



## Clarke County Fire & EMS Commission

101 Chalmers Court, Suite B

Berryville, Virginia 22611

(540) 955-5132

### AGENDA

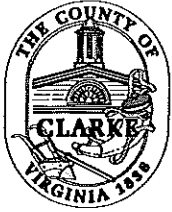
January 3rd, 2018

6:30pm

Clarke County Government Center – Meeting Room AB

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of Minutes – December 14th, 2017
3. Committee Reports –
  - Standards – No report prior to meeting
  - Technology – No report prior to meeting
  - Budget
    - i. Sub-committee budget recommendation
4. Unfinished Business
5. Report from the Fire and Rescue Association
6. Report from the Director of Fire and EMS
7. Public Comment
8. New Business
  - a. Meeting Schedule for 2018
  - b. Election of Chair and Co-Chair
9. Adjourn

Next meeting is on February 8th, 2017 at 6:30pm in the Clarke County Government Center – Meeting Room AB



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## MINUTES

December 14<sup>th</sup> 2017

6:30pm

Clarke County Government Center – Meeting Room AB

Attendees: Van Armacost, Chairman  
Bryan Conrad  
Jacob White  
Matt Hoff  
Diane Harrison  
David Weiss  
Andrew Nicholson

Absent: Tony Roper

Staff: Brian Lichty  
Pam Hess  
David Ash  
Jason Burns  
Chris Shipe  
Jay Grim  
Carolyn Trent  
Nick Giamanco

Chairman Armacost called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

1. Mr. Hoff made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was passed with all in favor.
2. Mr. Conrad made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 9<sup>th</sup> 2017 meeting as presented. The motion was passed with all in favor.
3. Committee Reports –
  - Standards – The committee met on Tuesday December 12<sup>th</sup> 2017 (see attached evaluation sheet) Ms. Harrison stated that Table 1 did not cross in her email. Mr. Lichty will resend to her.



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- Technology - Mr. Conrad and Mr. Lichty reported that the committee met last week and discussed the maintenance contracts for the radios as well as who owned what. They determined that all equipment will be placed under the Sheriffs control and the maintenance will be kept through the county. FirstNet has a new contract in January 2018 with AT&T. Omnicom will be coming in February 2018 to replace the hardware at dispatch and the moving of the transmitters will occur in Fiscal Year 2019. IPAWS-(Integrated Public Alert Warning System) a nationwide alert system-enrollment needs to be done if the county wishes due to a pending list and slow process. Mr. Ash will look into to this and make a decision. Code Red was bought out by OnSolve-Ms. Hess has resigned the contract and will sign up everyone that will have the need for individual sign ons for access. New phone system to be installed at dispatch on December 18<sup>th</sup> and communications will be converted onto it January 24<sup>th</sup>. MDTs for Fire & EMS was determined that it's not needed right now but could be valuable therefore it will be looked at later. The committee wants to recommend to the Commission that the County adopt the Motorola maintenance agreement for subscriber units. The proposal recommended is the basic maintenance agreement. Clarification is needed on who pays for replacement batteries, if the individual Companies are to continue or if the County will cover the expense. There was a discussion about the utility of the pagers, if the IAM responding program over the telephones is providing dispatch capabilities since most people do not carry pagers anymore. They want to make sure that the dispatches go onto IAM responding but due to time lag is it reliable enough.
  - i. Motorola maintenance/service proposal-see attached
- Budget - The committee met on Tuesday November 21<sup>st</sup> 2017 (see attached budget request/recommendation)
  - i. The Subcommittee met on Tuesday December 12<sup>th</sup> 2017 and Mr. White presented the two options that they would like the Fire & EMS Commission to consider for recommendation to the Finance Committee and the Board of Supervisors. (see attached) Mr. Weiss questioned how this would be a savings to the county if they don't



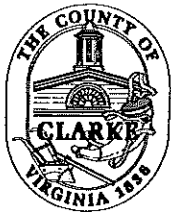
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cover apparatus expenditures currently. Mr. White and Ms. Harrison explained that these are just options and examples of how potential future needs could be helped if the Station's stipends were to be doubled in order to still maintain a certain level of service as costs are continuing to rise. Part 3 shows potential options to help to increase additional revenue through Fee for Service or a billable fire levy that would be a separate tax for county residents. Mr. Hoff commented that after reviewing the proposal it appears that main objective for the increase in the stipends would be to cover apparatus purchases and speaking on behalf of Boyce they feel that a stipend increase would be better utilized to hiring of more staff. He stated that you can have all the equipment that you need in the station but it doesn't give you the people required to operate them. Mr. Weiss questioned why nothing is being addressed about the recruitment/retention position. Ms. Harrison stated that the discussions had seemed to weigh towards the position not working as it hasn't in other neighboring counties so the Subcommittee went through the list and gave priority levels to what they felt needed to be address the fastest. Mr. Conrad stated that it seems like we have diverted away from what was the initial focus of the whole process, which was to reduce the scratch rate and get people responding to calls and when talking about buying hardware, there needs to be an bigger effort to get the people to do the work, the focus needs to remain here. Mr. Weiss wanted to remind everyone that the purpose of this Commission and all the work groups was to focus on sustaining a volunteer system but joined as a whole county. It appears that the path the Board of Supervisors set forth has been drastically changed. The focus seems to be more about career staffing and buying apparatus. The BOS/county was told that if they helped to absorb some of the expenditures like the insurance and some of the overhead costs, the companies would be able to manage more appropriately and get better responses from the volunteers but now it appears to be going in the opposite direction. Mr. Weiss stated that he will not be voting at this level because he will be seeing the final proposal and voting then at the appropriate level.



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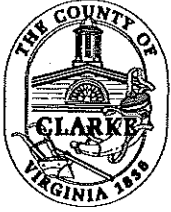
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- ii. Mr. Hoff made a motion to move next meeting to January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 instead of the 11<sup>th</sup> to give the appropriate amount of time for voting & submitting the approved budget request by 15<sup>th</sup>. All passed in favor.
- iii. Mr. Weiss suggested that it would be helpful for the BOS budget committee to understand how the proposed budget request presented will justify in a detailed manor and more concretely advance the goals of bettering the system.

#### 4. Unfinished Business

- a. Strategic Plan Review/Update-all members have reviewed and will be sent to the BOS like a report card to show where everything stands and/or has progressed. Mr. Conrad moved to approve report as is. Motion passed all in favor with Mr. Weiss abstaining.
5. Report from the Fire and Rescue Association - Mr. Armacost stated the Association met on November 27<sup>th</sup> with all 3 chiefs in attendance. The EMS Committee didn't recommend the Narcan grant that is through OEMS because it is something that Clarke gets for free through the hospital and they may not necessarily exchange something that is not in their system. The purchase of the new required ALS drug bags and the additional drugs that the council did not provide, paid for with Four for Life funding, have been integrated and getting out to all stations. Countywide hose testing was discussed and dates are being set.
  6. Report from the Director of Fire and EMS - (see attached) Report was emailed in advance and due to the length of this meeting Mr. Lichty asked if there were any questions or comments. No one had any.
  7. Public Comment - Chief Jason Burns of Blue Ridge stated that a complete inventory was conducted on everything and the stipend increase request is to help cover any types of costs not just apparatus to maintain an operational system. The volunteers are still going to work and fundraise to make up the difference. He commented that for recruitment/retention, the county needs to help fund the system to make it work. If paid personnel are needed to help fill the voids to maintain the volunteer system by all means do so, but the help is still needed to pay additional



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expenditures. If the county would choose the route to have paid staff running at all the stations then Mr. Lichty needs to be in charge. If you want a volunteer system to remain then the increase request is a necessity due to being sorely underfunded. President Chris Shipe of Enders wanted to add that we all agree that recruitment/retention is a critical piece and the reason why this was all started. Improvements have been made partly due to the county allowing and funding some career staff that has helped on relieving part of the volunteer burden/pressure especially with the senior citizen facilities in town. He is asking to take a little more pressure off and help them leverage money to keep the station and apparatus up. This will help to meet the standards and we need to continue to focus at everything globally. He wants to keep this as a volunteer system but with additional funding from the county. With the numbers presented he states that Enders can make this work. Tremendous strides have been made and we need to continue to focus as a whole. Rescue Captain Carolyn Trent of Blue Ridge commented that she has been active in Loudoun for 8 years and Blue Ridge almost 5 years. She has seen a lot of changes on both sides of the mountain and she feels that Clarke County has something extremely special here but what needs to perpetuate the system is the funding that is proposed. As someone who started out young in the system, if there is no money to pay for uniforms, gear, etc. then why would someone want to volunteer their time? There has been a lost demographic in Clarke and that's through the high school. This needs to be approached to gear the demographic to those coming of age and try to pull them into our system.

8. New Business - Mr. Armacost reminded everyone that elections are next month.
9. Adjourn - Mr. White made a motion to adjourn. The motion was passed all in favor at 7:56 pm.

Next meeting is on January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017 at 6:30pm in the Clarke County Government Center – Meeting Room AB.

The Budget Subcommittee met again to discuss the outcome of our last meeting. During that meeting we found more information that we feel was important to share prior to discussion and vote on our submission to the county budget. Each of the representatives from the departments will be making a ten-minute presentation of their department, their needs and how they differ from the other, and why they feel this increase is important.

Before they present, there are a few items that came out of the meeting that address the group as a whole.

As years have passed, the role of the fire department in the community has changed. We fight less fires but are called on more and more for potential life-threatening calls. While the role is changing, there still needs to be a certain level of equipment and vehicles to meet the basic needs of the community. Regulations require upgrades to costly protective gear. Training and certification requirements continue to increase. Technology continues to evolve which means upgrading of equipment, software, and more training in usage.

While these costs continue to rise, the departments have not received an increase in stipends since 2009. Senior housing in the Berryville area has increased putting a strain on the EMS portion of the department. The volunteer population has changed over time bringing a limited number of new volunteers to replace those aging out of the system.

When putting this all together, we create a perfect storm for failure not only financially, but in response times, recruitment and retention, and how the departments are perceived within the community.

The chart below shows what each of the surrounding areas is paying to Fire/EMS/Volunteer stations per person. Clarke who is ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in the state on median household income is paying the least.

County	Median Household Income	Population	Households (2010)	Fire/EMS/Volunteer	Per Person
Clarke - #15 (.71)	\$77,977	14,231	5,509	1,103,399	78.00
Fredrick - #24 (.60)	\$68,424	80,296	28,826	13,059,843	162.00
Warren (.65)	\$61,048	38,037	14,085	3,865,146	101.00
Winchester City (.91)	\$44,200	29,923	10,607	6,447,500	215.00

If the county was to increase the stipend by \$175,000. This would then leave us at \$82 per person – still far below what other jurisdictions are contributing. This would give a large boost towards the financial well being of the departments to be able to make sound financial decisions for the purchasing of capital expenditures while also allowing more time to be spent in lowering costs for training, recruitment and retention, and in the end improving response times in the EMS area as the response times for fire calls is in line with our current level.

Currently, there is a Strategic Plan in place. While it is a good document with good direction, it lacks the detailed plans to allow for true benchmarks to be seen. As a number of items relate directly to putting a budget together, we suggest that the Budget Committee be changed to Budget and Planning Committee.

The committee would continue to meet monthly to work with setting up a program that would allow for planning on a higher level to incorporate specific items under each strategic item. This will undoubtedly cross into other committees but will give a start to allow for an accountability for development and funding of the budget along with revenue streams, and having standards across departments that can tie to response time and recruitment and retention.

The committee would also request a change to the budget from Apparatus to Capital Fund. The departments could then decide if their funding from the additional stipend level is not to be utilized that year, the funds could then go into the Capital Fund for planned and emergency purchases. As examples:

- Currently, Boyce is not able to save for future vehicle purchases because of their bingo contract with the state. This would allow them to use their extra stipend for part time help or to put it towards the combined Capital Fund (they are also not able to use their Bingo dollars for staffing).
- Another department had a building that needed repair, they would be able to use it for that or bank it towards future equipment purchase.

By ensuring the additional \$175,000 each year to the departments, we are allowing for

- maintaining department identity and needs,
- have flexibility as needed for capital purchases,
- eliminate as much bureaucracy and time as possible with having to purchase through the county.

With planning, we would also look to incorporate both budgets starting with the next year's budget since EMS is basically handled within the stations.

### Recruitment and Retention

Each station within the county works with a different population in their area. The stations themselves need to be responsible for their recruitment and retention. Using funds to support a position specific to this endeavor for all stations would not give us our most 'bang for our buck'. There are so many resources available on recruitment and retention that departments should be able to work on this and draw from the experience of those who fit their area. If the departments feel at some point that a county-wide survey would help to develop their programs, doing something together would be a good cost-effective move. And there are resources through Shenandoah University that could help with that.

### Universal Budget Language



We would ask that Tom Judge put together a spreadsheet for the departments to use to fill in their financial data. This will ensure that we are all speaking the same language between departments and the committee.

### Quarterly Reporting

We had discussed a stringent quarterly reporting system be put in place tied to the full stipends. At this point in time, we feel that with the planning and the standards being put in place, that it would be better just to have a quarterly report from each department giving highlights of their departments workings for the quarter, so we can see that things are on track. This would be reported in a budget/planning meeting who would then report to the commission. This would then allow us to check the boxes of the planned items each quarter to see if we are on track.

If after this first year, things have not improved, then we would look at a more stringent checks and balances reporting but felt that this may over burden departments at this point in time.

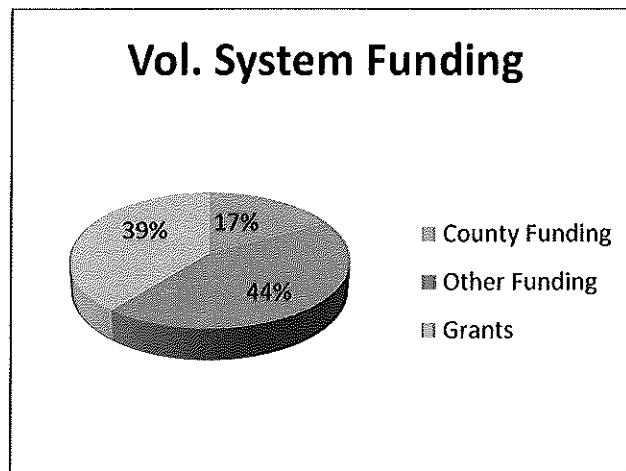


# Clarke County Fire & EMS Commission Budget Sub-Committee

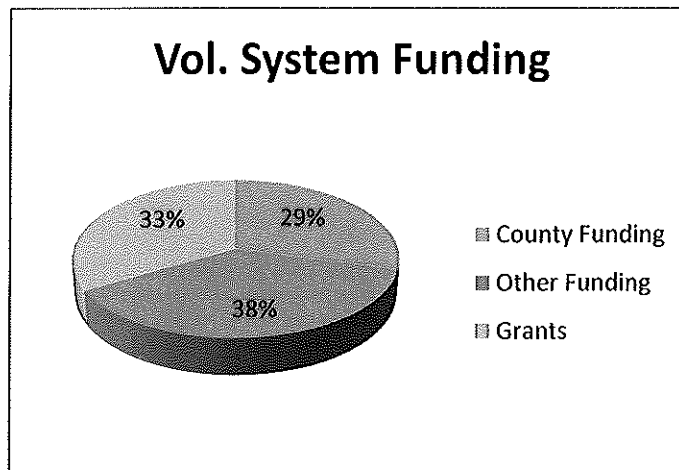


## BUDGET COMPARISON

### Current Fire-Rescue Funding



### Requested Fire-Rescue Funding



# BUDGET WORKSHEET

	ENDERS	BOYCE	BLUE RIDGE
<b>Current Allotment</b>	\$75,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
<b>Requested Allotment</b>	\$150,000	\$50,000	\$100,000
<b>Request Purpose</b>	Replace Ambulance & Ladder Truck	Pay for PT employees	PPE & Stn. Elec. Upgrades
<b>Current Breakdown</b>			
<b>% of Total Budget</b>	25% - 30%	6%	22%
Vehicle Repairs	\$56,229	\$23,938	NA
Fire Equipment & Supplies	\$15,920	\$3,350	\$27,757
EMS Equipment & Supplies	\$11,963	\$38,213	\$4,161
Fuel	\$11,985	\$16,105	\$3,979
Utilities	\$20,493	\$25,348	\$21,315
Training	\$2,611	\$3,010	NA
New Apparatus	\$79,828	\$11,874	\$248,855
Fundraising Expenses	\$19,648	\$406,976	\$19,886
Other	\$82,779	\$20,437	\$15,357
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$301,456</b>	<b>\$549,251</b>	<b>\$341,310</b>
<b>Average Yearly Depar. Budget</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>\$550,000</b>	<b>\$220,000</b>
<b>Current High Priorities</b>			
PPE	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%
SCBA Cylinders	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Radios	15.0%	15.0%	15.0%
Gas Meeters	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
OMD Agreement	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Additional Positions-2 (conv.)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Station Allotments	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Lifepack Maint. Contract	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
<b>Current Med. Priorities</b>			
Reporting Computers	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Training Program	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Physicals	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Fit Testing	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Veh. Maint. Contract	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Show Removal/Build. Maint	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Current Low Priorities</b>			
MDT	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Hose/Ladder	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Recruitment/Retention	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Vol. Incentive Program	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Strecher Maint.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total-</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>