



MID-COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Ana L. van Balen
Director

June 20, 2012

The Honorable Roger Berliner
Montgomery County Council President
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Berliner:

I am writing on behalf of the Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board (MCCAB) to express the MCCAB's concern with Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service (MCFRS) staffing reductions at three MCFRS stations which frequently respond to emergency calls within the Mid-County area. A similar letter is also being sent to the County Executive.

The County Executive's (CE's) Recommended FY13 Operating Budget proposed a decrease in expenditures of \$200,000 under the category of "Daywork Overtime at Rescue 1 (Bethesda-Chevy Chase), Rescue 2 (Wheaton) and Station 5 (Kensington)". The MCCAB recommended that the County Council restore this reduction in Daywork Overtime to avoid immediate service cuts and preserve current staffing at these stations. Unfortunately the CE's proposed reduction was approved by the County Council as part of its FY13 Operating Budget.

According to information provided to the MCCAB by the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad, as a result of this reduction beginning in July of 2012, MCFRS will not be able to staff one medic unit and a rescue squad at Wheaton Rescue 2, one ambulance and an engine company at Kensington Station 5, and one medic unit at Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue 1 between the hours of 6am-7am and 5pm-6pm. In 2011 all of these units frequently responded to emergency calls in the Mid-County Region. For example, the Wheaton Rescue 2 units responded to approximately 358 calls in 2011 between the hours of 6am-7am and 5pm-6pm.

The inability of these MCFRS units to respond to emergency calls beginning in July of 2012 raises serious public safety concerns for the Mid-County Region. Consequently the MCCAB recommends the County Council take immediate action to restore the reduction in Daywork Overtime and avoid the immediate service cuts which will take effect in July.

In the long-term the CE should develop a long-term approach to reduce overtime spending at these stations, such as renegotiating the MCFRS labor agreement to redefine day work as a 12 hour shift rather than a 10 hour shift.

Sincerely,

Gamunu Wijetunge, Chair

Mid-County Citizen's Advisory Board