



Report to CCVESA

April 1, 2024

Chief Michael W. Robinson, Director

I want to thank Mary Carole and Susan for their recent presentation on the CCVESA budget. It is now into the Fy 25 process, and we will see where things go. I thank all of the companies who recently invited to me to their banquets, and each provided some great insight into all of the work that each of you does for the safety and benefit of your communities. Congratulations to Gamber on their 60th Anniversary and to Sykesville who will celebrate their 90th this weekend. Also, thanks to the ACCVESA for the great meal/meeting at your recent gathering.

Personnel Changes: Assistant Chief Eric Zaney continues a lot of progress with EMS administration and operations, and he is focusing on getting everything to where it needs to be. Primary among that has been a reprogramming of our Knox narcotics security, NREMT recertification and establishing and fixing some administrative issues with MIEMSS. Today a general order #4-1-24 went out which takes Ketorolac (Toradol) out of the narc boxes and into the medical bags as it is not considered CDS. Acting Shift commanders (A) Max Nickey and (B) Russell Halterman are doing a great job and all four shifts are now consistent in practices and process.

Hiring Process: We are currently at 135 positions which includes eight civilian administrative positions. We hired 5 new FF/PMs who began on 1/4/23 and another 6 PMs or FF/PMs who began on Thursday 2/29/24 all but two are now cleared for independent functioning and those will be cleared by their preceptors shortly. We are continuing to actively recruit for PM and FF/PM positions, and these will remain postings indefinitely. We are currently processing 47 persons for various positions and will continue to process based on the budget outcome. As needed, we will re-advertise for needed positions. For FY-25 positions it will easily be August before the Fy 25 approved positions are assigned. We will not take over billing until we have DFEMS staffing in the respective stations.

We have also asked for a third chief position or deputy director to manage field operations (4 shift commanders and assigned personnel) This will balance the duties better among three chiefs and allow a single point of contact for all operational issues. This is in the FY 25 budget along with two training/safety lieutenants, an office assistant and the upgrade of the shift commanders to the captain rank and for one ALS car to be upgraded to four lieutenants. This would allow for greater supervision and create a back-up officer for the shift commander.

We will be advertising for two shift commanders, an Assistant Chief of EMS and a station lieutenant position. This will be through a promotional process and the Assistant Chief of EMS will be advertised externally as well as the Deputy Chief if we are successful with that. All of these vacancies will be filled by July with anticipation of possibly 6 additional lieutenants (4/EMS 102) and possibly two training lieutenants.

Transition to county employees: There are undoubtedly a multitude of questions and how? Why? What if? Etc. that will be raised by this transition. This will include some emotion as this is a big step by all

companies! It is my intent to continue to meet with each of the seven companies who will be transitioning to DFEMS staffing in FY-25. I met recently with New Windsor, Winfield and Union Bridge and am in the process of scheduling with Pleasant Valley, Gamber, Lineboro and Hampstead. All questions and concerns need to be raised to include: Who will be assigned? The transition to county billing? Our goal is to assure continuity of service and a smooth overall transition. This is many years in the making, we have a signed MOU, and our goal is to make this seamless with our objective to address your concerns. In the interim, the chief of each company may contact the shift commanders if they have a void with current EMS position staffing. We recently provided personnel to staff several corporate positions and will continue to do so. A transfer list was recently sent to balance ALS availability across each shift.

Response profiles: (ALS incidents) I am very aware of the many response issues that exist with these units. These issues will be mostly resolved after July when all Carroll transport units are staffed as ALS. In the interim please review General Order: 2-6-24 for clarification as to how these units will function until we have full staffing in July 2024. We have listened to the issues, met with ECC and believe that we can best serve the system with these interim changes. This will include responding a chase car to ALS incidents where a Medic is down staffed to BLS and allow ALS to be initiated sooner and to upgrade with the ALS chase units as necessary. This will allow more distant transport ALS units to remain available for other emergencies. The decision to upgrade or have an ALS/BLS unit transport will be incident specific and in the best interest of patient outcome. So far, this change has been well received and is working well.

FY-25 Budget/CCVESA: Multiple budget meetings were held with all companies over several months to discuss the FY-25 budget. A lot of concerns and issues were brought up. Your treasurer did a great job of presenting the FY 25 CCVESA budget with several enhancements/requests. I expect a “challenging” budget year. We have met with the Department of Management & Budget to put forth our FY-25 operating budget. Please understand that there is a process, and we can hopefully be successful in our funding. There will be public budget hearings in the Spring, and we will ask for your support there as well. Given the anticipated requests we are looking at a deficit even before the formal budget process begins. ESAC has communicated their budget concerns at a recent meeting with the Commissioners.

Director of Management and Budget Ted Zaleski presented the detailed FY25 Recommended Budget and FY 25-30 plans to the Carroll County Board of Commissioners (BOC). The budget process documents can be viewed on the county website.

Throughout March, April and May, a series of budget meetings will be held to develop and adopt the final budget. Please check the county website for meeting updates. The current schedule, which is subject to change, is noted below.

The board will next meet with any agency requesting funding not included in the Recommended Budget. Below is the list of meetings as they are currently scheduled:

Agency Meetings with Commissioners:

Tuesday, March 28th -1100 with DFEMS/CCVESA to present the volunteer budgets.

Thursday, April 4th-1100 to discuss the Operations deputy chief position.

After the commissioners meet with agencies, the board will begin discussing the budget options amongst themselves to create a proposed budget. The Proposed Budget Work Sessions will begin on April 2nd.

Once the Proposed Budget is agreed upon by a majority of the commissioners, a release of the FY25 Proposed Budget is planned for Tuesday, April 23rd.

Director Zaleski will then hold a series of community meetings to review and explain the Proposed Budget to the public. These meetings are currently scheduled as follows:

Budget Community Presentations:

Wednesday, April 24th	7:00 pm	Eldersburg Library
Thursday, April 25th	7:00 pm	Mount Airy Library
Monday, April 29th	7:00 pm	Exploration Commons (Westminster)
Tuesday, April 30th	7:00 pm	Taneytown Library
Wednesday, May 1st	7:00 pm	North Carroll Library

A Budget Public Hearing is scheduled on Monday, May 6, 2024, at 7:00 pm. at the Carroll Arts Center located at 91 W. Main Street in Westminster. More information will be provided closer to the date.

Additional Budget Work Sessions may be held by the commissioners to make any modifications to the proposed budget based on the information received during the Budget Public Hearing. These work sessions are tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, May 14th and Thursday, May 16th.

The FY2025 budget adoption is planned for Tuesday, May 21st.

Updated information can be viewed on the Bureau of Budget webpage as it becomes available: <https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/budget>. Comments and questions can be submitted via the webpage or can be sent to Director Ted Zaleski at tzaleski@carrollcountymd.gov at any time.

These sessions are in person and open to the public, will be televised on Channel 24, and streamed live on the county website. All meetings will be held in the County Office Building, 225 N. Center Street, Westminster, MD 21157, unless otherwise noted. Meeting times and places are subject to change, so please check the county website or call 410-386-2400 to confirm.

Meetings are available for viewing on the county meeting portal and the county YouTube channel. In addition, all meetings will be replayed on Comcast Channel 24.

SOPs: We are continuing in our process with FROPs and ESAC to move forward with our operational SOPs. The prior CCVESA approved SOPs where applicable will become part of the DFEMS SOPs and have been posted on our site under SOPs. Both ESAC and FROPS continue to work along with DFEMS and are working collaboratively to move this forward. The previously approved communications policy has some issues and Chief Hipsley (2) and I will be working with the ECC to resolve.

State Legislation: The state legislative session is nearing completion over the next several weeks. A number of your members have been actively involved and I will let them provide you with the latest

updates. There are a number of bills that are still active and likely to pass that have impact on Fire/EMS. I have been attending the weekly legislative meetings in Annapolis for updates and participation in several key areas.

Data Analyst: Katie Spurrier, has hit the ground running and is becoming acclimated to both Keystone and ERS. She has recently verified data for our first “annual report” which should go out in several weeks and will show data at various levels to include responses, staffing and GIS mapping of her findings. She will be looking at all data points and we will be standardizing our reporting which will include an upgrade to new reporting software for DFEMS which will mean that the current ERS will be replaced with a new product and that will be ESO. This is a complex process that will take at least a year to transition. Included will be single silo reporting where all data will be sent to the data analyst v. the OSFM. This will enable us to provide grants and on-going data to the Commissioners, MIEMSS and OSFM/NFIRS. Part of this process will be the end of NFIRS reporting and a migration to a new federal system known as NERIS or National Emergency Response Information System. ESAC Chair Ricky Baker is very active with this along with Chief Ruch, Richard Koons and other representatives from IT as well as the ECC, and IT. This will be a participative process with our goal of centralized data repository and recognition as a jurisdiction which will then enable us to compete for AFG, SAFER and other grants in the future. Katie is meeting with other regional agencies to determine best practices and to clarify our data sources and especially our accuracy.

LMS (Learning Management System) Our thanks to the CCVESA Liaison-Richard Koons for his valuable assistance with getting some compliance programs up and running. We are looking to expand this system for training delivery and tracking. Those requiring EMS continuing education can use the system to satisfy 12 hrs. for BLS and up to 30 hours for ALS. The NREMT has recently changed its policy on the use of “online” training for their recertification requirements.

EMS Recertification: Those paramedics who expired last month 3/31/24 were reminded to submit their credentials with continuing education and ALS skills to AC Zaney prior to the deadline. We held a final ALS skills review on Wednesday 3/6, and you can contact Eric: ezaney@carrollcountymd.gov to discuss any recert issues. We have updated all of our certification databases for Carroll affiliated providers and thanks to David Coe for his expertise and assistance with this.

Training Center Expansion: As most are aware the Phase II of the PSTC which is an expansion of the practical training area to include a new burn facility, flammable liquids/gas props and other enhancements has been held up by the presence of PFAS compounds in the soil. We had a meeting with our architect last week and CCVESA was well represented. Construction will begin shortly on a new waterline into the facility. We also verified the specifics of the site enhancement and if all goes well, we will be bidding the construction and then schedule a “groundbreaking” maybe sometime in the summer of 2024. The DFEMS/CCVESA training group continues to meet every two weeks with the architect and county project manager.

Along with this project we are moving forward with a logistics/warehouse facility on the PSTC campus. Working with facilities we have established a temporary warehouse in an unused area of the barn on the first floor. That is currently operational, and we are storing medical supplies, PPE and other items since last year. Dennis Brothers is leading the project and is also coordinating the rehab of the block building

that was in use by the Sheriff. We will do a rebuild of that building which will become the DFEMS warehouse and office of the quartermaster. This project has been approved and is moving forward with an anticipated Summer 24 completion. This will house our quartermaster who is working out of a temporary office at the PSTC. We recently received a new sprinter van for the quartermaster which will greatly enhance his capability and allow for station deliveries.

EMS Billing: Along with our EMS Billing Technicians Amy and Jennifer we are making progress in this area. We are working directly with the VFCs that have come on board with our vendor Digitech and although slow to come in the revenues appear to be steady and thanks to feedback from the users, we are making improvements towards greater efficiency and quicker turn-around. Those companies using our vendor should be seeing a steady revenue stream. We are anticipating moving the remaining seven companies to our billing vendor in early July or once we get our staffing in the stations which will mean August 2024. Please contact either Amy or Jennifer with any questions via 410-386 6800 or via email. We are also working with the administration, budget and the comptroller to focus our billing funds on systems equipment and positions. In addition, we have been approved to begin with our ESSR (Medicaid reimbursement) funds. Prior to the next cutover of billing our billing staff will meet individually with each of the seven anticipated companies to assure a smooth transition and to assure that you receive all of your generated funding.

Background checks: We have begun our company level background checks. We listened to your concerns regarding your access to valid background information. You should now be able to receive a full report of the specifics of each submitted request which should enhance your level of information. Again, the backgrounds should be initiated for the following:

1. All riding/operational members
2. All new applicants for a VFC
3. Anyone who participates in LOSAP and is a functional administrative member.

I realize that there may be some additional questions and you can email these to me, or we can discuss at the meeting. Callie Williams is our administrator for this program: cwilliams@carrollcountymd.gov

Chamber Public Safety Awards: The annual Carroll County Chamber of Commerce Awards Ceremony will be held on May 13, 2024, with a breakfast at the Pleasant Valley Social Hall. With the advent of DFEMS the awards committee has changed their policy such that all awards will be submitted through the agency. Accordingly, the awards and criteria for Fire/EMS personnel were sent out via a General Order. I did submit a number of awards and thanks to those companies who submitted. There is currently no one nominated for the Volunteer Fire/EMS person of the year. The awards will be discussed and confirmed by the committee on Wednesday 4/3/24 so see me asap if there is a submission for this award?

Those who are approved for an award will be provided a ticket for the breakfast and ceremony. Companies with members receiving awards are encouraged to purchase tables and individual tickets will be available for \$35 each. Tables will hold 8 persons.

VEHICLES: All five of our DFEMS Tahoe's have been completed which covers EMS 101-103, OPS 101 and a reserve unit. On Wednesday we will be receiving the new M18 and M39 which will be assigned once we have them titled/tagged and equipped. Each of these units will come with new

monitors, stretchers, Luca's devices and will be fully stocked by DFEMS. They are in the DFEMS color scheme with the name of their assigned station on the doors. We anticipate 4 additional Medics for delivery by August and we will put out to competitive bid two additional Medic Units in the FY-25 budget along with two pick-up trucks to support anticipated training positions. We have also received a new 2024 Ford/Sprinter van for the quartermaster. We recognize the future need for some additional reserve units both ambulances and fire engines and will be working on plans for that initiative.

Mark your calendars: The weekend of May 4-5th will be the annual National Fallen Firefighter's Memorial weekend at the memorial in Emmitsburg. Our LODD Robert Jones, Reese VFD will be honored at the ceremony on Sunday. Reese and others are planning to be in attendance along with the Jones Family. See the NFF website for more information.

EMS Week: will occur May 19-25 and the theme will be: Honoring Our Past. Forging Our Future! There will be a number of EMS related events in Carroll County, and we will be posting those once details are finalized. The state EMS Awards will also be held during that timeframe and submissions should have been made already.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Michael W. Robinson

Director- DFEMS