

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
95th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2025

As Engrossed: H3/19/25

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1416

By: Representative L. Johnson

By: Senator K. Hammer

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING FIRE DEPARTMENTS; TO ALLOW A VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT SERVICING UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF THE COUNTY TO LEVY DUES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING FIRE DEPARTMENTS; AND TO ALLOW A VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT SERVICING UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF THE COUNTY TO LEVY DUES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 14-20-108(a), concerning dues for volunteer fire departments, is amended to read as follows:

(a)(1)(A) The quorum court of each county, upon request filed with the quorum court by one (1) or more volunteer fire departments ~~in the county~~ whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county, may adopt an ordinance authorizing a designated county official to collect and remit to the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county the annual dues charged by the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county in consideration of providing fire protection to those unincorporated areas in the county.

(B)(i)(a) When a quorum court receives a request for the levy of ~~volunteer fire department~~ dues for a volunteer fire department whose



fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county and the request has been signed by the fire chief and the chair and secretary of the board of directors, if any, of a volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county and filed with the county clerk, the quorum court by ordinance shall call for an election on the issue of the levy of ~~the volunteer fire department~~ dues for a volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county on each residence and on each business having an occupiable structure.

(b)(1) The issue may be placed on the ballot at a special election by order of the quorum court in accordance with § 7-11-201 et seq.

(2) The special election shall be held by August 1.

(c) If an attested petition is filed with the county clerk and signed by a majority of registered voters in the volunteer fire department district whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county voting in the immediately preceding general election, then the quorum court by ordinance shall dispense with a special election on the issue of the levy of ~~volunteer fire department~~ dues for a volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county.

(d)(1) If the levy of ~~volunteer fire department~~ dues for a volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county is approved by a majority of those voting on the issue or the county clerk determines that the number of signatures of registered voters is sufficient and the quorum court dispenses with a special election, the ~~volunteer fire department~~ dues for the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county shall be listed annually on real property tax statements and collected by the county collector at the same time and in the same manner as real property taxes.

(2)(A) The county collector shall report delinquencies to the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county for collection.

(B) A volunteer fire department

whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county may collect ~~volunteer fire department~~ dues for the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county that have become delinquent and may enforce collection by proceedings in a court of proper jurisdiction.

(ii) The cost of the election shall be borne by the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county that requested the levy.

(2) The ordinance enacted by the quorum court shall set forth the terms and conditions ~~on which the volunteer fire department~~ that the dues for the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county are to be collected by the county and for the remission of the ~~volunteer fire department~~ dues for the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county to the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county.

(3) However, an active member of a volunteer fire department whose annual ~~volunteer fire department~~ dues for the qualifying fire department whose annual ~~volunteer fire department~~ dues for the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county are collected in this manner may be exempt from the annual ~~volunteer fire department~~ dues for the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county at the discretion of the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county in consideration of providing services to the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 14-20-108(f)-(h), concerning dues for volunteer fire departments, is amended to read as follows:

(f) At the discretion of a volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county, a church served by a volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county may be exempt from ~~volunteer fire department~~ dues for a volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county if the church is exempt

from real property taxes.

(g)(1)(A) By December 15 of each year or upon the creation of a volunteer fire department whose fire protection covers an unincorporated area of the county, a volunteer fire department whose fire protection covers an unincorporated area of the county that uses or intends to use the county collector for collection of the ~~volunteer fire department~~ dues for a volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county shall file an annual report with the county clerk in any county in which a portion of the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county is located.

(B) The county clerk shall not charge any costs or fees for filing the annual report.

(C) The volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county shall deliver a filed copy of the annual report to the county collector within five (5) days of filing.

(2) The annual report shall contain the following information as of December 15 of the current calendar year:

(A) Identification of the volunteer fire department board members whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county and contact information;

(B) The contact information for the volunteer fire department chief whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county;

(C) Information concerning to whom the official designated to remit the ~~volunteer fire department~~ dues for the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county is to pay ~~volunteer fire department~~ the dues for the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county; and

(D) The amount of the annual dues charged by the volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county by parcel or on each residence or business having an occupiable structure.

(h) The official designated to remit the ~~volunteer fire department~~

dues for a volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county under this section shall not remit the dues collected by the county collector to any volunteer fire department whose fire protection district covers an unincorporated area of the county until the annual report has been filed.

/s/L. Johnson