

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 48th Legislature (2002)

HOUSE BILL HB2766

By: Dunegan

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to public health and safety; amending 63 O.S. 2001, Section 2814, which relates to political subdivisions authorized to operate emergency telephone service; and clarifying language.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 63 O.S. 2001, Section 2814, is amended to read as follows:

Section 2814. A. In addition to other powers for the protection of the public health, a governing body may provide for the operation of an emergency telephone service and ~~may~~ is authorized to impose an emergency telephone fee, as provided in this section, for emergency telephone service in areas, subject to the jurisdiction of the governing body. The governing body may do such other acts as are necessary for the protection and preservation of the public health if necessary for the operation of the emergency telephone system.

B. The governing body is hereby authorized, by ordinance in the case of municipalities and by resolution in the case of counties or a combined governing body, to provide for the operation of emergency telephone service and to impose an emergency telephone fee in the area to be served by the system. The ordinance or resolution shall submit to the voters in the area to be served the question of the imposition of emergency telephone service and the amount of the emergency telephone fee. The ordinance or resolution shall propose the amount of the emergency telephone fee to begin the second year

and for each year thereafter, in an amount not greater than fifteen percent (15%) of the tariff rate, and shall call for an election to be held within one (1) year from the date the ordinance or resolution is adopted.

The ordinance or resolution shall also provide for the collection of an amount not to exceed five percent (5%) of the tariff rate in areas subject to the jurisdiction of the governing body for a period of no longer than one (1) year. The one (1) year, five percent (5%) fee shall be a part of, not an addition to, the fee set by the voters. The collection of the five percent (5%) fee may begin, prior to the election, within thirty (30) days after the resolution or ordinance becomes effective. The one (1) year, five percent (5%) fee shall be used to provide for the cost of conducting the election to set the emergency telephone fee and any initial or start-up cost necessary to implement the emergency telephone service. If the fee is not approved by the electors, any remaining money collected during the first year shall be distributed to the local exchange telephone company and then shall be refunded to each service user charged on a pro rata basis.

C. Within sixty (60) days of the publication of the resolution adopted pursuant to subsection B of this section, there may be filed with the county election board of the affected county or counties a petition signed by not less than three percent (3%) of the total number of votes cast in the next preceding general election of the county or affected area.

Within sixty (60) days of publication of an ordinance adopted by a municipality pursuant to subsection B of this section, there may be filed with the county election board of the county in which the municipality is located a petition signed by not less than three percent (3%) of the total number of votes cast in the next preceding election of the city.

The petitions may request that the question of the installation and operation of emergency telephone service and imposition of the one (1) year, five percent (5%) emergency telephone fee as called for in the resolution or ordinance be disapproved.

Upon determination of the sufficiency of the petition and certification by the county election board or boards, the proposition shall be submitted to the qualified voters of the county, municipality or area to be served not less than sixty (60) days following the certification of the petition.

If a majority of the votes cast in an election held pursuant to subsection B of this section disapprove the operation of emergency telephone service and imposition of an emergency telephone fee or a majority of the votes cast disapprove the one (1) year, five percent (5%) emergency telephone fee, upon certification of the election results by the county election board or boards, the resolution or ordinance shall not take effect and the emergency telephone service and the emergency telephone fee called for in the resolution or ordinance shall not be imposed. If the resolution or ordinance is disapproved by the electors, any remaining money collected during the first year shall be distributed to the local exchange telephone company and then shall be refunded to each service user charged on a pro rata basis.

D. If the governing board does not take action to provide for the operation of emergency telephone service and to impose an emergency telephone fee as provided in subsection B of this section, there may be filed with the county election board or boards of the affected area a petition signed by not less than three percent (3%) of the total numbers of votes cast in the next preceding election of the affected area.

The petition shall request that the question of the installation and operation of emergency telephone service and imposition of a fee in an amount not greater than fifteen percent (15%) of the tariff

rate be submitted to the qualified voters of the county, municipality or area to be served. Upon determination of the sufficiency of the petition and certification by the county election board or boards, the proposition shall be submitted to the qualified voters of the county, municipality or area to be served not less than sixty (60) days following the certification of the petition.

If a majority of the votes cast at an election held pursuant to this subsection approve the installation and operation of emergency telephone service and imposition of an emergency telephone fee the governing body shall provide for the installation and operation of the service, impose the approved fee and provide for the governance of the system. If the affected area is governed by two or more governmental entities the governing bodies of each shall enter into an agreement in accordance with the Interlocal Cooperative Act to provide for the governance of the system.

E. Any fee imposed by a county or combined governing body shall not apply to any portion of the county located within the boundaries of a municipality or other governmental entity also imposing an emergency telephone fee pursuant to the provisions of the Nine-One-One Emergency Number Act. The approved emergency telephone fee shall be effective upon certification of the election results by the county election board or boards. Except as provided for in subsections G and I of this section, an emergency telephone fee imposed prior to the effective date of this act shall continue at the established amount until an election to change the fee is called as provided for in this section.

F. If a majority of the votes cast at an election held pursuant to subsection B of this section approve the installation and operation of emergency telephone service and imposition of an emergency telephone fee, the governing body shall provide for the installation and operation of the service and impose the approved fee. The initial five percent (5%) fee, established by resolution

or an ordinance, as provided pursuant to the provisions of subsection B of this section shall remain in effect for the remainder of the first year.

G. The emergency telephone fee approved pursuant to the provisions of this section shall be reviewed at least once each calendar year by the governing body which shall, in accordance with subsection D of Section 2815 of this title, establish the amount of the fee for the next calendar year, not to exceed the amount set by the electors. The governing body shall have the power and authority to reduce the emergency telephone fee being paid by the service users of the emergency telephone system to the estimated amount needed for the annual operation and maintenance of the system. If the governing body makes a reduction and in a subsequent year determines it is necessary to increase the fee to operate and maintain the system, the governing body may raise the fee up to an amount not to exceed the amount previously set by the electors. Any fee imposed by the electors of a county, municipality or area served shall remain at the amount approved by the electors until a new vote of the electors is conducted in the manner for which an election may be conducted to impose a fee as provided for in this section. The proceeds of the fee shall be utilized to pay for the operation of emergency telephone service as specified in this section. Collection of the fee may begin at any time if an existing service is already operative or at any time subsequent to execution of a contract with the provider of the emergency telephone service at the discretion of the governing body.

H. If the fee approved by the voters is less than fifteen percent (15%) and the governing body determines there exists a need for ancillary communications systems necessary to communicate the reported emergency to the appropriate emergency service and personnel and the governing body also determines that the fee set by the electors is not sufficient to fund the ancillary communications

systems, the governing body may by resolution or ordinance call an election to submit the question of raising the voter-approved fee in a sufficient amount, not to exceed fifteen percent (15%), for such additional time as determined by the governing body it is necessary to purchase the ancillary communications equipment. The vote shall be conducted in the manner provided for in subsection B of this section.

I. A governing body with an existing emergency telephone service system in operation prior to the effective date of this act may by ordinance or resolution restore the emergency telephone fee set at three percent (3%) to an amount not to exceed five percent (5%) of the tariff rate for such additional time as is necessary to fund ancillary communications equipment necessary to communicate the reported emergency to the appropriate emergency service and personnel.

Within sixty (60) days of the publication of the resolution adopted pursuant to this subsection, there may be filed with the county election board of the affected county or counties a petition signed by not less than three percent (3%) of the total number of votes cast in the next preceding general election of the county or affected area.

Within sixty (60) days of publication of an ordinance adopted by a municipality pursuant to this subsection, there may be filed with the county election board of the county in which the municipality is located a petition signed by not less than three percent (3%) of the total number of votes cast in the next preceding election of the city.

The petitions may request that the question of restoring the emergency telephone fee to an amount not to exceed five percent (5%) of the tariff rate to fund ancillary communications equipment be submitted to the qualified voters of the county, municipality or area to be served.

Upon determination of the sufficiency of the petition and certification by the county election board or boards, the proposition shall be submitted to the qualified voters of the county, municipality or area to be served not less than sixty (60) days following the certification of the petition. If a majority of the votes cast at the election are for restoring the emergency telephone fee to an amount not to exceed five percent (5%) of the tariff rate to fund ancillary communications equipment, the resolution or ordinance restoring the fee shall become effective. The increase of the fee may be implemented within thirty (30) days after the resolution or ordinance becomes effective.

J. The tariff rate used for initial calculation of the emergency telephone service fee shall remain static for the purpose of calculating future fees for emergency telephone service. Therefore, future rate changes for emergency telephone service shall be stated as a percentage of the initial tariff rate.

K. The emergency telephone fee shall be imposed only upon the amount received from the tariff for exchange telephone service or its equivalent. No fee shall be imposed upon more than one hundred exchange access lines or their equivalent per person per location.

L. Every billed service user shall be liable for any fee imposed pursuant to this section until it has been paid to the local exchange telephone company.

M. The duty to collect any fee imposed pursuant to the authority of the Nine-One-One Emergency Number Act from a service user shall commence at a time specified by the governing body. Fees imposed pursuant to this section that are required to be collected by the local exchange telephone company shall be added to and shall be stated separately in the billings to the service user.

N. The local exchange telephone company shall have no obligation to take any legal action to enforce the collection of any fee imposed pursuant to authority of this section, however, should

any service user tender a payment insufficient to satisfy all charges, tariffs, fees and taxes for exchange telephone service, the amount tendered shall be credited to the emergency telephone fee in the same manner as other taxes and fees. The local exchange telephone company shall annually provide the governing body with a list of amounts uncollected along with the names and addresses of those service users which carry a balance that can be determined by the local exchange telephone company to be nonpayment of any fee imposed pursuant to the authority of this section.

O. Any fee imposed pursuant to the authority provided by this section shall be collected insofar as practicable at the same time as, and along with, the charges for exchange telephone service in accordance with the regular billing practice of the local exchange telephone service. The tariff rates determined by or stated in the billing of the local exchange telephone company shall be presumed to be correct if such charges were made in accordance with the business practices of the local exchange telephone company. The presumption may be rebutted by evidence which establishes that an incorrect tariff rate was charged.

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