

M E M O R A N D U M

March 3, 2009

TO: Public Safety Committee
FROM: Minna K. Davidson, Legislative Analyst
SUBJECT: Quarterly Update – MCFRS Reorganization

The Council enacted Bill 36-03, *Fire and Rescue Services - Amendments*, in May 2004, and the bill took effect on January 1, 2005. The bill restructured the County's fire and rescue system to clarify the command and control structure, streamline operations, and enhance volunteer recruitment and participation. It also established a uniformed County Fire Chief with the authority to administer, direct, and originate Fire and Rescue operations.

The County's first Fire Chief, Tom Carr, retired at the end of October, and the Executive appointed Richie Bowers to serve as Interim Fire Chief while a national search for a new Fire Chief is underway.

For the upcoming briefing, Chief Bowers will provide updates on the topics listed below, and will be available to respond to Committee questions.

- Policy development across MCFRS
- Recruitment and retention of career and volunteer personnel, including volunteer training issues
- Strategies to increase paramedic recruitment and retention
- Status of volunteer standby programs
- Status of the MCFRS master planning process
- Status of the search for the permanent Fire Chief

As has been the practice for previous quarterly updates, Marcine Goodloe, President, and Eric Bernard, Executive Director, Montgomery County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (MCVFRA), will also be present to discuss the Association's perspective on these issues.

The Montgomery County Council Public Safety Committee has requested an update about the current paramedic recruitment and retention process.

MCFRS has remodeled its ALS delivery over the past several years to incorporate the 1 and 1 model utilizing four person staffing. This has made the paramedic program more attractive to those who do not want to be assigned to a medic unit full time. This allows for a much more diverse rotation of assignments to maintain proficiency in all disciplines. Many more prospective candidates have expressed interest in the program due to this change. MCFRS also completed the region's first fire department based ALS Simulation Lab. This is a state of the art teaching lab that incorporates Human Patient Simulators. These lifelike mannequins are used to simulate and practice procedures and allowing students to experience real to life situations. This lab has made the learning environment for the paramedic student much more challenging.

Our current day class model produces about 15 paramedics for the MCFRS on a regular basis. The day class has proven impact by attracting personnel that stay with the MCFRS, a pass rate on the National Registry Paramedic test in excess of 95%, and a class completion rate of 99%.

I am available to discuss these results in person and present our strategy as you direct.

RC-33: 1-CRT'99 (repeat from RC31 & 32), 1-EMT-P

Current night class CRT'99 #9: 7-career, 6-MCVFRS, 1-US Park Police

Current Day CRT'99 Class #10: 10-career, 2-MCVFRS, 4-Frederick County

Last Day class CRT'99# 8: 5-career, 2-MCVFRS, 1 Frederic County
(although we do not expect 2 possible 3 career to complete due to numerous issues)

CRT'99 to EMT-P Class # 3 Bridge: 8-Career, 2-MCVFRS, 5-DCFD

Current Programs:

Baltimore County Fire Department, UMBC, Howard CC, Essex CC, Baltimore City CC, Anne Arundel Community College, Prince Georges Fire & EMS, Prince Georges CC, Washington County CC, not sure of Eastern Shore

Not doing classes any longer:

Frederick County Fire & Rescue, Baltimore City Fire Department, Howard County Fire & Rescue, perhaps others but I can't think of them.