

MEMORANDUM

March 2, 2010

TO: Public Safety Committee
FROM: Minna K. Davidson, Legislative Analyst *MKD*
SUBJECT: Impact of MCFRS civilian position reductions and lapse

For the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) FY10 operating budget, the Executive recommended, and the Council approved abolishing two civilian positions and lapsing eight civilian positions for a full year. The positions are shown in the table below. The discussion of this item from the Council's budget worksession packet is on © 3-8.

Position	Division	\$	wy
Abolish			
OSC (FY08 RIP savings)	Community Risk Reduction	-125,080	-1
Gaithersburg OSC (FY09 svgs. pln.)	Volunteer Services	-89,580	-1
Lapse			
Sr. Planner	Community Risk Reduction	-75,530	-1
Administrative Specialist	Administrative Services	-87,980	-1
Program Manager I	Administrative Services	-84,283	-1
Admin. Specialist III (FY09 svgs. pln.)	Administrative Services	-68,979	-1
Supply Technician II	Administrative Services	-55,300	-1
Manager III (FY09 svgs. pln.)	Volunteer Services	-123,495	-1
OSC (FY09 svgs. pln.)	Volunteer Services	-71,658	-1
OSC Glen Echo (FY09 svgs. pln.)	Volunteer Services	-68,610	-1

During the budget review, Council staff expressed concern about how the workload from these positions would be handled, and whether uniformed personnel would be assigned to the functions of the positions either on straight time or overtime. The Committee requested that the Fire Chief report at mid-year on the impacts of the abolished and lapsed positions, and how the workload is being handled without them.

As part of the FY10 Budget Savings Plan, the Executive recommended lapsing a vacant Senior Citizen Fire Safety Task Force position for a full year (savings: -\$69,460), and lapsing five non-uniformed Code Inspector positions that were to be part of a Fire Code Enforcement civilianization initiative (savings: -\$293,490). The recommendations are shown on © 9. The Committee reviewed these recommendations during its review of the FY10 Savings Plan.

MCFRS staff provided brief updates on the impacts of the positions that were abolished or lapsed in the FY10 budget and in the FY10 Savings Plan (© 1-2). Among other things, they note that the position reduction impacts that were described in the budget worksession packet remain the same (© 5-7). For the Committee session, MCFRS staff will discuss their responses in more detail and will be available to respond to Committee questions.

Questions

1. The MCFRS response on © 2 says that the work associated with the Senior Citizen Task Force Position is primarily being absorbed by staff with some additional contract staff work hours.

How much contract staff time is being used? Approximately how much does the contract staff cost? How long will contract staff time be used?

2. The MCFRS update on “Other Civilian Positions” says that there has not been any significant increase in direct overtime associated with the lapsed or abolished positions, but work has been delayed. It also mentions that work has been distributed across the organization and some personnel have been redeployed to absorb the workload.

What kind of work has been delayed, and for how long?

Which personnel have been redeployed, and how have their responsibilities changed?



MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Richard R. Bowers
Fire Chief

February 26, 2010

To: Minna Davidson, Montgomery County Council Staff Analyst

From: Fire Chief Richard Bowers

Subject: Response to PSC Questions – Civilian Lapse Positions

In the FY10 budget, the Executive recommended, and the Council approved, abolishing two civilian positions and lapsing another eight for a full year. Council staff expressed concern about how the workload from those positions would be handled, and whether uniformed personnel would be assigned to the functions of those positions either on straight time or overtime. The Committee requested a mid-year briefing on the impacts of the abolished and lapsed civilian positions, and how the workload is being handled without them.

1. Please provide one or two paragraphs summarizing the overall impact of the abolished/lapsed civilian positions and the general approach that has been used to cover their duties.

The positions identified in the previous Council packet do in fact remain unfilled. There were nine positions lapsed and two positions abolished. The descriptions of the workload and the shift of duties remain consistent. The reference is found in the Council packet located at:

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/pdf/agenda/col/2009/090507/20090507_6.pdf. The civilian positions that were lapsed as part of the FY10 budget are discussed on pages (circle) 39-41 of that packet.

2. For each position, please provide a brief (no more than four lines) description of the position's duties and how they are being covered in FY10. Please feel free to update the descriptions on © 39-41 of the budget packet if that would be the most efficient way to respond.

See question 1.

Office of the Fire Chief

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3. If any additional civilian positions have been lapsed or abolished during FY10, please list them and explain how their duties are being covered.

Two positions have been lapsed in addition to those identified above. One is the Senior Citizens Fire Safety Task Force position and five civilian inspectors in the Fire Code Enforcement Section. The work associated with the Senior Citizen Task Force Position is primarily being absorbed by staff at this time with some additional contract staff work hours. The Fire Code Enforcement positions remain unfilled and the workload is being distributed among the members of that section.

4. If covering the duties of any of the lapsed/abolished positions has resulted in increased overtime costs, please identify the positions and the hours/dollars of overtime associated with each one.

Fire Code Enforcement

The staffing model was and remains predicated on the concept of providing a critical mass of code enforcement personnel that could be shifted to existing building inspections in response to the cyclical nature of new construction work load.

Senior Citizen Task Force Position

The work associated with the Senior Citizen Task Force Position is primarily being absorbed by staff at this time with some additional contract staff work hours.

Other civilian positions

The reduction and lapsed FY10 budget has placed a significant administrative strain on each of the Divisions and Sections. There has not been any significant increase in direct overtime associated with these lapsed or abolished positions. The impact has been delays in response or support from the affected Division and or Sections. The work has been distributed across the organization and some personnel have been redeployed so the critical work can be assigned and absorbed.

On © 39, MCFRS has provided brief descriptions of the positions and how their duties will be covered if the positions are abolished.

PS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS: Approve the reductions of the ECC, Recruiting, and Training positions as recommended by the Executive. (3-0)

Place \$134,000 on the Reconciliation List to restore the Master Firefighter day position at Burtonsville. (3-0) The Executive intended for volunteers to absorb the duties of this position. The Burtonsville Volunteer Fire Department initially thought that a career position that was previously unfilled would be eliminated. When they realized that an additional career position would be eliminated, they said that they could not cover the reduction. Comments from Burtonsville are attached on © 109-112. The Committee was concerned that eliminating the position would create a gap in daytime service.

Issue #14: Changes in civilian positions

The table on © ⁸~~58~~ shows the net changes in civilian positions in MCFRS. Total civilian positions are recommended for a net increase of 19 positions, from 112 in FY09 to 131 in FY10. The net increase is associated with new initiatives including civilianization (10 in the ECC and 6 in Code Enforcement), implementation of the EMST fee (2), and implementation of ePCR (1).

To help offset the costs for the new initiatives, MCFRS is abolishing two civilian positions and lapsing another eight for a full year². Without the new civilian positions for the new initiatives, MCFRS civilian staffing would be reduced by 9%. Brief descriptions of the positions to be abolished or lapsed and the plans to cover their duties are on

© ~~39-41~~
5-7

Position	Division	\$	wy
Abolish			
OSC (FY08 RIP savings)	Community Risk Reduction	-125,080	-1
Gaithersburg OSC (FY09 svgs. pln.)	Volunteer Services	-89,580	-1
Lapse			
Sr. Planner	Community Risk Reduction	-75,530	-1
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OSC (FY09 svgs. pln.)	Volunteer Services	-71,658	-1
OSC Glen Echo (FY09 svgs. pln.)	Volunteer Services	-68,610	-1

² The Executive's budget includes several adjustments to the allocation of Public Service Intern positions which are technical in nature. They appear on the table on © 58, but they are not included in this discussion.

Council staff is concerned that these reductions in civilian positions will diminish MCFRS' ability to carry on day-to-day operations. While it may be possible for MCFRS to manage the workload for a year while positions are lapsed, Council staff does not believe that MCFRS can do without the lapsed positions for the long term.

Even for the short term, Council staff is concerned that MCFRS will address backlog or peak workload issues by detailing uniformed positions to administrative functions or assigning uniformed positions to those functions on overtime. MCFRS comments on the Administrative Specialist in Administrative Services and the Supply Technician II (© 40) indicate that some work for each position will be done by uniformed personnel on overtime.

Over the past few years, MCFRS has tried to reduce overtime and move away from detailing uniformed positions which must be backfilled on overtime. In their response to Questions 27 and 28 (© 48-49), MCFRS staff indicated that all previously detailed positions were returned to the field, and that except for a position detailed to the Apparatus Section, no other positions are expected to be detailed to non-field functions in FY10. Council staff hopes that as the FY10 workload unfolds, MCFRS does not change its position on this issue.

Council staff recommendation to the Committee: Although Council staff is reluctant to see so many civilian MCFRS positions abolished or lapsed, current fiscal constraints leave no choice but to approve the reductions as recommended by the Executive.

Council staff suggested that the Committee may want to request that the Fire Chief report at mid-year on the impacts of the abolished and lapsed civilian positions, and how the workload is being handled without them.

PS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Approve as recommended by the Executive. (3-0) Request that the Fire Chief report at mid-year as suggested by Council staff.

Issue #15: Uniformed and Civilian Positions in non-operations sections

For FY10, the Executive proposed a combination of uniformed and civilian positions for several non-operations sections of MCFRS. Council staff asked whether uniformed positions* could be abolished instead of, or in addition to the civilian positions that are already recommended for reduction; or, if the uniformed positions cannot be abolished, whether they could be replaced with civilian positions.

The affected sections, the recommended staffing, and the circle numbers with the MCFRS responses are listed in the table on the following page.

- Master Firefighter day position in Burtonsville

This position is staffed seven days a week 10 hours per day, 0700 to 1700. Currently, MCFRS staffs FS15 with six personnel 0700 to 1700 seven days a week and 5 personnel 1700 to 0700. To provide minimum staffing for all primary units at FS15 12 personnel are required. The reduction of this position will add one additional position to the LFRD requirement from the hours of 0700 to 1700.

- Lieutenant in Recruiting

The Recruiting Lieutenant assists the Recruiting Manager III and Recruiting Captain in implementing all aspects of the Recruiting Team's work plan. The Recruiting Lieutenant attends recruiting events and manages relationships with MCFRS applicants, reducing the need for overtime to manage these functions. The Lieutenant is also involved in volunteer recruitment activities.

- Firefighter III in the ECC

This was a technical adjustment for a position that was not needed and was not filled.

- Battalion Chief in Training

This was a term position (for NIMS training) that had reached the end of its term. Going forward, there is some grant funding available to continue training on overtime to the extent that additional training is needed.

9. On the non-uniformed side, two positions are recommended for abolishment, and nine are recommended to be lapsed. Please provide brief (no more than four lines) descriptions of these positions' duties and how they will be covered after the positions are abolished or lapsed.

- Abolish one Office Services Coordinator (CRRS - FY08 Retirement Incentive Plan)

Duties from administrative support to populating of data bases will need to be picked up by the individual managers or send to another facility for other OSCs to manage. Currently functions of logistics and financial management have been diverted to the Division level OSC. The Division level OSC is also covering some financial duties of a financial analyst position in Admin Services that is lapsed.

- Abolish Gaithersburg Office Services Coordinator (Volunteer Services - FY09 Savings Plan)

The Fire Chief is working to provide support for this position through various options. These include assignment of work from other LFRD administrative personnel as well as the Fire Chief's staff.

- Lapse Sr. Planner (CRRS)

Workload demand in organizational planning exceeds current staff capacity. Therefore it is intended to keep this position and eventually fill it when the funding is available. Currently the critical workload will be assigned to other managers such as the Division Chief and an M3 in addition to their duties because the tasks involved are mandatory requirements. Other work by the senior planner will be deferred until staff is available.

- Lapse Administrative Specialist (Administrative Services)

This position is part of the Employee Services Section and works directly on Labor issues, including preparation of documents for discipline, coordinating outside requests for promotional examinations, coordinating in county promotional examination processes and document control. The work this position does been divided between existing already over taxed staff and some is being done by a Battalion Chief on overtime.

- Lapse Supply Technician II (Administrative Services)

This position is assigned to our Logistics Section with specific duties in our storeroom and warehouse. The lack of this position has caused a reduction in hours the storeroom is open, and is being filled for specific circumstances (Annual Leave, Large incoming orders, etc) by uniformed firefighters on overtime.

- Lapse Administrative Specialist III (Administrative Services)

This position is part of our Budget Section with primary responsibility for grant management. We currently have a fiscal assistant temporarily promoted to try and manage the workload of 20-25 Federal, State and UASI grants worth millions of dollars. After the term of the temporary promotion expires we will have the fiscal assistant continue to manage this program working out of class. This continues to have our Budget Section working down one person.

- Lapse Program Manager I (Administrative Services)

This position is assigned to our Facilities/CIP Management Section. This person was the day to day contact for all facility related issues. Without this person it

requires the Manager to handle all issues from current facilities to the building new stations as well as development of PORs and management of the CIP program. With an aging infrastructure the workload continues to increase and is being prioritized to ensure the safety of personnel.

- Lapse Manager III (Volunteer Services – FY09 Savings Plan)

The Fire Chief is working to provide support for this position through various options. These include assignment of work from the Fire Chief's staff.

- Lapse OSC (Volunteer Services – FY09 Savings Plan)

The Fire Chief is working to provide support for this position through various options. These include assignment of work from the Fire Chief's staff.

- Lapse OSC at Glen Echo (Volunteer Services – FY09 Savings Plan)

The Fire Chief is working to provide support for this position through various options. These include assignment of work from other LFRD administrative personnel as well as the Fire Chief's staff.

10. For FY10, the following Sections are proposed to have uniformed staff as well as civilian staff. Could the uniformed positions* be abolished instead of, or in addition to the civilian positions that are already recommended for reduction? If the uniformed positions cannot be abolished, could they be replaced with civilian positions?

- Fire Chief's Office, Investigative Programs

1 Manager III
1 Battalion Chief*

The office of Investigative Programs was created in 1998 through Section 21 of the County Code, which also reorganized the Fire and Rescue Service. The purpose of the Office of Investigative Programs, as outlined in Section 21, is, "monitoring compliance with law and County and Commission policies, regulations and procedures and investigating matters assigned by the Administrator or the Commission." The Office is a direct report to the Fire Chief. The Battalion Chief reports to the civilian MIII. The uniformed position is a non-bargaining unit rank and serves as the fire service subject matter expert. The rank of Battalion chief allows the flexibility to interview most personnel within MCFRS during investigative matters. The 2 personnel assigned to Investigative Programs have four main areas of responsibility. These are:

- Internal Affairs Investigations

FY10 CE Recommended MCFRS Position Changes				
Position	Division	\$	# positions	wy
Uniformed positions				
Add 13 positions to open Milestone Stn. 34 (5 additional SAFER positions will staff this Station)	Operations	414,330	13	4.3
Add 12 positions - 2009 SAFER Grant*	Operations	934,243	12	3.1
Abolish MFF day position at Burtonsville	Operations	-134,000	-1	-1
Abolish FFIII in ECC	Operations		-1	-1
Abolish Lt. in Recruiting	Community Risk Reduction	-146,300	-1	-1
Abolish Battalion Chief in Training	Wellness, Safety, Training	-195,875	-1	-1
Net change uniformed positions		872,398	21	3.4
Civilianization - Abolish 10 positions in ECC	Operations	-314,000	0	-2.5
Civilianization - Abolish 5 FF positions in FCE	Community Risk Reduction	-204,000	0	-1.25
Civilianization - Abolish 1 MFF position in FCE	Community Risk Reduction	-139,000	-1	-0.25
Total reduction after civilianization		-657,000	-1	-4
Non-Uniformed positions				
Civilianization - Add 10 call-taker positions	Operations	578,150	10	8
Civilianization - Add 5 Inspectors	Community Risk Reduction	401,846	5	4
Civilianization - Add 1 Engineer	Community Risk Reduction	99,000	1	1
Add one Public Services Intern position	Community Risk Reduction		1	0.3
Add Manager III position - EMS billing	Administrative Services	105,500	1	1
Add Information Technology Specialist II (ePCR)	Administrative Services	90,000	1	1
Add OSC position - EMS billing	Administrative Services	70,000	1	1
Add one Public Services Intern position	Administrative Services		1	-0.7
Abolish one OSC - FY08 RIP program savings	Community Risk Reduction	-125,080	-1	-1
Abolish Gaithersburg OSC position (FY09 savings pln.)	Volunteer Services	-89,580	-1	-1
Lapse Sr. Planner Position	Community Risk Reduction	-75,530	0	-1
Lapse Administrative Specialist	Administrative Services	-87,980	0	-1
Lapse Program Manager 1	Administrative Services	-84,283	0	-1
Lapse Administrative Specialist III	Administrative Services	-68,979	0	-1
Lapse Supply Technician II	Administrative Services	-55,300	0	-1
Lapse Manager III (FY09 savings pln.)	Volunteer Services	-123,495	0	-1
Lapse OSC position (FY09 savings pln.)	Volunteer Services	-71,658	0	-1
Lapse OSC position - Glen Echo (FY09 savings pln.)	Volunteer Services	-68,610	0	-1
Lapse one Public Services Intern position	Wellness Safety, Training			-1
Net change non-uniformed positions		494,001	19	4.6
Uniformed positions - net change by rank				
MFF		6		
FFIII		6		
Battalion Chief		-1		
Captain		11		
Lieutenant		-2		
		20		

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Ref No.	Title	\$	Revenue
		General Fund Total:	-17,042,560
			61,270
<u>Fire</u>			
Fire and Rescue Service			
→ S1	DECREASE COST: LAPSE SENIOR CITIZEN FIRE SAFETY TASK FORCE POSITION This is a new position that has not been filled, so lapsing it should have no impact. MCFRS had intended to use this position to launch a senior citizen fire safety program and implement recommendations of the senior citizen fire safety task force. Recent fire fatality figures for the county show that seniors are at greater risk than other age groups.	-69,460	0
→ S2	DECREASE COST: LAPSE FIVE NON-UNIFORM FIRE CODE INSPECTOR POSITIONS Lapsing these positions will slow the department's efforts in fire safety inspection. MCFRS does not anticipate a dropoff in revenue because of a substantial increase in the number of permits being renewed. Renewal of these permits is an administrative function that doesn't involve the fire code inspectors.	-293,490	0
S3	DECREASE COST: OPEN STATION 34 ON JUNE 1, 2010 This should not have an impact as it appears that the station may not be ready to be staffed prior to June 1st.	-404,500	0
S4	REDUCE: LAPSE FIVE UNIFORM POSITIONS IN FIRE CODE ENFORCEMENT Lapsing these positions will slow the department's efforts in fire safety inspection. MCFRS does not anticipate a dropoff in revenue because of a substantial increase in the number of permits being renewed. Renewal of these permits is an administrative function that doesn't involve the fire code inspectors.	-102,000	0
S5	DECREASE COST: DELAY SPRING RECRUIT CLASS This reduction will not impact service in FY10.	-1,370,000	0
S6	REDUCE: ABOLISH LIEUTENANT POSITION IN FIRE CODE ENFORCEMENT Duties will be absorbed by existing staff.	-60,830	0
		Fire Total:	-2,300,280

Mass Transit

DOT-Transit Services

S1	DECREASE COST: GET IN OPERATING COSTS The current participation rate is 89 county employees (as of January 2010) each employee receives \$35.00 a month to use transit as a commuting alternative. This reduction is for the fare expense not needed for the current level of participation. Participation has been stable during the past few years. Transit does not anticipate any additional transit applicants this year.	-68,000	0
S2	REDUCE: REDUCTIONS TO PARK AND RIDE LOT CLEANING Reduce \$10,590 - Reduction of mulching and weeding of flower beds. Reduction of tree pruning, delay crack/seal of lots at park and ride lots. \$10,000 from MES contract - reduction of trash collection at bus stops, from 3 times every two weeks to 2 times to every two weeks.	-20,590	0
S3	ELIMINATE: SUSPEND FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS SUPER FARE SHARE Suspend all expenditures in the Friendship Heights Super Fare Share program. The county will not subsidize employers that provide a subsidy to employees using transit to get to and from work. Currently 42 employers with about 2,600 employees are enrolled, and over 500 employees receive transit benefits under this program. Unless these employers increase their financial commitment, suspension of the program will result in a reduction in the transit benefits provided to employees, and a potential increase in the number of employees driving to work vs. using transit. Suspension of this program also will impact the TMD's ability to persuade additional Friendship Heights employers to provide transit benefits or to participate in other alternative mode programs with the County.	-36,000	0
S4	ELIMINATE: SUSPEND NORTH BETHESDA SUPER FARE SHARE Currently 39 employers with over 7,000 employees are enrolled, and over 900 employees receive transit benefits under this program. Unless these employers increase their financial commitment, suspension of the program will result in a reduction in the transit benefits provided to employees, and a potential increase in the number of employees driving to work vs. using transit. Suspension of this program also will impact the TMD's ability to persuade other employers to provide transit benefits or to participate in other alternative mode programs with the County. Parking revenues in North Bethesda fund the Super	-80,000	0