

# MCFD1 breathing sigh of relief after levy approval

BY MATT RAWLINGS  
Of the Keizertimes

After suffering through a pair of failed levies over the last year, Marion County Fire District #1 (MCFD1) had their local option levy (Measure #24-455) pass with over 60% of the vote at the May 18 Special District election.

The levy, which will last for the next five years, is for \$0.59 per \$1,000 of assessed property value — or \$59 (\$4.92 per month) per \$100,000 of value.

“We were absolutely ecstatic. It was great to know that our message was received,” said MCFD1 fire chief Kyle McMann. “We know things are tight still, but now we can limit liability for our firefighters and our citizens.”

After receiving a \$0.71 levy from 2016 to 2020, the district asked voters to increase the levy by \$0.28 at the primary election in May 2020, but at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ballot measure was not approved — it was the first time a levy wasn't approved in the history of the district.

At the November 2020 general

election, MCFD1 asked voters to renew the \$0.71 levy, but once again the measure failed, forcing the district to cut \$2.4 million from their \$19.7 million budget — MCFD1 is an independent taxing

\$1,000 of assessed property value.

Due to the budget cuts, MCFD1 was forced to layoff 12 full-time firefighter/paramedics, close down fire stations in Macleay and Labish Center and take emergency apparatus out of service.

But with the passing of the levy last week, the district will be able to rehire nine firefighter/paramedic positions this summer and add a dedicated three-person engine company, which will be placed at the district's Middle Grove location. The number of responding units will also increase from three to four, which will help with the delays in response times MCFD1 has experienced over the last year.

“Some of our laid-off personnel got jobs with other departments, but there are also quite a few firefighters that are ready and excited to come back, they are just waiting for their date to return,” McMann said.

McMann believes that citizens were more inclined to vote yes due to their being less issues on the ballot, but also because of the district's committed effort to get their message

out to the community on the importance of the levy. McMann reached out to multiple legislators about the levy and had a couple interviews on local radio stations. MCFD1 also hosted three virtual town hall meetings and even had off-duty firefighters go door-to-door to promote their cause.

“There was a lot less noise on the ballot. There weren't any presidential or Senate races on there. But we really pushed hard to get our message out to the community,” McMann said.

During virtual town halls, as well as other conversations with local citizens, McMann believes that the biggest selling point for the levy was having a dedicated three-person engine company.

“I don't think people realized that our crews are oftentimes committed for six or seven hours at a time and that in certain situations, we would be unable to respond in a timely fashion to something like a child choking because we don't have a dedicated engine company that is there all the time,” McMann said. “I think that was the biggest eye-opener for people.”

The levy will officially go into effect on July 1.

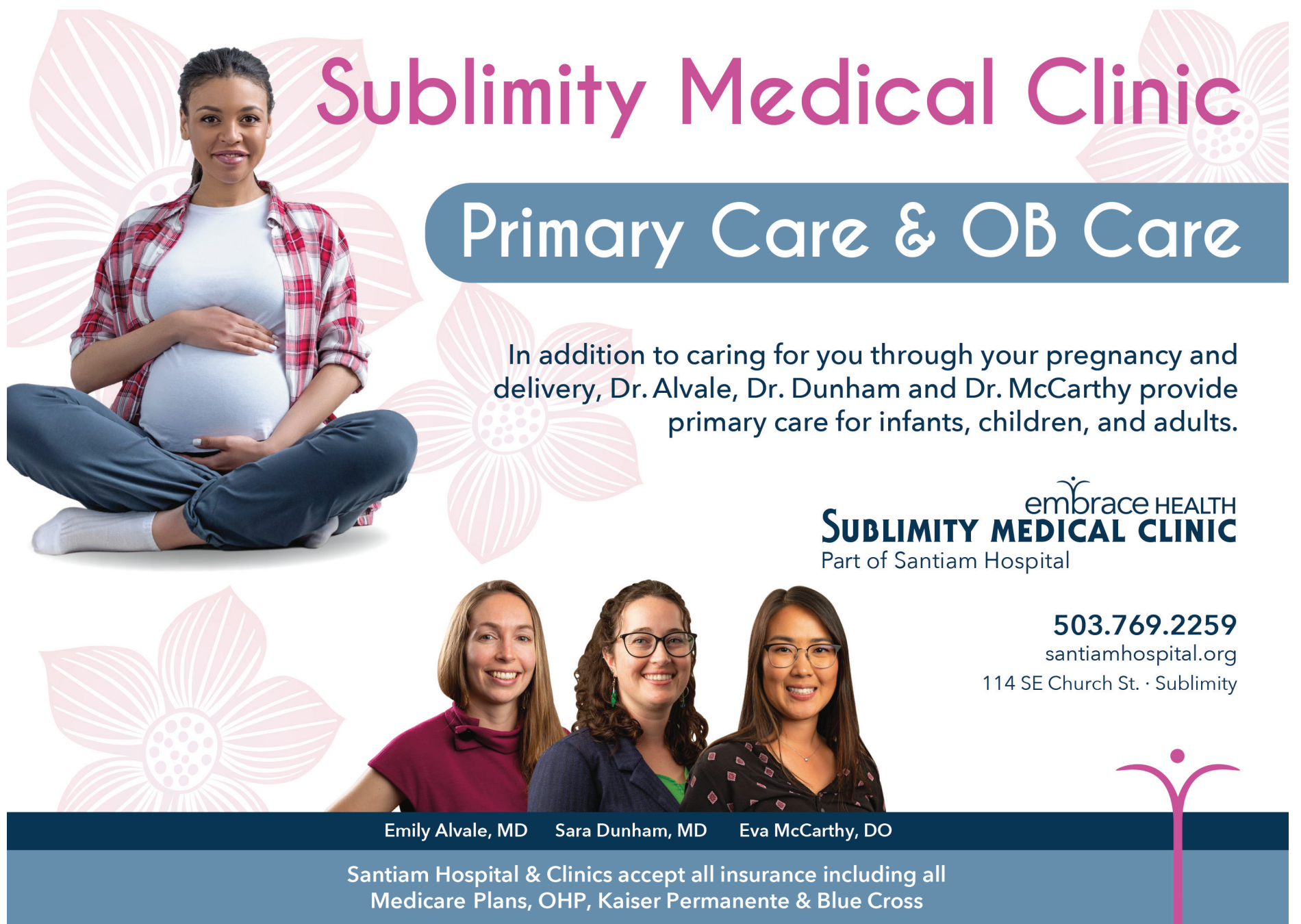
“This was extremely important for us. It reduces our response times and it keeps us stable so that we won't get to this point again,” McMann said.

We were absolutely ecstatic. It was great to know that our message was received. We know things are tight still, but now we can limit liability for our firefighters and our citizens.

— KYLE MCMANN

Fire Chief, MCFD1

district and receives no revenue from Marion County, the state or federal government, emergency services are funded through a permanent tax rate of \$1.90 of



**Sublimity Medical Clinic**

**Primary Care & OB Care**

In addition to caring for you through your pregnancy and delivery, Dr. Alvale, Dr. Dunham and Dr. McCarthy provide primary care for infants, children, and adults.

**embrace HEALTH**  
**SUBLIMITY MEDICAL CLINIC**  
Part of Santiam Hospital

503.769.2259  
santiamhospital.org  
114 SE Church St. · Sublimity

Emily Alvale, MD   Sara Dunham, MD   Eva McCarthy, DO

Santiam Hospital & Clinics accept all insurance including all Medicare Plans, OHP, Kaiser Permanente & Blue Cross