

PS COMMITTEE #5
April 17, 2015

Worksession

MEMORANDUM

April 15, 2015

TO: Public Safety Committee

FROM:  Keith Levchenko, Senior Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: **FY16 Operating Budget: Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS)**

Those expected to attend this worksession include:

- Chris Voss, Director, OEMHS
- Michael Goldfarb, Administration and Finance Manager, OEMHS
- Chuck Crisostomo, Operations Manager, OEMHS
- Elyse Greenwald, Management and Budget Specialist, Office of Management and Budget

Attachments to this memorandum include:

FY16 Recommended Operating Budget (©1-5)

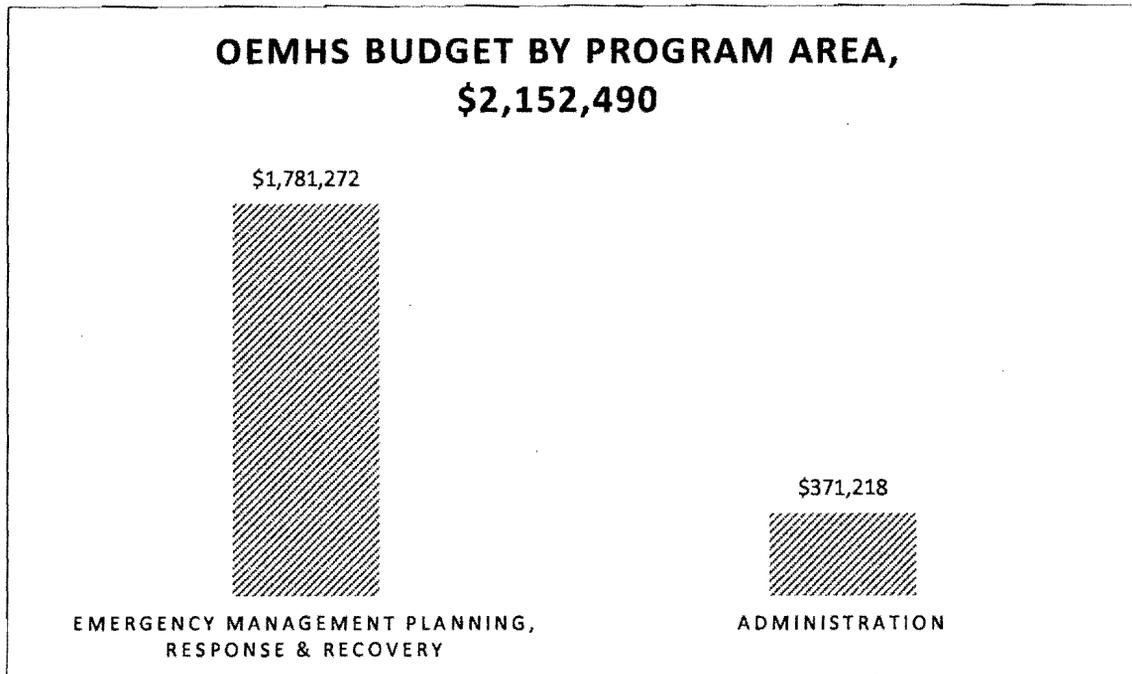
OEMHS Update on the new Alert Montgomery System (©6)

Budget Summary:

- **No major organizational or service changes recommended**
- **The total budget is rising 7.5 percent, due entirely to changes in the Grant Fund**
- **General Fund expenditures are decreasing 1.0 percent**
 - **1.8 percent increase in personnel costs (mostly because of FY16 compensation adjustments)**
 - **12.9 percent decrease in operating expenses (mostly from equipment repair and supplies/equipment not needed in FY16)**

Council Staff Recommendation: Approve the OEMHS General Fund and Grant Fund budgets as recommended by the County Executive.

Overview



The Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS) is responsible for coordinating the County’s planning, preparation, and response to County emergencies. OEMHS manages the County’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and coordinates the activities of the Emergency Management Group (EMG).

The Executive’s FY16 Recommended Budget write-up for the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS) is attached on ©1-5.

As shown in Table #1 below (which includes both the General Fund and Grant Fund), for FY16, the Executive recommends total expenditures of \$2,152,490 for OEMHS, an increase of \$150,941 (or 7.5 percent) from the FY15 Approved Budget (primarily as a result of grant-related changes discussed later). An increase in a full-time position (grant-funded) is also assumed.

**Table #1
OEMHS Total Expenditures and Positions/Workyears (General Fund and Grant Fund)**

	Actual	Approved	Estimated	CE Rec	Change: Rec to Approved	
	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY16	\$\$\$	%
Personnel Costs	1,435,490	1,741,749	1,612,487	1,926,126	184,377	10.6%
Operating Expenses	4,444,927	259,800	250,404	226,364	(33,436)	-12.9%
Total	5,880,417	2,001,549	1,862,891	2,152,490	150,941	7.5%
Full-Time Positions	11	12	12	13	1	8.3%
Part-Time Positions	1	1	1	1	-	0.0%
Workyears/FTEs	12.48	14.30	14.30	15.30	1.00	7.0%

The bulk of the budgetary change (both dollars and FTEs) has to do with Federal grant dollars assumed in FY16. The General Fund and Grant Fund trends (broken out separately in Table #2, below) highlight this point:

**Table #2
OEMHS Total Expenditures and Positions/Workyears (By Fund)**

General Fund	Actual	Approved	Estimated	CE Rec	Change: Rec to Approved	
	FY14	FY15	FY15	FY15	\$\$\$	%
Personnel Costs	814,229	1,108,418	979,156	1,127,936	19,518	1.8%
Operating Expenses	249,518	259,800	250,404	226,364	(33,436)	-12.9%
Total	1,063,747	1,368,218	1,229,560	1,354,300	(13,918)	-1.0%
Full-Time Positions	8	8	8	8	-	0.0%
Part-Time Positions	1	1	1	1	-	0.0%
Workyears/FTEs	7.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	0.00	0.0%
Grant Fund						
Personnel Costs	621,261	633,331	633,331	798,190	164,859	26.0%
Operating Expenses	4,195,409	-	-	-	-	n/a
Total	4,816,670	633,331	633,331	798,190	164,859	26.0%
Full-Time Positions	3	4	4	5	1	25.0%
Part-Time Positions	-	-	-	-	-	n/a
Workyears/FTEs	4.88	5.70	5.70	6.70	1.00	17.5%

The General Fund is actually decreasing in FY16 by 1.0 percent, as a result of reductions in operating expenses. Personnel costs are increasing due to the FY16 compensation adjustment.

Without the FY16 compensation adjustment, personnel costs in the OEMHS General Fund budget would be down 1.5 percent and the overall General Fund budget would be down 3.5 percent.

The Grant Fund includes \$798,190, all related to existing grants.¹ However, OEMHS is managing approximately \$4.9 million in grants spread across multiple public safety departments and municipalities. No new grants are assumed in FY16. Five term positions are assumed for FY16 (one more than shown for FY15, but this is a correction to the complement rather than an actual increase in staffing).

¹ OEMHS staff provided the following information regarding its current grants:

- Emergency Management Program Grant – This state grant has not been awarded yet, but we anticipate approximately the same amount as the current grant (\$333,770). This grant funds OEMHS training and planning staff.
- UASI Regional Planning (\$330,134) – This NCR grant funds a staff member to work on both local and regional planning projects and supports other planning efforts.
- UASI Volunteer and Citizen Corps (\$286,200) – This NCR grant supports preparedness outreach as well as volunteer programs (Community Emergency Response Team, County Animal Response Team).
- UASI Planning, Training, and Exercises (\$183,000) – This NCR grant funds health planning coordination and exercise support.
- UASI National Incident Management System (\$135,000) – This NCR grant funds a contractor to serve as the National Incident Management System (NIMS) officer for Montgomery County.

FY16 2nd Quarterly Analysis

The OEMHS General Fund Second Quarterly Analysis as reflected in the FY16 Recommended Budget shows a significant General Fund surplus in personnel costs and a smaller General Fund surplus in operating expenses (see Table #3, below).

Table #3
2nd Quarterly Analysis Savings Comparison

	FY15	FY15	Change	
	General Fund Budget	2nd QA	\$\$	%
Personnel Costs	1,108,418	979,156	(129,262)	-11.7%
Operating Expenses	259,800	250,404	(9,396)	-3.6%
Total	1,368,218	1,229,560	(138,658)	-10.1%

Personnel costs are down as a result of lapse savings from vacant positions. Operating expenses are also down slightly.

Organizational Structure and Staffing Levels

No major changes in organizational structure or staffing levels are assumed for FY16 or occurred during FY15. The grant fund shows an increase of 1 position and FTE. However, as noted earlier, this is a correction to OEMHS' personnel complement and does not reflect a new position.

OEMHS Director Chris Voss has announced that he is leaving the County. The process to hire his replacement is underway and his position is expected to be filled during the first quarter of FY16.

FY16 Expenditure Issues

There are no major expenditure issues noted in the FY16 Recommended Budget for OEMHS. The General Fund and Grant crosswalk tables are on ©4-5, both of which include adjustments that do not involve any service impacts.

The General Fund crosswalk table shows:

- Compensation (\$35,675), benefit adjustments (\$9,902+\$2,619), and annualizations of FY15 personnel costs (-\$18,678) result in a net increase of \$29,518.
- A reduction in overtime of \$10,000 (from \$15,101 to \$5,101). With the Alert Montgomery transition complete and with the expected filling of a vacant M3 position, the office expects to see a substantial reduction in overtime.
- Changes in internal service costs in motor pool (-\$1,192) and printing and mail (-\$794) totaling (-\$1,986).
- Reductions in miscellaneous operating expenses of \$33,436. The biggest reductions are in:
 - Equipment repair (from \$48,300 to \$28,300 or -\$20,000). Much of the FY15 total was needed for Hazmat Permitting system upgrades. This upgrade will be complete in FY15.
 - Other public safety supplies/equipment (from \$15,000 to \$5,000 or -\$10,000). OEMHS reviewed its current stock of supplies and determined that a two-thirds reduction in costs is possible in FY16.
 - Computer training (from \$4,000 to \$2,550 or -\$1,450). This change is based on anticipated needs in FY16.

Council Staff is supportive of the changes noted above. However, equipment repair and supplies may need to be considered for increases in future years.

The grant fund includes an annualization increase (\$164,859 and 1 FTE) which is actually a correction to reflect the actual personnel complement based on existing grants.

FY16 General Fund Revenues

Revenues associated with the hazardous materials permit fee remain unchanged for FY16 at \$800,000 per year. Over 3,000 entities are responsible for reporting information and paying the associated fee. These fees apply to all industrial, commercial, educational, recreational, agricultural, research, or institutional occupancy which uses, processes, stores, transfers, or manufactures hazardous substances in quantities that pose a risk to first responders or the surrounding community.

Major Initiatives

One major initiative that occurred during FY15 is the County's migration to a new Alert Montgomery system (as part of a regional effort to upgrade to a new alert system platform). OEMHS reports that the new system currently has 250,608 registrants, compared to 216,084 when the old system was decommissioned in October 2014. The new system provides a number of performance upgrades and capabilities not available in the old system. More detail regarding the new system is attached on ©6.

Council Staff asked OEMHS for an update on major initiatives in FY16. Below is information provided by OEMHS staff:

“The County’s Emergency Operations Plan will begin its update in FY 2016. OEMHS continues to work with Departments to update and improve the Department’s 102 Continuity of Operations Plans. Another plan with a major re-write planned for next year includes the County Shelter Plan and our Family Re-unification / Family Assistance Center Plan.

“Family Re-unification / Family Assistance Center program— recent After Action reports nationally have identified specific shortfalls, including integration with law enforcement for debriefing and information collection purposes. In addition to the Plan mentioned above, we anticipate both training and an exercise to occur on this topic in the next year.

“Critical facility evacuation planning and coordination will see several additions to the program (Nursing Home and Large Assisted Living Facility). OEMHS works closely with the Health Department and brings in managers and operators of critical facilities to improve transparency and educate organizations on emergency management planning and Montgomery County considerations. This year’s program includes exercises with critical facility owners.”

Another item of ongoing interest to the Council has been emergency coordination with the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). OEMHS reports improvement in this area as noted below:

“WSSC experienced both a large diameter pipe and a valve failure earlier this year. During this time, OEMHS experienced a much more transparent and collaborative working relationship with WSSC. OEMHS appreciated WSSC bringing the county in early and providing regular briefs on the emergency repairs.”

Council Staff also asked OEMHS how its emergency management relationship with Pepco may be affected by the proposed Exelon/Pepco merger. OEMHS staff provided the following information:

“The Maryland PSC has not issued an opinion on whether to approve as of April 9th. If they do, Exelon has indicated the following: Pepco and BGE Cooperation with the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (“OEMHS”).

“Exelon and Pepco commit that Pepco will continue Pepco’s strong working relationship, coordination and communication with OEMHS and Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties during storm-restoration events, including with respect to identification of priority facilities to be restored. Exelon commits that the relationship will be expanded to include BGE.

“System Hardening to Support Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (“WSSC”) Potomac Water Treatment Plant.

“Within six months after the Merger closing, Pepco will provide to Montgomery County and to Prince George’s County an analysis of transmission- or distribution-system options, and associated costs, to enhance the reliability and resiliency of electric service to the WSSC Potomac Water Treatment Plant, which serves both Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties.”

Council Staff Recommendation

Council Staff recommends approval of the OEMHS General Fund and Grant Fund budgets (revenues and expenditures) as recommended by the County Executive.

Attachment

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Emergency Management and Homeland Security

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS) to plan, coordinate, prevent, prepare, and protect against major threats that may harm, disrupt, or destroy our communities, commerce, and institutions and to effectively manage and coordinate the County's unified response, mitigation, and recovery from the consequences of such disasters or events should they occur. Key objectives are to:

- Coordinate County plans and actions to minimize harm to residents, employees, and visitors in Montgomery County before, during, and after emergencies.
- Coordinate the services, protection, and contingency plans for sustained operations of County facilities.
- Coordinate and provide public education to ensure the resilience of our communities during disasters.
- Coordinate homeland security policies and priorities, including grant seeking, management, and reporting.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

The total recommended FY16 Operating Budget for the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security is \$2,152,490, an increase of \$150,941 or 7.5 percent from the FY15 Approved Budget of \$2,001,549. Personnel Costs comprise 89.5 percent of the budget for 13 full-time positions and one part-time position, and a total of 15.30 FTEs. Total FTEs may include seasonal or temporary positions and may also reflect workforce charged to or from other departments or funds. Operating Expenses account for the remaining 10.5 percent of the FY16 budget.

LINKAGE TO COUNTY RESULT AREAS

While this program area supports all eight of the County Result Areas, the following are emphasized:

- ❖ *A Responsive, Accountable County Government*
- ❖ *Safe Streets and Secure Neighborhoods*

DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures for this department are included below, with multi-program measures displayed at the front of this section and program-specific measures shown with the relevant program. The FY15 estimates reflect funding based on the FY15 approved budget. The FY16 and FY17 figures are performance targets based on the FY16 recommended budget and funding for comparable service levels in FY17.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INITIATIVES

- ❖ *Conducted monthly department Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) drills with 67 percent of department representatives participating in 2014.*
- ❖ *Provided employee emergency preparedness training through four County-wide workshops and an individual department trainings.*
- ❖ *Conducted two Emergency Operations Center functional exercises, a school preparedness workshop, and a COOP tabletop exercise.*
- ❖ *Transitioned Alert Montgomery to an upgraded system. Montgomery County has the highest amount of users in the National Capital Region.*
- ❖ *Conducting ongoing testing of County Facility Emergency Action Plans / Evacuation Plans including coordinating five evacuation drills. OEMHS also tracked all County building evacuation drills.*

- ❖ **Provided continued management of Homeland Security grant funds in excess of \$5 million per year.**
- ❖ **Provided continued management of the Hazmat Permitting Program including issuing 2,460 permits.**
- ❖ **In FY16, will coordinate a review and update of mass care plans.**
- ❖ **In FY16, will coordinate and plan critical facility evacuation exercise.**

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Michael Goldfarb of the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security at 240.777.2333 or Elyse Greenwald of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2768 for more information regarding this department's operating budget.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Emergency Management Planning, Response & Recovery

This program includes the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security and provides plans for consequence management, mitigation, and response to natural and man-made disasters, including terrorist events that may involve chemical, biological, radiological/nuclear, or explosive/incendiary devices. Activities involve compliance with Federal and State requirements for emergency management planning and operations; consequence management; logistics support, administration, and finance coordination; liaison with Federal, State, regional, and local agencies; sheltering and relief support; coordination of regional policy-level decision making and public information dissemination; and public education. Regional coordination is provided through the emergency support functions of the regional, State, and Federal agencies as outlined in the Regional and National Response Framework. The Emergency Management Group (EMG) is supported by this program when it activates to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in response to emergencies.

Elements of this program include:

- Emergency Operation Plan updates, training, and implementation.
- Planning, coordination, and operation of information and communication systems in the EOC to support the EMG in consequence management, resource allocation, logistics and mutual aid support, and decision making.
- Establishment and maintenance of an asset management inventory of available resources that can be used to support an EMG response and recovery operation, including resources from private and non-profit organizations.
- Public health coordination of hospitals for disaster and terrorist event response.
- Coordination for public health planning for large-scale mass population medical dispensing, and strategies for isolation and quarantine for management of disease outbreaks, if required.
- Coordination of Fire, Police, Public Health Services, Transportation, and other appropriate County departments and agencies regarding incident command systems and training/certification on the use and application of the National Incident Management System.
- Coordination and management of volunteers and communications organizations that can support disaster response – the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service, Civil Air Patrol.
- Support and management for the Local Emergency Planning Council regarding “community right to know” requirements and providing advice and recommendations to the County Executive and County Council regarding the storage of certain hazardous materials in the County.
- Management of the County’s Hazardous Permitting Program, in conjunction with Federal law, regarding the licensing and permitting of facilities and the handling and storage of certain regulated hazardous materials.
- Coordination of multi-discipline exercises with the County and regional partners.
- Maintenance of the EOC and the information and situation awareness systems therein.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY13	Actual FY14	Estimated FY15	Target FY16	Target FY17
Available capacity for overnight shelter	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
Percent of County residents subscribed to Alert Montgomery (by device) based on 2012 U.S. Census population of 1,004,709	31.3%	39.4%	35.0%	35.0%	35.0%
Percent of Emergency Alerts sent within 20 minutes of information received by the OEMHS between 9-5 M-F	100%	100%	95%	95%	95%
Percent of Emergency Management Accreditation standards met by the County	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Percent of Emergency Management Operations Center systems tested for reliability within required time frame	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percent of National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) requirements met by the County	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percent of Principal County Departments and Offices with a COOP plan score of 2.5 or higher ¹	55%	83%	75%	80%	85%

	Actual FY13	Actual FY14	Estimated FY15	Target FY16	Target FY17
Percentage of County Facility Plans reviewed within 90 days of submission/contract	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
Percentage of required exercises and drills completed	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of the County's 19 municipalities participating in Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

¹*COOP plan score is the average of scores received for each of seven key plan components (Orders of Succession/Delegation of Authority; Mission Essential Functions; Alternate Facilities; Program Manager; Human Capital Management; Vital Records; and Vital Equipment).

<i>FY16 Recommended Changes</i>	Expenditures	FTEs
FY15 Approved	1,466,645	12.30
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY15 Personnel Costs	164,859	1.00
Decrease Cost: Computer Training	-1,450	0.00
Decrease Cost: Public Safety Supplies at Emergency Operations Center	-10,000	0.00
Decrease Cost: Equipment Repair/Maintenance	-20,000	0.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	181,218	0.00
FY16 CE Recommended	1,781,272	13.30

Notes: Increase partially from \$119,113 from grant previously assigned to Administration Program.

Administration

This program includes planning, directing, managing, and operating the OEMHS as well as other administrative duties, including centralized application for and management of homeland security and related grants. Development of homeland security policies, protocol, and priorities is managed through the Homeland Security Directorate, chaired by the Manager of OEMHS.

<i>FY16 Recommended Changes</i>	Expenditures	FTEs
FY15 Approved	534,904	2.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	-163,686	0.00
FY16 CE Recommended	371,218	2.00

Notes: Decrease partially from \$119,113 from grant now assigned to Emergency Management Planning, Response and Recovery Program.

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY14	Budget FY15	Estimated FY15	Recommended FY16	% Chg Bud/Rec
COUNTY GENERAL FUND					
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Wages	612,229	844,983	745,808	846,849	0.2%
Employee Benefits	202,000	263,435	233,348	281,087	6.7%
County General Fund Personnel Costs	814,229	1,108,418	979,156	1,127,936	1.8%
Operating Expenses	249,518	259,800	250,404	226,364	-12.9%
Capital Outlay	0	0	0	0	—
County General Fund Expenditures	1,063,747	1,368,218	1,229,560	1,354,300	-1.0%
PERSONNEL					
Full-Time	8	8	8	8	—
Part-Time	1	1	1	1	—
FTEs	7.60	8.60	8.60	8.60	—
REVENUES					
Hazardous Materials Permits	825,762	800,000	800,000	800,000	—
Miscellaneous Revenues	750	0	0	0	—
Other Charges/Fees	5,447	0	0	0	—
Other Intergovernmental	2,248,042	0	0	0	—
County General Fund Revenues	3,080,001	800,000	800,000	800,000	—
GRANT FUND MCG					
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Wages	462,196	467,120	467,120	593,499	27.1%
Employee Benefits	159,065	166,211	166,211	204,691	23.2%
Grant Fund MCG Personnel Costs	621,261	633,331	633,331	798,190	26.0%
Operating Expenses	4,195,409	0	0	0	—
Capital Outlay	0	0	0	0	—
Grant Fund MCG Expenditures	4,816,670	633,331	633,331	798,190	26.0%
PERSONNEL					
Full-Time	3	4	4	5	25.0%
Part-Time	0	0	0	0	—
FTEs	4.88	5.70	5.70	6.70	17.5%
REVENUES					
Federal Grants	4,344,474	349,912	349,912	250,000	-28.6%
State Grants	401,604	283,419	283,419	548,190	93.4%
Grant Fund MCG Revenues	4,746,078	633,331	633,331	798,190	26.0%
DEPARTMENT TOTALS					
Total Expenditures	5,880,417	2,001,549	1,862,891	2,152,490	7.5%
Total Full-Time Positions	11	12	12	13	8.3%
Total Part-Time Positions	1	1	1	1	—
Total FTEs	12.48	14.30	14.30	15.30	7.0%
Total Revenues	7,826,079	1,433,331	1,433,331	1,598,190	11.5%

FY16 RECOMMENDED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
COUNTY GENERAL FUND		
FY15 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION	1,368,218	8.60
Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)		
Increase Cost: FY16 Compensation Adjustment	35,675	0.00
Increase Cost: Retirement Adjustment	9,902	0.00
Increase Cost: Group Insurance Adjustment	2,619	0.00
Decrease Cost: Printing and Mail	-794	0.00
Decrease Cost: Motor Pool Rate Adjustment	-1,192	0.00
Decrease Cost: Computer Training [Emergency Management Planning, Response & Recovery]	-1,450	0.00
Decrease Cost: Overtime	-10,000	0.00
Decrease Cost: Public Safety Supplies at Emergency Operations Center [Emergency Management Planning, Response & Recovery]	-10,000	0.00
Decrease Cost: Annualization of FY15 Personnel Costs	-18,678	0.00
Decrease Cost: Equipment Repair/Maintenance [Emergency Management Planning, Response & Recovery]	-20,000	0.00
FY16 RECOMMENDED:	1,354,300	8.60

	Expenditures	FTEs
GRANT FUND MCG		
FY15 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION	633,331	5.70
Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)		
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY15 Personnel Costs [Emergency Management Planning, Response & Recovery]	164,859	1.00
FY16 RECOMMENDED:	798,190	6.70

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Program Name	FY15 Approved		FY16 Recommended	
	Expenditures	FTEs	Expenditures	FTEs
Emergency Management Planning, Response & Recovery Administration	1,466,645	12.30	1,781,272	13.30
	534,904	2.00	371,218	2.00
Total	2,001,549	14.30	2,152,490	15.30

FUTURE FISCAL IMPACTS

Title	CE REC.	(5000's)				
	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21
This table is intended to present significant future fiscal impacts of the department's programs.						
COUNTY GENERAL FUND						
Expenditures						
FY16 Recommended	1,354	1,354	1,354	1,354	1,354	1,354
No inflation or compensation change is included in outyear projections.						
Labor Contracts	0	2	2	2	2	2
These figures represent the estimated annualized cost of general wage adjustments, service increments, and associated benefits.						
Subtotal Expenditures	1,354	1,356	1,356	1,356	1,356	1,356

OEMHS

Alert Montgomery Update

We continue to see excellent growth with Alert Montgomery. As of April 2nd, there were a total of 250,608 registrants in the entire system. The old system decommissioned in October 2014 with 216,084 registrants.

The performance has been excellent with the new system. A difference in the performance between the two systems has been witnessed with how they send messages to users with multiple devices. The old system would send to all of a users' devices and then move on to the next user when sending messages. This system prioritizes a person's devices or allows the user to prioritize their devices. The new system sends to everyone's top priority first, then everyone's second priority and so on.

The system also has a significant number of new options:

Mobile Member app: this is a free app that users can download to receive alert notifications. It is particularly good for mobile devices as there are no character limits as in text messages, attachments can be accessed and a distinctive M icon is displayed on smart phones when alerts are received via this path. This is also the fastest transmission mode for alert messages.

Polling – this feature gives the County the ability to solicit a response to questions it may ask in a Notification alert message. This is likely more useful when sending to smaller groups such as our internal Emergency Management group, but has the potential for large scale applications in the case of a regional emergency.

Automated weather: this feature allows for the system to automatically send weather alerts to subscribers for various severe weather conditions such as Tornados, and severe thunderstorms. This is a significant improvement over our Old system, where staff would have to first receive an alert from the National Weather Service then re-transmit this via Alert Montgomery. In the case of an approaching tornado, the minutes lost in re-transmission are very significant. The Old system would also freeze up when attempting to large ALL User alert messages, preventing follow up alert messaging to other users.

Reporting features: are much more precise in the new system. For each alert notification we can now pull up not only the total number of accounts we sent the alert to, but also the numbers for emails, text messages and the new Mobile Member app. The reports can be produced in the form of a line graph or pie chart.

Geographic area alerts: One major component of the new alert system is the ability to deliver more targeted alerts during "location-specific" emergencies such as gas leaks, hazardous materials events and flash floods. This feature also allows for the system to alert all subscribers located at a specific address.

Everbridge University: a dedicated training site where alert notification "senders" can take a series of courses designed to train them on various aspects of the system. While dispatchers go thru minimal training, the organization administrators must pass an 8 hour training session with a final exam. Nothing at all was available in the Old system for training senders.