

**FREDERICK COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT
FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET JUSTIFICATIONS**

Over the past few years, the County's growth and demands on emergency services has provided us with a very challenging mission. As our organization grows and changes to meet the new challenges within Frederick County, so do our budgetary needs. We are at a crossroads in the development of our department and have critical decisions to make to determine which path will provide the necessary services to our community.

We are a unique organization to the county, as we encompass both career and volunteer staff, of which 147 are career uniformed staff, seven (7) civilian employees and several hundred volunteer members.

Personnel Request

Compensation of Firefighter/EMT (8 total)
\$163,468.00 requested (\$20,433.50/each)

3505-1001-000-160 through 3505-1001-000-163 Plus 3505-1001-000-165 through 3505-1001-000-168

- o **8 - Full-Time Firefighter/EMTs**

Demands on the County's Fire and Rescue System continue to increase as the population grows. Emergency incident volume has increased by 18% year over year through October 2021.

Increases in both residential and non-residential development have created coverage deficiencies and stretch existing resources. The System must be capable of not only handling rural hazards, but also an expanding suburban/urban area and the hazards of a growing commercial and industrial footprint in the community.

The Fire and Rescue System is a combination system where career staff work with eleven (11) volunteer Fire and Rescue companies to provide services to the community. The volunteer companies continue to provide and maintain 9 of the 11 fire stations and all the operational apparatus utilized in the System. The career staff provides most of the operational staffing but is augmented by a dedicated core of operational volunteer firefighters and EMS provides.

The Department staffs the fire stations 24-hours per day, 365 days per year with a targeted minimum staffing with additional positions built-in to account for sick, vacation, and injury leave. Our staffing ratios were stretched even more thinly this past two years due to the COVID pandemic and increasing number of long-term injuries. As the Department addresses the need to increase minimum staffing to meet the demands on the system, an increase in relief staffing is also necessary.

As the County continues to grow, the demands on staffing will continue to increase. Ensuring the safety of our personnel, obtaining an acceptable level of service, and meeting new standards adopted by State and Federal agencies are the immediate challenges facing our Fire and Rescue Department.

Building minimum staffing levels takes advance planning, because typically it takes 18 months from the announcement of a new job opening for a new Firefighter/EMT to count towards effective minimum staffing.

Our request for eight (8) new positions beginning on January 1, 2023, would allow us to effectively post and recruit of the new positions and maintain capacity in the planned fire academy class for potential attrition among existing staff. The eight new positions when they are released to serve as minimum staffing would allow us to upstaff stations so that each of the three battalions (geographic areas of the county) have a minimum staffing of 12 personnel across all three shifts. The increased staffing would contribute to several objectives – notably:

- ✓ Allow multiple units from one station to respond to calls for service.
 - Decrease response times within 1st Due areas
 - Increase staffing at busiest stations
- ✓ Address safety concerns due to understaffing.
- ✓ Decrease the dependence of automatic aid/mutual aid resources.
- ✓ Address coverage for Vacation, Sick, Injury/FMLA, and Training Leave.
- ✓ Alleviate Overtime coverage for unexpected leave.
- ✓ Decrease employee injuries

3505-1003-003 Part-Time

\$186,000 Requested

- Increase of \$56,400

The increase will allow the hiring of part-time EMS-only Paramedic positions to staff up to 48 hours a week. The System has a critical shortage of Advanced Life Support (ALS) EMS providers which strains our ability to maintain minimum staffing. The System is piloting using part-time ALS providers to augment existing overtime to ease an over-reliance on existing staff and to potentially create opportunities for targeted surge staffing to address increased call volumes efficiently.

3505-1005-000 Overtime

\$2,104,100 Requested

- Increase of \$200,000

The requested funds in FLSA Pay include expenses related to scheduled hours worked over 2756. Currently, the three-shift 24/7/365 schedule worked by Fire and Rescue Operations Division staff totals 2,928 hours worked annually per employee. The Overtime budget should be an accurate depiction of overtime worked that is not easily accounted for due to its unpredictability. The table details the expected overtime expenses to be paid during FY23.

FLSA Time (current OPS employees)	746,872
Holiday (current OPS employees)	448,632
Shift Training (current OPS employees)	451,596
NEW STAFF	0
Hold-Over/Incidental Coverage	300,000
FM Response	45,000
Academies/Training Personnel	77,000
Other/Meetings/Physicals	35,000

The request is an increase of \$200,000 in incidental overtime funding to better reflect actual experience the last two years due to higher-than-normal sick leave due to COVID, higher number of employees with chronic injuries requiring surgical intervention and long recuperation time and increasing employee attrition.

3505-1007-000 Incentive

\$90,000 Requested

- No increase

3505-1007-002 FLSA Pay

Funds will be transferred out monthly indicating the total FLSA hours to be paid. This will allow for a better understanding of actual overtime hours versus the total hours each shift is scheduled to work annually.

3505-1007-001 Career Development

\$169,304 Requested

- Decrease of \$14,696

3505-2013-000 Education Tuition Assistance

\$42,000 Requested

- Increase of \$6,000

The department is requesting of \$6,000 for tuition assistance to be able to send an additional Advanced EMT's to an accredited Paramedic program. The options for Paramedic Training Programs range from 9 to 15 months in length and must be completed through an accredited training program through the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services. The department is working creatively to help produce Paramedics through our own ranks as it is extremely competitive to hire already certified Paramedics. This is critical area of so we can assure we have an appropriate number of Paramedics to maintain minimum staffing to serve the community plus have additional relief staff for our current Paramedics.

Fringe Benefits

Due to the requested personnel increase, all fringe benefits reflect an increase based on the appropriate calculations provided by the Finance Department.

Operational Requests

3505-3004-001 Repair and Maintenance – Equipment

\$264,600 Requested

- Decrease of \$2,525

3505-3004-002 Repair and Maintenance – Vehicles

\$62,750 Requested

- Increase of \$6,000

Increase due to additional reserve apparatus.

3505-3005-000 Maintenance Service Contracts

\$1,625 Requested

- Increase of \$105

The adjustment is due to price increase from vendor. No new services were added.

3505-3006-000 Printing and Binding

\$17,050 Requested

- Increase of \$1,250

The \$1,250 increase is for the Fire Marshal's office public education materials.

Our primary public education outreach is focused on elementary school-aged children within the county, we would like to expand our program to adults. To educate older adults in our community about ways to lower their risk of fire and falls. To strengthen our program and broaden its reach we need to increase our public education materials

3505-3007-000 Advertising

\$26,964 Requested

- Increase of \$4,964

The \$4,964 increase is for the Fire Marshal's office fire safety education.

Increase our fire prevention education safety messages through advertising with iHeart Radio so we will have our PSAs on air 52-weeks of the year

3505-3009-004 Forest Fire Extinction

\$14,872 Requested

- \$1 increase

The increase is a result of rounding up to the next dollar amount to cover overage.

3505-3010-000 Other Contractual Services

\$239,518

- Increase of \$54,101

Approximately \$9,080.00 of the increase requested would be utilized for annual physical needs for new position and an additional \$15,000 for additional annual diagnostic testing as part of employee physicals to detect for common occupational diseases for firefighters.

We are also requesting \$30,000 to contract with a healthcare provider practice to provide behavioral health assistance to department employees. The practice once identified following an RFP would be responsible for the following.

- Be Available 24/7 for Frederick County Fire and Rescue Department Employees
- Provide Annual Training to all FCFRD employees – covering behavioral health awareness, trends, treatment methods, etc. – Which is required by Virginia Code 9.1-203.1
- Establish and Oversee of a Department Peer Support Program and provide Quarterly Training for Peer Support Team Members

Most people are aware of the physical demands that are placed on firefighters and EMS providers. But it is important to also realize the impact that fighting fires and responding to emergencies has on the mental wellbeing of emergency personnel. Firefighters and EMS providers face the risk of many behavioral health concerns such as anxiety, depression, burnout, post-traumatic stress disorder, and addiction among others. Firefighters and EMS providers spend their careers trying to save others while putting themselves in danger. Recent data shows that 1 in 4 first responders in Virginia have experienced depression and 8 percent admitted to recent thoughts of suicide. More alarming is that suicide stands as the 3rd leading killer of firefighters behind cancer and heart attacks. In 2019, 111 firefighters and seven (7) EMTs died of suicide nationwide, according to the Firefighter Behavioral Alliance.

Frederick County Fire and Rescue Department firefighters and EMS providers are not immune from behavioral health problems, with several employees consistently navigating challenges with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), among other behavioral health challenges. Recognizing this, the department finds it imperative to provide avenues for firefighters and EMS providers to get the behavioral health treatment and support they need from clinicians and other resources with knowledge and experience of treating these men and women who serve.

The department believes the option of contracting with a practice will be more cost effective and provide better provider availability of qualified resources than to hire a single full-time employee to fulfill these roles and responsibilities.

3505-4003-002 Central Stores – Gasoline

\$38,500 Requested

- Increase of \$3,500

Estimated 10% increase due to anticipated increase of fuel cost.

3505-5204-000 Postage and Telephone

\$21,804 Requested

- No increase requested.

3505-5299-000 Internet Access

\$16,592 Requested

- No increase requested

3505-5302-000 Equipment Insurance Coverage (Fire Insurance)

\$3,700 Requested

- Increase of \$450

The Department has 14 trailers, with extensive training equipment and materials stored in them, and a Kawasaki mule 4010. This line item provides for fire insurance for these trailers and represents the amount quoted by the Finance Department. The \$250 increase would cover the associated equipment insurance coverage.

3505-5305-000 Motor Vehicle Insurance

\$18,500 Requested

- Increase of \$1,220.

Adjustment for rate increase.

3505-5401-000 Office Supplies

\$40,574 Requested

- Increase of \$8,224

\$8,224 increase is for purchase of iPad cases for replacement iPads through IT Department.

3505-5402-001 K9 Maintenance

\$3,600 Requested

- No Increase Requested

3505-5403-000 Agricultural Supplies

\$500 Requested

- No Increase Requested

3505-5404-000 Medical and Laboratory Supplies

\$206,000 requested

- Increase of \$126,150

\$67,000 of the increase is for a VOEMS Rescue Squad Assistance Grant. This a 50/50 grant requiring a 50% match of funds from the locality. This grant would be utilized to purchase a high-fidelity pediatric training mannequin. This mannequin would be utilized to better train our EMS providers in the treatment of pediatric patients. The response to pediatric emergencies is often the most stressful and trying incidents that our providers respond to. Currently, we have antedated mannequins which do not provide any feedback or realism to the training

environment. These mannequins will provide a high-fidelity training environment for all our providers to ensure the best quality of care when faced with these incidents.

We are also asking for \$70,500 for mechanical ventilators to allow our newly trained and certified Critical Care Paramedics an enhanced tool to provide life-saving interventions in the field. We would request immediate consideration of this request as an appropriate use of American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Mechanical ventilators are designed to provide a consistent rate and volume of air to an unconscious patient and may be used for unconscious patients or patients requiring CPAP. Ventilators are used routinely in hospitals and inter-facility transports. Multiple jurisdictions in Virginia are using ventilators in pre-hospital settings. Over the past year, ventilators could have been used approximately 100 times to help maintain a person's airway.

Mechanical ventilators will be used in two ways. First, for unresponsive patients who have had an airway placed. Currently, we will assist with a bag-valve mask and manually squeeze the bag to inflate a person's lungs. While this has been the standard in the past, this is a very inaccurate way to manage an airway. We rely on a provider's judgement and expertise to give the proper amount of air. The more excitement and adrenaline level the provider has, the faster the provider will squeeze the bag. This can cause overinflation of the lungs. The mechanical ventilator will give the proper rate and volume, no matter what is happening around it.

Mechanical ventilators can also be used to assist a conscious person's breathing. Our providers currently use CPAP for patients with COPD or congestive heart failure. CPAP gives a constant amount of pressure against a patient, helping to keep their airway and lungs open. The mechanical ventilator can be used as BIPAP. This is similar to CPAP, except it releases the pressure when the patient breathes out. When our providers transport a patient to the ER, the Doctor almost immediately switch the patient to BIPAP. The main reason is that it is more comfortable for the patient and decreases anxiety.

3505-5407-000 Repair and Maintenance – Supplies

\$41,647 Requested

- No Increase Requested

3505-5408-000 Vehicle and Powered Equipment Supplies

\$26,125 Requested

- Increase of \$1,575.

\$1,000 of the increase is for additional reserve engine and \$575 estimated 5% increase in anticipated fuel cost.

3505-5409-000 Police Supplies

\$8,200 Requested

- Increase of \$1,500

The \$1,500 increase is due to the cost increase of the same amount of ammunition used for training and annual qualification.

3505-5410-00 Uniforms and Wearing Apparel

\$414,220 Requested

- Increase of \$33,607

The \$33,607 increase is to absorb the uniform cost of the 8 additional positions requested for \$68,384 with anticipated \$34,777 savings in other purchases.

3505-5411-00 Books and Subscriptions

\$92,051 Requested

- Increase of \$32,620

Part of this increase is a reclassification of funds to the appropriate line item for the departmental staffing software subscription service of \$10,750.

An additional \$20,880 is for the First Due subscription software that will greatly improve the department's pre-plan ability for all hazards and allow online access on fire apparatus. First Due software provides needed data for emergency response operations by automatically connecting to online and offline data sources, bringing critical building and occupancy information into one central cloud-based platform; then translating it into a quick and easy-to-consume format and making it available on any device. The platform also includes a simple to use data collection and digital mapping tool for use on any device as well as Community Connect; allowing for residents to submit life safety information and facility managers & commercial business/property managers to communicate occupancy and pre plan data on their own structures as well as receive mass notification and targeted real time incident data for events occurring at their buildings.

3505-5413-000 Other Operating Supplies

\$262,964 Requested

- Increase of \$25,163

\$25,000 of the increase is for a Fire House Subs grant. This is a 100% grant that requires no match of funds. This grant would be utilized to purchase technical rescue equipment to use in training. In the current situation when the department does technical rescue training, we must rely on the Virginia Department of Fire Programs to supply the equipment, or we must take apparatus out of service in the county for the training. When we take the apparatus out of service this hinders our response to incidents across the county. With this equipment this will help mitigate these reliance's upon others for the equipment.

3505-5413-004 Other Operating Supplies/Emergency

\$3,000 Requested

- No Increase Requested

3505-5413-005 Other Operating Career Staffing

\$26,750 Requested

- No increase requested.

3505-5506-000 Travel

\$78,816 Requested

- Increase of \$13,550

Increase to fund new critical care paramedic classes and continuing education for existing critical care paramedics.

3505-5605-000 Sara Title Program

\$13,000 Requested

- No Increase Requested

3505-5605-002 Hazardous Materials Response Team

\$34,745 Requested

- No Increase Requested

3505-5801-000 Dues and Association Membership

\$3,375 Requested

- No Increase Requested

3505-9001-000 Lease/Rent Equipment

\$12,500 Requested

- No Increase Requested.

CAPITAL REQUESTS

3505-8005-000 - Motor Vehicle and Equipment

\$388,400 Requested

4WD Pick-Up and equipment (NEW EM10) \$58,400

This vehicle will be utilized by the current Emergency Management Coordinator. This position became a full-time position in May 2021 and currently, there is no dedicated vehicle for this position. The Emergency Management Coordinator will be on a 24 hour on call status to respond to incidents and disasters plus attending all required meetings and trainings around the Commonwealth of Virginia.

This position will respond to a variety of incidents for multiple reasons to support equipment needs, incident planning, damage assessment, and many other reasons. The EM Coordinator also serves as the lead of the Department's Drone Program. The vehicle will support the transport and deployment of the Drone Platform and provide the latest technology to the Incident Commander for managing significant incidents. Other tasks include participation in the Regional Pet Sheltering and moving the Red Cross trailers as needed for training and storm-related events.

4WD Ambulance Replacement for 10-1 \$330,000

Replacement for M10-1: The current Medic 10-1, a 2003 Ford Ambulance, has over 95,930 miles as of November 2019. The current condition of this vehicle is fair to good at best. Due to its original use as the first line ambulance, excessive wear and tear is evident. Medic 10-1 plays a crucial role as a bariatric unit for all of Frederick County. This ambulance also serves as a reserve unit to be utilized by any of the 11 volunteer stations. With the high mileage on this vehicle, a significant increase in maintenance and repair costs has occurred during the past two fiscal years. The chassis does not meet the current specifications for weight to continue to be used as a bariatric unit.