



Fauquier County Fire Rescue System

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*Kalvyn Smith, System Fire Chief
Dale Kidwell, Chair
Jim Kudla, Co-Chair*

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS MEETING NOTES

APPROVED

SUBJECT MATTER: BUDGET

**Saturday January 20, 2024
Fauquier Hospital, Sycamore A/B Conference Room
0900 – 1100**

The Finance and Budget Planning Committee hosted an Administrative Officers meeting on Saturday January 20, 2024. The purpose was to offer the volunteer members an understanding and overview of the Fauquier Fire Rescue System budget, opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns that the stations may have regarding their current financial processes, and for members of the Fire Rescue System to network.

Committee members present at this session were: Fire Rescue Systems Chief Kalvyn Smith, Chairperson Deputy Chief Dale Kidwell, Co-Chair Jim Kudla, FCFRS Accounting/Administrative Manager Jenn Greer, and Catlett Volunteer Fire Department member, Karen Moore.

Fauquier County Government Staff members present at this session were: County Administrator Janelle Downes, Office of Management and Budget Director Mallory Stribling, FCFRS Accounting Specialist Trish Hamby, and FCFRS Administrative Specialist Heather Kidd.

Volunteer Station members present at this session were: Company 2 Lieutenant Chad Mason and Treasurer Debra Kuhn, Company 4 President Eric Irvine, Company 7 Treasurer Stephen Hannaman, Company 8 President Brian Baxter and Treasurer Petra Williams, and Company 10 Treasurer Jennifer Doolin.

Budget Review – The county is moving to a 2-year reassessment cycle beginning in FY 2027. Fauquier County is a \$420 million organization. \$40 million of these funds are allocated to employee health insurance, our third largest fund. The penny is now at \$1.5 million for every one cent increase on the tax rate. This averages to approximately \$47 per year of an increase to the average homeowner, based on 2022 assessment values. Four for Life, ARR fund, station contributions, and the maintenance funding has not been affected by the implementation of Chapter 9 and remain at their adopted levels. There were questions regarding receiving funds from other jurisdictions as we, Fauquier County, are providing mutual aid to them. Chief Smith advised that we will not receive funding from other jurisdictions, therefore the station chiefs will need to set restrictions on how often or how far the apparatus at their station will travel, as they see fit.

Chief Smith was granted 24 new Fire Rescue Technicians, 1 Logistics Manager, and 1 HR Generalist at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Thursday January 11, 2024. The plan for these 24 positions, is to bring 3-person 24/7 staffing to Lois and The Plains stations as well as 24/7 staffing for both the engine and ambulance at Marshall and Orlean stations. We will be applying for the SAFER grant for Recruitment and Retention which will help to support volunteer stations with membership and logistical support. The one-time COVID relief funding has been exhausted.

Processes – There were mutual concerns for paying bills due to the current financial policies and procedures in place. The Volunteer Financial Management Policy was updated in September 2023 to match the County’s internal financial processes. At the next Finance Committee Informational Session, Tanya Wilcox, Fauquier County Treasurer, will be in attendance to answer questions and concerns regarding these current policies and practices.

Strategic Planning – Budget Director Mallory Stribling informed members of the large variety of county resources which are available to them for utilization. Examples of these resources would be the Procurement division for purchasing and utilizing rideable contracts, Office of Budget Management for strategic planning per station as well as budget processes and requests, Community Development for situations such as permits for station renovations, Finance Department regarding annual audits, as well as Human Resources and community partners for fundraising and recruiting. The Finance Committee will be hosting more of these informational sessions to delve more comprehensively into each of these subject matters.

All Fauquier Fire Rescue System SCBA is currently set to be replaced in FY26. This will cost roughly four million dollars that the county will be financing both with cash and other sources (debt financed).

Roundtable – Members requested that the Finance Committee host these informational sessions more frequently and offer a virtual option for those unable to attend in person.

There is concern from several stations that their identity as a Volunteer company is going to be diminished in the future, as “FAUQUIER COUNTY” is being displayed on apparatus instead of the individual station name and/or patch. Chief Smith took the action at this meeting to initiate labeling individual stations on ambulances. Fauquier County Administrator, Janelle Downes, voiced that communication is much deeper and wider with this new administration, among all levels of the county government. She also communicated that her office remains consistently accessible and emphasized her readiness to address pertinent matters through scheduled discussions.

Another perk for Volunteer members in the county, is that they have access to Marathon Health Wellness Center. Marathon offers physicals, any medical resources, and has increased their scheduled hours to allow more available access to members. The Systems Fire Chief Smith has emphasized to the station Chiefs that they should be encouraging each of their members to schedule and attend their annual physicals.

The session adjourned at 10:55 am.