



December 2025
Chief Michael Robinson
Monthly Report to CCVESA

Attached herein is my report for December 2025. I will be in attendance at this evening's meeting to answer any questions or concerns.

STAFFING: We were nearing our authorized strength of 224 field personnel and recently have lost 10 personnel as the result of resignations and terminations. This takes us down to 214 personnel. In addition, we have 10 personnel on extended absence due to FMLA, and injuries both on and off duty. So, this creates 20 openings or vacancies which we must backfill daily through the use of overtime and in many cases with holdovers. This is causing an increase in our overtime. We are however working to fill our vacancies as soon as feasible. We anticipate 3 FF/PMs to begin on 12/4 and possibly an additional FF/EMT. We are currently in the testing process for an additional 6-8 personnel, but this will take us into January.

ALS Units: Mt Airy (2nd unit) and Union Bridge are in service as ALS units. They are currently ALS staffed as staffing permits. The department will reach full staffing and therefore will adjust the existing down staffing policy to reduce holdovers. The order for down staffing units to BLS will be 1st 1 unit from Mt Airy, 2nd Union Bridge, 3rd Gamber. This policy has been updated and sent out. This may increase given our current staffing scenario along with high vacation time and use/lose personal leave hours until the new year begins. Responses will be adjusted using the EMS Supervisors to upgrade BLS units as necessary.

Lieutenant promotions: Effective on Thursday, October 9 @ 0700 with C shift our three ALS chase cars were reassigned as EMS supervisor units each staffed with a lieutenant. We held an orientation with the 12 new officers, and they will be continuing with some additional training sessions that will focus on their roles over the next several months. First and foremost, they will provide EMS supervision and quality assurance. Their secondary roles will be station management, and we are realigning the station accountability as we will have 6 lieutenants (3 EMS cars and 3 station lieutenants.) Typically, the new lieutenants will manage the career personnel at their station assignments: 4,5,14 as well as in some cases a second adjacent station and on the Rt. 30 corridor, EMS 101 will manage stations 2,4, and 7. On incident scenes where they are first arriving they may assume incident command but will transition upon the arrival of a chief officer (volunteer or career.) They may also serve as the primary safety officer at working incidents where they are not assigned to an EMS function. Over the last several weeks as well as earlier today, some of these personnel have been the initial incident commanders on working fire incidents. They have done an excellent job of size-up and establishing initial incident command.

Over the next several months they will be learning and gaining experience to clearly define their roles. The station administrative responsibilities have been reassigned to balance the lieutenants along with the station lieutenants. A station assignment map is attached for your review. Your assistance as mentors to guide these officers is sincerely appreciated. Several of you have already stepped up on working incidents to facilitate their growth. Each of them clearly recognizes their roles and should make our system whole from both the EMS supervisory and station administrative roles.

EMS Fleet:

The county currently owns eight (8) medic units with a 6th (Road Rescue) slated for delivery this week. Our goal is to have 16 first line and 6 reserve units. We went out for bids for 3 additional medic units and Road Rescue has been awarded the order which will be for Ford F-550 gasoline chassis with Road Rescue door forward ambulance bodies. We are looking at a 24–28-month delivery time. Given the state of our remaining VFC owned units we believe we will soon be in a “crisis” with some of your units having more than 200,000 miles and an overaged reserve fleet of only 3 units. On October 20, I traveled along with our spec committee to Road Rescue in Florida for the final inspection of the new M-128 which is currently at Atlantic in Hanover, MD and will be delivered hopefully this week. Once the electronics are installed it will go in service. The replacement M-139 demo is having its graphics applied at FESCO and that unit is a Ford 550/Horton which was a demo unit but close to our design. That should be delivered in about two weeks and will also need the electronics swapped with the old 139 we accept the unit, it should be in service by mid-December. I have provided a “spread sheet” to each company chief that Chief Brothers has put together to better define the status of our overall EMS fleet.

The situation is not good, and we will be developing a plan to address. In the interim we will work closely with you and your vendors and our maintenance shop to address issues as they occur. We will also address this in the FY-27 budget and will request at least five additional replacement medic units which could all be demos v. custom designed. Those units if available would give us a significantly shorter delivery time. It may take two years and 10 units to put us where we need to be.

M-139 Accident: Our internal investigation in concert with BCoPD and CCSO is continuing. We are also working with our insurance carrier as the liability associated with this incident is significant. Both of the personnel involved have returned to modified duty. They are still undergoing treatment of their injuries. As a result of this accident, we are working with Chief Zaney and the ECC to review all of our response profiles and transition many of our incident responses to “non-emergency” We are following the Montgomery County experience in this area since Dr. Stone is our EMD medical director and also Montgomery’s. We are working on a draft to be completed soon and will be reviewed by FROPS and ESAC prior to implementation.

FY-27 Budget:

We are in the preliminary stages of the FY 27 budget and placed our requests for additional staffing. Our priorities are as follows:

1. Additional 8 (eight) floater positions from original FY-23 staffing plan
2. Four (4) shift safety/training lieutenants-new positions
3. Laborer either full or part-time to be assigned to the Quartermaster/warehouse
4. Paramedic position (grant funded) for mobile integrative health (MIH) program
14 total positions

The training/safety Lieutenants positions would be assigned to each of the 24/72 shifts and would focus on the training and compliance needs of each shift as well as the volunteers. They would have an immediate safety officer response profile and perform other duties such as accident/injury investigations, station and PPE inspections and provide driver training and OSHA compliance. All other departments in the region currently have such a position.

So, I had also asked each of your (chiefs) for personnel requests based on their own staffing assessments. Accordingly, I have requested in the FY-27 budget, additional positions as follows:

Hampstead- 4 lieutenants

Westminster-4 FADOs (Tower 3)

Taneytown- 8 FF/EMTs for a second EMS unit

Pleasant Valley- 4 lieutenants

Union Bridge- 4 FADOs (Tanker)

Gamber- Day shift lieutenant

Winfield- 4 lieutenants

29 positions total + 14 positions (my requests) = 43 new career positions or \$4.5 million

In an effort to support these requests I will be meeting with the commissioners to consider the use of SAFER funding to achieve this additional staffing goal. These positions will be addressed directly at the ESAC/BOCC meeting on 12/4. I commend those companies who are forward thinking and recognize their staffing needs. I believe we need to be realistic in assessing what our next direction should be while also recognizing those companies who continue to do the best they can to achieve volunteer staffing. I believe these additions if approved will put our system in a safer and more efficient situation. There is still plenty of need and we all need to work together to achieve consistent staffing goals! This will take multiple budget cycles to attain.

My other goal with the FY 27 budget is to request a countywide study by a consultant.

That study would evaluate our current system and its capabilities to include both fire and EMS coverage, station locations, apparatus needs/type and staffing. We would use three criteria in the study and that would include ISO standards of coverage, NFPA -1201,1710 for coverage and CFAI (fire accreditation) standards of cover. I believe we all have our opinions but a third-party unbiased organization using national standards could provide a comprehensive overview of our strengths, weakness and recommendations for future Fire/EMS coverage and potential costs. This would also provide an analysis of apparatus and fleet needs

both for procurement and maintenance as well as station locations and maintenance requirements to provide sustainability. We will see if we are able to have this included and will move forward from there.

DC Joe Dennis is leading the volunteer budget effort for FY-27, and he is working with each of you. I am in support of Joe's concepts on the budget, and we have had several discussions on this. The future funding of loans is also a topic that the ESAC/BOCC meeting will address along with the overall increases in fire apparatus and equipment. I am still waiting for CCVESA to come up with a proposal for enhanced station maintenance projects and I have yet to receive any proposals for how such funding would be administered. It is imperative that you are developing a realistic proposal for inclusion in the FY-27 budget. Insurance is another ongoing concern in terms of cost and coverage. The 10K deductibles based on accident history are not sustainable and I am working with risk management and our insurer VFIS to see what options are there. We will also look at that issue in our budget discussions. Our challenge with the budget will be the growing state budget deficit and the unpredictability of state funding and revenues into the county.

PSTC improvements/ Phase II: We are also submitting in our budget at the request of the training committee a replacement container/module for our burn facilities which have become worn giving the age. This current configuration of a burn facility was intended to be temporary pending phase II of the PSTC. Currently we have a priority project into the state for \$1.3 million to provide a remediation project for the PFAS and water delivery to the PSTC site. The new water line construction has begun, and progress is being made.

The state legislative delegation met with the commissioners and administration to discuss the prioritization of that project which if approved would move our phase II of the PSTC forward. Currently you can see that our warehouse project is progressing and will hopefully be complete by early next year. This will move our quartermaster/supply operation entirely to this rehabbed space and will significantly increase our storage capacity. More to follow.

Cancer screening grant: I submitted on Friday, 11/14 through the state health department, a grant for \$85,500 for cancer screening for 228 uniformed career personnel. There is \$480,000 available for a one-time cancer screening. I was told by 2nd VP Mott, that you have also submitted a separate grant to cover volunteer personnel. This would be done separately by a third-party cancer screening company. Our goal would be to provide testing for all who receive physicals through a cancer screening company and to attempt to do this on an annual basis at no cost to personnel.

Operations: Our new fireground (SOP Section 4) policies are in effect and are working well. My observation of the changes is that they are working, and we are more efficient, organized and certainly safer on fire/rescue incident scenes. We have standardized our running assignments, communications and incident organization. Over the last two weeks we have experienced 10+ working fires, and the responses have been great and each fireground has been well organized

with great accountability. Our career and volunteer command officers have really stepped up with staffing and command presence. We are making great progress overall! Our next area of concern involves communications and some realignment of our talk groups and policies and together I believe we can improve that area through some specific changes.

Congratulations, to the training committee on the successful recruitment of the EST program which is moving forward with 15 students and delivering EMT for the fall semester. Chief Brothers continues to work closely with the group to assure support of the program along with MFRI resources. This an outstanding group and certainly our future and we should be doing all that we can to support their training and retention. I want to commend those companies who conducted a “training day” at the PSTC on Sunday, 11/16 with multiple combined fireground evolutions and live burns. A great turnout with nearly 100 personnel from multiple companies. We certainly can benefit from of this. Chief Brothers in concert with the training committee and our growing volunteer/career certified instructors will be exploring the delivery of “academy status” programs that will allow us to provide our own MFRI/academy courses with smaller number of students. As a result of combined efforts, a previously cancelled FO-III program is starting here tonight and available to assist with upgrading our training requirements.

NERIS: In addition to our three-day training sessions. We held a follow up informational session with our ESO vendor on Friday, 11/7 and some of you were present. Richard Koons along with Melissa are working daily to assure that everything is in place. We will be maintaining 14 FDIDs or the new NERIS identifiers and we will centralize our data while allow each of you the ability to utilize the associated modules. We are also continuing to work with Richard on assuring the preservation of legacy LOSAP data. Understand that there will be glitches with the system as is the case with any new technology. Together we will figure this out and move forward with hopefully a better data and reporting system. We are in contact with our vendor, and I held a recent meeting with their management to review their contractual commitments and specifically the preservation and delivery of archived legacy data.

Pinning & Promotional Ceremony, On Thursday, 11/20 we held our annual ceremony which was an overwhelming success with the “pinning” and swearing in of over 40 new personnel who have been hired over the past year. We also held a formal promotion for a station lieutenant, 11 of our lieutenant paramedics and our 4 battalion chiefs. I thank all who attended to make this a memorable event. A special thanks for those stations who provided replacement coverage for our personnel to attend while on duty without diminishing countywide coverage.

Commendations Board, has met and will be meeting in January to review submissions for awards related to 2025 incidents, special recognitions and to make recommendations for the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce Awards. Please review the SOP and consider submitting for the various categories of awards. The Chamber awards include a countywide Fire and EMS person of the year and other rewards. We have had a lot of significant incidents, and many people have provided significant levels of service. Don’t let them go unrecognized! Please

contact President Todd Tracey or DC Price for further information or to make a submission. The awards event will be scheduled for some time in the Spring of 26.

ESAC meeting with Commissioners: is scheduled for Thursday, December 4 at 1300. Chairman Baker has prepared a slide presentation which addresses the priorities for the FY-27 budget as well as an update on ESAC recommendations for our system to move forward. He will also update our progress. Given their schedule, the presentation will be limited to one hour so there is a lot of content to provide. I will attend as well, and I will defer to Rick for further elaboration of this important meeting.

Maryland General Assembly/Legislative Session-2026 will begin on 1/14/26 in Annapolis. This will be a challenging year for the state given the billion+ deficit. I will be attending the MACO Winter Conference next week along with other department directors, administrators and commissioners. We will receive some insight into the session from the governor and other key legislators as well as an economic overview for the state. I will also be in attendance during the session for the Friday fire service legislative meetings along with your MSFA President and other fire service reps. Hopefully the fire service will make some progress and preserve state funding in areas such as 508, loan funding and other relevant initiatives. Each company should sign up for the weekly MSFA legislative bulletin to keep abreast of progress in these areas. I'm sure that President Simpson will have more to say in this area.

Happy Holidays to all! My appreciation for all of you who will be in a “response mode” during what will likely be a time of increased responses! We will be posting some holiday safety information on social media with a focus on cooking and heating and I encourage each company to do something similar on your sites. Also, my sincere appreciation to those companies who supported our “on duty” personnel with meal assistance on Thanksgiving and for the upcoming holidays. As we end the year 2025, we can look back on some great progress within our combination system. I look forward to a prosperous New Year and our continued partnership. Enjoy the holidays and take some time to focus on family, friends and celebrations!

Respectfully submitted,
Chief Michael W. Robinson
Michael W. Robinson MA, CFO, NRP
Director

MWR/mr
C: CCVESA officers
Command Staff

