



September 2, 2025
Chief Michael Robinson
Monthly Report

Attached herein is my report for September 2025. I am unable to attend this evening as I am fulfilling my duties as a past president of the Anne Arundel County Volunteer Firefighter's Association and attending their annual past president's dinner. I did have a very positive meeting with your CCVESA executive board this past week and discussed many issues.

Battalion Chief Reclassification: Effective on August 1, 2025, the four shift commander/captains were retitled to the rank of Battalion Chief. This was an internal employment/HR action which I do not take lightly. This was done after meetings with the HR Director, the county administrator and my staff. This was a move made to more consistently define the role of this position as well as to align it with the operations of a Fire & EMS Department.

There have been multiple discussions and meetings on this topic including with ESAC, FROPS and the County Commissioners. There is no need to further validate this, and I take full responsibility for not effectively communicating this critical and impacting change prior to its implementation. We are moving forward and will continue to work together as we progress.

We will continue to operate with a battalion chief on each shift as the shift commander responsible for our personnel as well as ongoing coordination consistent to the MOU and in cooperation with the volunteer companies. Command and control of incidents will continue to be held by the first arriving chief officer at any chief officer rank. Exceptions to this would be incident specific and in accordance with established incident command policies and procedures.

Volunteer Battalion Chief Program: Consistent to G.O. 8-2-2025 the volunteer battalion chief program as previously structured has been eliminated. However, it never negated the ability of any chief officer in the county system to respond on any incident as available. A correction has been made to realign the BC tone alerting to the previously adopted command support response- CS 1, 2, or 3 which is currently in effect. The responding chiefs under this response profile will respond as their normal radio alias which clearly identifies who is responding. The CS tones have been added to structural alarms and remain as the previous BC tones. This will assure additional chief officers to staff command/staff positions on escalating or complex incidents as well as coverage when BC 101 is deployed. At the recent second alarm barn fire this system worked well with a total of 8 chief officers responding. First arriving chief 10 was the IC assisted by BC 101 and this complex incident ran seamlessly with a command team in place.

Working with already established work groups in FROPS we will continue to move forward with the standardization of volunteer officer credentialing to include training requirements and consistency within the system. The goal is to assure competency and command presence that focuses on decision making, safety and accountability.

STAFFING

New hires: We are nearing our authorized strength of 224 field personnel and recently hired one paramedic and next week followed by at least four FADOs to complete our staffing by the end of September. We have also had several internal reclassifications to both FF/Paramedic and FADO.

ALS Units: In the near future Mt Airy (2nd unit) and Union Bridge will go in service as ALS units essentially at the same time. 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 should not occur too frequently as our high vacation time is now over.

Lieutenant promotions: The process began on 8/27 with the written exam and continues with an assessment center to identify 12 lieutenant paramedics. The selection and promotion will be complete by October and should take effect on the pay period that begins on Thursday, October 9. The successful candidates will undergo several days of orientation training to understand their roles in both EMS supervision/care as well as expanded incident roles which will evolve further once they are versed in their EMS supervisory roles. They will also supervise career staff at their assigned stations. This will give us officers at six of the 13 stations where we provide staffing.

Recent incidents: We have had a number of working fire and rescue incidents, and our overall command presence and operational consistency has been outstanding from both career and volunteer personnel. We are moving forward with implementation of our fireground operations revised policies as approved by ESAC. There will be a “rollout” with a train the trainer and each chief officer will be responsible for implementing the policies initially on a trial basis and then formalized when all personnel are trained. We will be bringing in all career employees off duty to assure that this is given the correct focus.

911 Ceremony of Remembrance: Invitations have been sent, and this will be held on Thursday, 9/11/25 and is the 24th anniversary. We will host a brief ceremony at the PSTC, and class A uniforms are recommended. The ceremony will begin at 0830 and will be held at the 911 monument site. Also, at noon on 9/11 Mission BBQ will be holding a brief ceremony and we will have units participating. All members are invited and will be eligible for a “free” sandwich compliments of Mission BBQ to recognize your service.

Apparatus funding:

This has become a significant issue as the county can only provide loan funding each year at no greater than 5% of their bond issue. This is part of the county statutes which limits lending capabilities. Combined with the limitations on the state's loan fund this creates a significant issue for VFC funding of major apparatus. I have met with the comptroller, county administrator and director of management and budget on this issue. The Commissioners have also been briefed. On Thursday, 9/30/25 there will be a meeting with the county officials involved in the loan funding which will begin around 1800. This is for presidents, but treasurers and chiefs are certainly welcome. We all recognize how critical funding is given the cost of apparatus and the time to produce. I would encourage each of you to attend this important meeting to discuss the current and future situation. An invitation will be forthcoming, and this will be held in the Reagan Room on the ground floor of the County Office Building.

EMS Fleet:

The county currently owns eight (8) medic units with a 6th (Road Rescue) slated for delivery in November. Our goal is to have 16 first line and 4 reserve units. We are currently going out for bids for 3 additional medic units and hope to order in the next several weeks. Horton, Lifeline and Road Rescue are the bids that we have received, and we must now go through fleet, procurement and ultimately the Commissioners for approval. 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. We recently needed to borrow a reserve from Frederick County. We are working with fleet and on our end Chief Brothers will be coming to each station to determine the short- and long-term status of our remaining ambulances. 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.

FY-27 Budget:

We are in the preliminary stages of the FY 27 budget and will again request two training Lieutenants as well as the remaining eight (8) floaters that were originally budgeted. In addition we are asking for a laborer position to assist the QM and a paramedic to begin a Mobile Integrative Health (Community paramedic program.) Any additional positions are to be determined. So fundamentally, if any station would like additional career staffing, then send me an email stating what position and a justification by October 1. I will not request any additional station staffing without that company's request. Energy costs are seeing a significant increase, and I have not yet received a lot of direction for FY-27 in that area.

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 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.

Congratulations, to the training committee on the successful recruitment of the EST program which is moving forward with 20 students and delivering EMT for the fall semester. Chief Brothers will work closely with the group to assure support of the program along with MFRI resources.

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 state legislative delegation will be meeting with the commissioners and administration next week to discuss the prioritization of that project which if approved would move our phase II of the PSTC forward. More to follow.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Michael W. Robinson

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Director

MWR/mr

C: Presidents

CCVESA officers

Command Staff