPTION SIX: COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT & SSD TAX INCREASE

- ADD A FIRE DEPARTMENT
 - STAFF, TRAINING, EQUIPMENT, FACILITIES
 - DISCONTINUE/DISSOLVE OTHER FIRE SERVICE PROVIDERS
- ADJUST SSD FUND TAX RATE TO PAY FOR SERVICES (JUNE 2021)
 - REPLACES THE SUBSCRIPTION INVOICE
- TAXES INVOICED AND COLLECTED BY TAX COMMISSIONER ON PROPERTY TAX BILLS
- NO TAXES WOULD BE PAID BY TAX-EXEMPT ENTITIES
- NO WAY TO “CAP” AMOUNTS COLLECTED ON A MILLAGE BASED TAX

OTHER OPTIONS

- **HYBRID OF OPTIONS**
 - PHASE IN OF OPTIONS
 - IS THERE A ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL?
 - STEPS
- **OTHER / DISCUSSION**



Summary

Option Level Matrix	Status Quo 1	Subscrip Ord 2	Fee Structure 3	Fire District 4	SSD with Contracts 5	SSD Fire Dept 6
How services are funded:						
By subscription	X	X				
By fees/assessments			X			
By tax levy				X	X	X
Ability to cap amount paid	limited		X			
How services are billed:						
Provider invoices	X	X				
Chatham County property tax bill			X	X	X	X
How payments are collected:						
By provider	X	X				
By Tax Commissioner			X	X	X	X
Legal & contractual items:						
County ordinance required		X				
County revenue ordinance amended			X	X	X	X
Requires contracts with providers	X	X	X	X	X	X
County enforcement (civil action)		X	X	X	X	X
Ability to Lien property for nonpayment	X			X	X	X
State's ability to remove fees on tax bills			X			
County Governance:						
None to little	X	X				
Negotiated			X	X	X	
Full						X

REFERENCE INFORMATION

- BUDGETS FOR MUNICIPAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS TOTAL \$48.3 MILLION
- COUNTY TAX RATES
 - CURRENT MILLAGE RATE
 - SSD: 4.801
 - GENERAL FUND: 11.543
 - CURRENT VALUE OF ONE MILL
 - SSD: \$5,325,200
 - GENERAL FUND: \$14,226,500

PUBLIC SURVEY BY ETCINSTITUTE

- SURVEYS MAILED TO HOUSEHOLDS IN THE UNINCORPORATED AREA
- OPEN SURVEY PORTAL STARTING MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2020
<http://chathamcountysurvey.org/>
- RESULTS DUE MID JANUARY 2021



Questions?