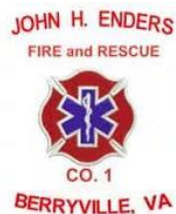




CLARKE COUNTY FIRE, EMS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BUDGET PROPOSAL

Fiscal Year 2022



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Introduction

The Clarke County Department of Fire, EMS and Emergency Management (CCFEMS) is a proud member of the Clarke County Fire – Rescue System. The Department was created in 2014 following recommendations from the Fire and EMS Workgroup. Although the County has had career personnel for many years helping to answer emergency calls there was no formal department.

The CCFEMS is led by the Director of Fire and EMS. The primary function of the department is to assist the Volunteer Companies in meeting the high demands in providing Fire, Emergency Medical Services, Hazmat and Technical Rescue to the citizens and visitors of Clarke County. Support is provided in many ways; providing personnel to respond to calls, revenue recovery collection, education and much more.

The Director is the overall system manager and is responsible for working with each Company, County Administration and the Board of Supervisors to meet the mission of the department. The Mission of the Clarke County Fire – Rescue system is to provide a unified career and volunteer service department that provides safe and professional response to fire, medical and environmental emergencies. The department is dedicated to minimizing the loss of life and property through suppression, rescue, education, and other programs.

Our Core Values are what drive us each and every day. They are Professional Excellence, Teamwork and Integrity (TIP). These Core Values help guide us in making the best financial decisions for the system.

This year's budget **requests** are focused in two categories; Operations and Capital Improvements.

Operations-

- 1- Assist with volunteer staffing \$257,217(adding career personnel to Blue Ridge Vol. Fire Company).
- 2- Three new programs, Training program \$5,000 (adding funding line focused directly on Training), Tuition Program \$2,000

(program designed to give volunteers reimbursement/assistance for classes) and \$5,000 to create a Volunteer Recruitment line item (funding offset from Purchased Services).

- 3- Fire-EMS Job reclassifications \$20,053 (reclassification into of current Firefighter/EMT into 4 new Job classifications)

Capital –

- 1- With the assistance of an AFG grant, the purchase of new radios and SCBAs - \$1,000,000.
- 2- Follow the current radio upgrade project phase 3 (old phase 4) for vehicle repeaters for Fire-Rescue \$426,685.

All elements of this budget are focused on meeting the needs of the system. The System includes not only CCFEMS but also John H Enders Volunteer Fire Company, Boyce Volunteer Fire Company and Blue Ridge Volunteer Company. Although each Company submits their budget requests separately they are represented in this budget document.

This Budget Proposal is split into three significant parts; Expenses, Revenue and Capital Improvements. Part 1 (Expenses) will cover costs associated with; Volunteer expenses, Operations, Training & Recruitment, Administration and Support Services. Part 2 (Revenues) will cover revenue from Fee-For-Service, Grants and Clarke County General Funding. Part 3 (Capital Improvements) will focus on the Capital Outlays for Fire – Rescue over the next five years. This plan is in conjunction with the Clarke County Capital Improvement Plan.

Directors Message

The Clarke County Fire – Rescue System has experienced many significant impacts so far this year. The most notable is that current COVID-19 Pandemic. This has caused changes in operational policies and procedures, administrative actions and much more. However, we continue to work towards a system that provides the highest levels of service to our customers.

We often use the word “system” because we are truly a system. One element of the system cannot function appropriately if they are not supported. The three Volunteer Fire Companies, John H. Enders, Boyce and Blue Ridge are all critical internal customers for CCFEMS.

This FY22 Budget Proposal examined our current needs and programs while also looking at our future needs. Each decision made is weighed heavily on available funding and how requests could impact future budgets.

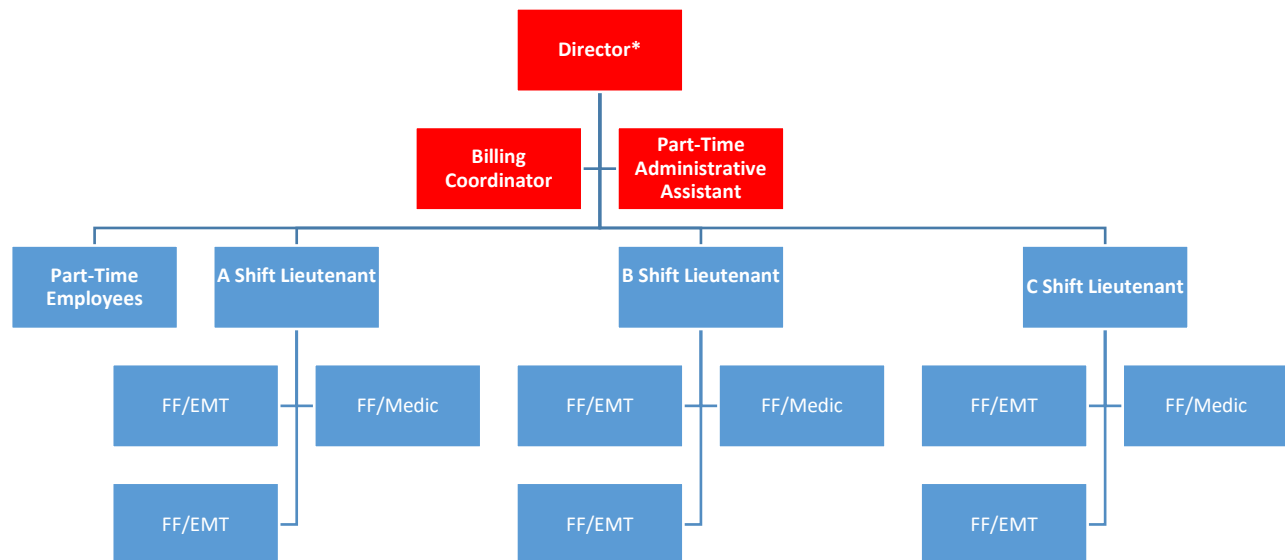
I am always thankful to the Volunteer Companies and our Administrative support personnel in the work they do each budget year. This assistance is critical in bringing forward a comprehensive plan that meets our needs while minimizing the impacts on tax payers.

Department Overview

The Clarke County Department of Fire, EMS and Emergency Management (CCFEMS) is the managing agency for Clarke County Fire – Rescue. Clarke County Fire – Rescue includes CCFEMS, John H. Enders Volunteer Fire Company, Boyce Volunteer Fire Company and the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company.

CCFEMS consists of two divisions; Operations and Administration. The Operations division is made up of 12-full time employees and 25 part time employees, and split into 3 different shifts (A,B,C). This division is responsible for providing direct service to our external customers (running the calls). The Administrative division is responsible for all administrative functions such as payroll, Fee-For-Service, Logistics, Supplies, Training and much more. These two divisions work closely with each other in providing the best service possible to both our external and internal customers.

Organizational Chart



RED – Administrative

BLUE – Operational

***-Operational & Administrative**

Fiscal Year 2021 Accomplishments

Fiscal Year 2021 posed many unique challenges, with uncertainty in revenue projections, increased expenses, federal Coronavirus Aid Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) funding and much, much more. Regardless of these challenges Fire – Rescue has fared well. Below is some of the accomplishments in FY 21;

- Expansion of NFPA 1582 Physical Program
- Implementation of Hazardous Duty Retirement Benefits
- New Fuel Program
- Enhanced Emergency Medical Supplies Program
- Expansion of Mobile Data Terminal Program
- Purchase of Qualitative and Quantitative FIT Testing Equipment
- COVID - Hazardous Duty Pay
- Assistance to Firefighter’s Grant – COVID
- Continuation of year 1 SAFER Grant
- RSAF Grant – Handtevy

Additionally, this Fiscal Year staffing was expanded to the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Rescue Company. This staffing was first initiated in the fall of 2020 and continues to expand, with the goal of providing staffing 12-hours a day 7 days a week. This staffing will be examined further in this budget proposal.



Handtevy Pediatric System

Expenses

The expenses identified below show the progression of costs from the previous year to the current year.

Volunteer Expenses

Expenses	FY 21 APPROVED	FY 22 Requested
Vol. Fire Disab Ins.	\$11,000	\$11,000
Vol. Fire Worker's Comp.	\$20,531	\$21,000
Vol. Fire Purchased Serv.	\$33,000	\$33,000
Vol. Fire Co Insurance	\$57,084	\$40,204
Vol. Fire Companies Enity Gift	\$25,000	\$0
Vol. Fire Incentive Prog.	\$15,000	\$0
Vol. Fire 4 for Life	\$18,438	\$20,000
Vol. Fire Fire Programs	\$33,726	\$36,000
Vol. Fire&Res Mat'l Suppls	\$2,000	\$2,000
Vol. Fire Tech WE/OL Content	\$0	\$0
Vol. Recruitment	\$0	\$5,000
Blue Ridge Vol. Fire LODA	\$1,846	\$1,900
Blue Ridge Vol. Fire Co. Contib.	\$65,000	\$65,000
Blue Ridge Mileage FFS	\$0	\$13,800
Blue Ridge Cylinder Replacement	\$0	\$39,573*
Boyce Vol. Fire LODA	\$2,137	\$2,200
Boyce Vol. Co. Contrib.	\$65,000	\$90,000*
Boyce Mileage FFS	\$0	\$28,750
Enders Vol. Fire LODA	\$2,623	\$2,700
Enders Vol. Fire Co. Contrib.	\$90,000	\$90,000
Enders Mileage FFS	\$0	\$72,450
Shenandoah Farms Line of Duty	\$0	\$0
Shanandoah Farms Vol. Fire Co	\$0	\$0
Tuition Reimb./Assistance	\$0	\$2,000
Technology-Lifepack Cloud Srv	\$40,000	\$0
Lifepack Maintenance Contract	\$20,000	\$20,000
Subtotal-	\$502,385	\$596,577

Table 1

*-Volunteer Company requested item

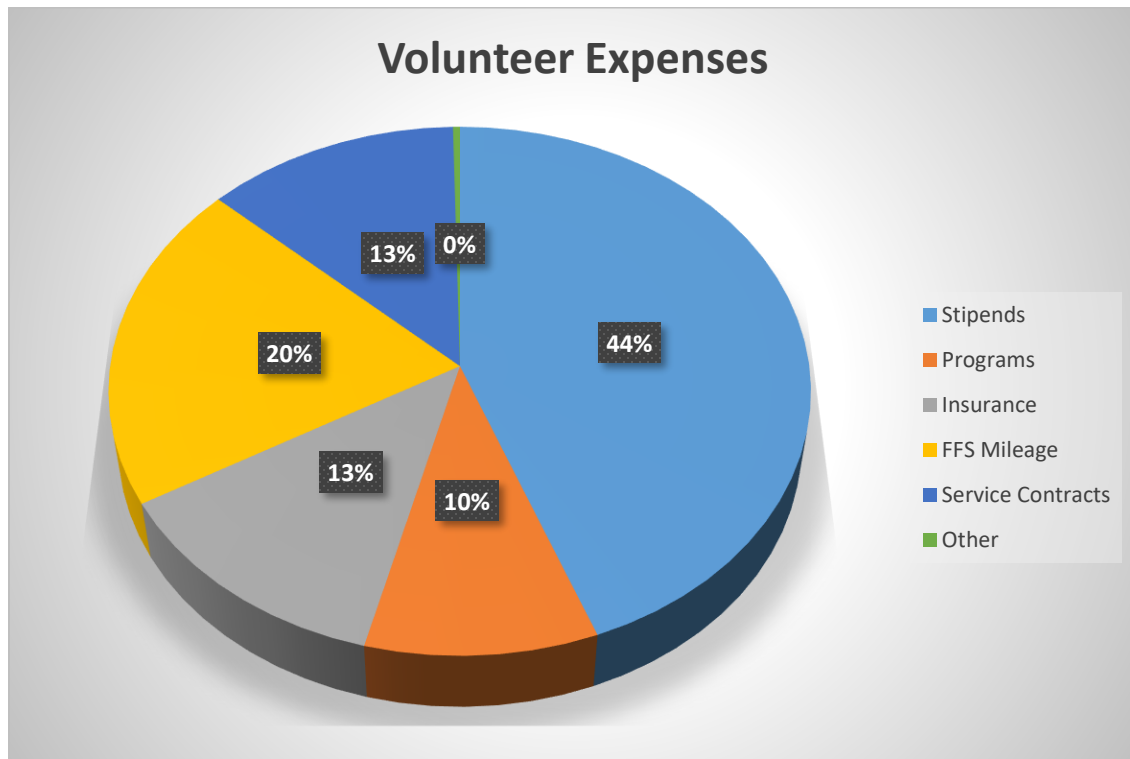


Chart 1

The Volunteer Expenses shown in table one (page 7) shows an increase of \$95,192 from the previous year. This increase is primarily due to the change in the Fee-For-Service program structure.

Starting in FY 2022 each Company will receive Fee-For-Service funding associated with revenue earned from transport mileage. The total estimated mileage revenue for FY22 is estimated to be about 25.5% of all collections, this is equal to \$115,000. Table 2 below demonstrates the historical data on call percentages and estimated mileage revenue.

Company	% of total revenue	Estimated Distribution
John H Enders	63%	\$72,450
Boyce	25%	\$28,750
Blue Ridge	12%	\$13,800
Total	100%	\$115,000

Table 2

To assist in off-setting costs associated with the change in Fee-For-Service the Incentive program was eliminated.

Additionally, the \$25,000 to Warren County was also removed. Over the past two years we have seen a rise in the dispatch to on scene time from the area designated to Warren County Company 6 (first due, box 402). In the past year we have seen the response to box 402 increase by as much as 6 minutes in a single month, and seen a decrease of an average of 4.5 calls a month (due to the Company being OOS). In recent months we have made adjustments to the dispatch procedures to address this issue and found units from Boyce are getting to the scene in about the same amount of time. In 2019 the average cost per call for Warren County was \$153.40 (total calls divided by allotment). In 2020 that cost has risen to \$221.20 per call. This increase in response times is largely contributed to Warren County Fire – Rescue needs for that unit within their own system. This and a decrease of reliance on mutual aid companies by an average of 50% over the same past two years contributed to this decision. Lastly, in efforts to offset the rising costs of Fire – Rescue, I feel these funds can be reallocated with minimal impacts on service delivery.

All costs reduced to assist with off-setting the Fee-For-Service program are listed below;

Program	Original Amount	Reduced Amount	Savings
Incentive Program	\$15,000	\$0	\$15,000
Fuel Program	\$35,000	\$15,000	\$20,000
Warren County	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000
Insurance Savings	\$57,084	\$40,204	\$16,880
Travel	\$8,000	\$6,000	\$2,000
		Total-	\$78,880

Table 3

You will also notice a new line item titled “Vol. Recruitment”, this line item is for volunteer recruitment within the system. The funds for this project will be off-set by reducing the amount in purchased services (in Operational Expenses).

Volunteer Recommendations

Boyce Volunteer Fire Company - has requested an addition of \$25,000 to their stipend to assist with costs associated with their part-time employees.

Recommendation-After meeting with the Fire-EMS Commission budget sub-committee I feel the best option is to provide this funding in a reimbursement allotment. See the staffing plan for further recommendations.

The Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company - has requested \$39, 573 for the replacement of 35 SCBA cylinders if the AFG grant is not successful.

Recommendation- All the cylinders in the system are due to expire in 2021 and 2022. This is a system problem and is identified the CIP. Therefore, there is no need to approve funding for this project separately as long as this request is included as part of the CIP.

Operational Expenses

Expenses	FY 21 APPROVED	FY 22 Requested
EMS Salaries (4 new FTE-Blue Ridge)	\$794,155	\$1,073,724
EMS Overtime	\$74,182	\$112,200
EMS Part Time Salaries	\$50,000	\$35,000
Employee Bonuses	\$0	\$0
EMS FICA	\$67,273	\$91,274
EMS VRS 1&2	\$35,224	\$55,000
EMS VRS Benefits - Hybrid Plan	\$35,060	\$0
EMS Health Ins	\$130,184	\$156,229
EMS Life Ins	\$10,534	\$12,500
EMS DisIns Hybrid	\$2,365	\$3,500
EMS WC	\$45,600	\$48,000
EMS Leave Pay	\$28,200	\$8,500
EMS LODA	\$20,000	\$23,500
EMS Purchased Services	\$49,100	\$44,100
EMS Postal Services	\$200	\$200
EMS Telephone	\$1,450	\$1,550
EMS Travel	\$8,000	\$6,000
EMS Training	\$0	\$5,000
EMS Misc	\$5,000	\$5,500
EMS Mat&Sup	\$40,000	\$40,000
EMS Veh Fuel	\$35,000	\$20,000
EMS Clothing	\$13,000	\$15,000
EMS Noncap Office Equip	\$2,000	\$2,000
EMS Tech SW/OL	\$15,000	\$15,000
EMS Capital outalys Adds	\$10,500	\$10,500
AFG Radios/SCBAs	\$0	\$1,007,000
Radio Project	See CIP Section	
LEMPG Grant	\$7,500	\$7,500
Handtevy EMS RSAF Grant (spring 2020)	\$8,000	\$0
Subtotal-	\$1,487,527	\$2,798,777

Table 4

Priority 1 (\$257,217) –

For the second time in three years the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company has requested staffing assistance. In their first request, a study was done and found

the majority of calls by the Company were to assist Enders Company 1. A determination was therefore made that additional staffing would best be used at Company 1 Enders.

Over the past two years the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Company has seen an increase in the number of “failures” and a decrease in the number of volunteer hours. The average failure percentage for the Blue Ridge Rescue Company has risen 13.6%, with an average failure percentage in 2020 of 24.7%. In addition, 3 of the 5 areas (boxes) where we are not meeting our response goal are located in the Blue Ridge Fire Company first due.

In 2019 the average volunteer hours (information from the incentive program, operational members only) was over 470 hours per month. In 2020 that average has dropped to 271 hours per month. The number of average volunteers participating went from 14.8 in 2019 to 10.3 in 2020. It should be noted that Blue Ridge on average has 33% of the members of Enders and 50% the membership of Boyce and some of the highest certified members in the system.

By adding 4 new FTEs for the Blue Ridge Staffing we can have significant impacts on our service delivery. This staffing would include 1-Lieutenant, 1-Technician II and 2 Technician I's. An alternative plan would be to spread this expense over two years, hiring two FTEs in FY22 and two in FY23. However, this would increase costs in part-time personnel (an estimated \$90,000) in order to maintain two personnel in the station. This staffing is important to meeting our response goal of 15 minutes on EMS incidents. We believe that areas not meeting this goal could be reduced by half with this staffing.



Furthermore, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends having 14-17 people on the scene of any residential fire at a “full alarm assignment” 80-90% of the time. The only way we will be able to meet this standard and the goal set on the Strategic Plan (“to provide excellent Fire and Emergency Medical Services, i.e., the proper level of care and timeliness of service, 24 hours a day and seven days a week”) is to increase career personnel during peak times when volunteers are not available. This most often is during the daytime hours. Below is a breakdown of firefighters needed on a “residential house fire”;

- 1-Incident Commander
- 1-Pump Operator
- 2-Firefighters on attack lines
- 2-Firefighters on backup lines
- 1-Firefighter for attack line support
- 1-Firefighter for back up line support
- 2-Firefighters for search and rescue
- 2-Firefighters for ventilation
- 2-Firefighters to service as Rapid Intervention Team
- 14-Total if aerial device not in operation**

- 1-Aerial device operator
- 2-Water shuttle (tanker operators)
- 17-Total if aerial device in operations**

*Information obtained from NFPA 1710 & 1720 standards

The estimated costs associated with these additional personnel are provided below (using the change in job classification);

# of FTEs	Title	Annual Salary w/Benefits
1	Lieutenant	\$78,361.92
1	Tech. II	\$67,684.03
2	Tech. I	\$111,371.52
Total-		\$257,417.47

Table 5

By adding these additional positions we are addressing the Volunteer Company's concern, working towards our response time goals and improving the overall service to the community. We have already seen improvements as high as 10 minutes (dispatch to en-route) on days when the station is staffed with career personnel to assist.

Additionally, this added staffing will be used to help with increased logistical duties such as SCBA mask & N95 FIT testing, SCBA repair & maintenance, radio programming, uniform/gear management and scheduling.

Future Staffing Considerations - Two Companies have now requested staffing assistance and the third has requested additional funding to support part-time employees they provide. This enforces the need for a long-range staffing plan to assist these Companies. If volunteer recruitment can bring in enough personnel to keep failure percentages below 10% and meet response standards there will be no need for further career staffing. Below is a recommendation on staffing by priority;

Priority	# FTE's	Company	Staffing Schedule
1	4	Blue Ridge	12hrs day 7 days week
2	4	Boyce	12hrs day 7 days week
3	2	Enders	Fill Sunday & Wednesday
4	2	Boyce/Blue Ridge	24hrs day 7 days a week

Table 6

Priority 2 Training (\$5,000 & \$2,000)–

Additionally, there is three new line items (programs) identified, the first is Training (\$5,000). This line item will be addressing continuing education (CE) training required by certifications that was previously provided by another jurisdiction. This training would be provided to both career and volunteer personnel in the system at no cost to the provider. It is the goal of the program to provide enough CE training every year that anyone regardless of certification level, can obtain the required CE hours for re-certification. Remaining funding would be used to provide much need fire training.

The second item is a tuition reimbursement/assistance program (\$2,000). This program will focus on providing volunteers possible tuition assistance for programs such as Advance Life Support certification and other college level courses. A program will be developed to outline the requirements for funding prior to any funding being awarded.

The third is Recruitment (\$5,000-taken from Purchased Services). As identified earlier, recruitment is one of our highest priorities in 2021. For the past several years we have tried to obtain information on recruitment from each Company. However, this information has been intermediate at best therefore, in January 2021 a Recruitment Committee is being formed to help the system in identifying the “right volunteers” for our system. Additionally, this committee with help in identifying methods to focus funding on such as flyers, mailers, radio advertisement and much more. The true cost of the program can only be fully developed after a clear plan has been developed. Therefore the funding set aside for this project is estimated only and a more defined amount will be sought in Fiscal Year 2023 after the Committee has developed a plan.

Priority 3 (\$20,053)–

Currently Fire-EMS only has two job classification; Firefighter/EMT/Medic (grade 15) and Lieutenant (grade 22). This leaves big gaps in career development, and compensation when an employee is promoted. A Firefighter/Medic with one year of service is in the same grade as a Firefighter/Medic with 20 years’ experience and significantly more certifications. As identified by the BOS budget priorities, employee compensation is a priority to maintain our strong workforce.

Eliminating the current position of Firefighter/EMT/Medic and creating four different positions; Technician I-EMT, Technician I-Medic, Technician II-EMT and Technician II-Medic will encourage employees to work towards certification to achieve higher positions. Additionally, this allows a position (Technician II) to be the senior person on duty when the shift Lieutenant is off.

Each of these positions is dependent on certifications and experience levels with the lowest grade (Technician I) needing only minimum certification and little experience, to the Technician II who needs additional certifications and a

minimum of 7 years' experience. I propose the following job classification and titles to address this issue;

Grade	Title	Salary-Min	Salary-Mid	Salary-Max
15	Technician I-EMT	\$40,360.14	\$52,468.19	\$64,576.23
16	Technician I-Medic	\$42,378.15	\$55,091.60	\$67,805.04
17	Technician II-EMT	\$44,497.06	\$57,846.18	\$71,195.29
18	Technician II-Medic	\$46,721.91	\$60,738.49	\$74,755.06

Table 7

These new classifications, using the current grading system encourages employees to seek additional certification and longevity in the Department. Currently, we have 9 employees whose titles are Firefighter/EMT or Firefighter/Medic. Costs associated with this program are addressed in Table 8 below.

Current Grade	# of Emp.	New Grade	New Title	Cost
15	3	15	Tech. I-EMT	\$0
15	1	16	Tech. I-Medic	\$925
15	2	17	Tech. II-EMT	\$9,830
15	3	18	Tech. II-Medic	\$9,298
Total Cost-				\$20,053

Table 8

Table 9 below shows the difference in certification and experience levels required for each position. Numbers represent the training hours required for each certification.

Certification	FF/EMT/Medic	Tech. I- EMT	Tech. I- Medic	Tech. II- EMT	Tech. II- Medic
Grade	15	15	16	17	18
Experience-Firefighter (years)	0	0	0	5	5
Experience-EMT (years)	0	0	0	7	7
NIMS 100	6	6	6	6	6
NIMS 200	12	12	12	12	12
NIMS 700	4	4	4	4	4
NIMS 800	5	5	5	5	5
CPR	8	8	8	8	8
EMT-Basic	160	160	160	160	160
Infection Control	4	4	4	4	4
Firefighter I	160	160	160	160	160
Rural Water Supply	16	16	16	16	16
Mayday FF Down	16	16	16	16	16
Hazmat Awar./Ops	32	32	32	32	32
HIPPA	2	2	2	2	2
EVOC I, II, III	16	16	16	16	16
Driver Pump Operator (DPO)	56	56	56	56	56
Art of Reading Smoke	8	8	8	8	8
Firefighter II				57	57
Pediatric Life Support (PALS)			12.5		12.5
Advanced Life Support (ACLS)			15.5		15.5
EMT-Paramedic/Intermediate			1800		1800
Technical Rescue-Mod II				8	8
Technical Rescue-Mod II				16	16
Vehicle Rescue-Level I				16	16
Instructor I				42	42
Officer I				72	72
Total Hour Requirements-	505	505	2333	716	2544

Table 9

Additional adjustments-

The EMS VRS Benefits-Hybrid Plan decrease to \$0.00 with the assumption that all employees on this plan would move to VRS Plan 2 to meet requirements set forth in the High Risk Retirement program.

Fuel program (EMS Veh Fuel) has been reduced by \$20,000 to help off-set increased costs. This offset would maintain the current program with EMS units and would not expand to Fire Apparatus due to this reduction.

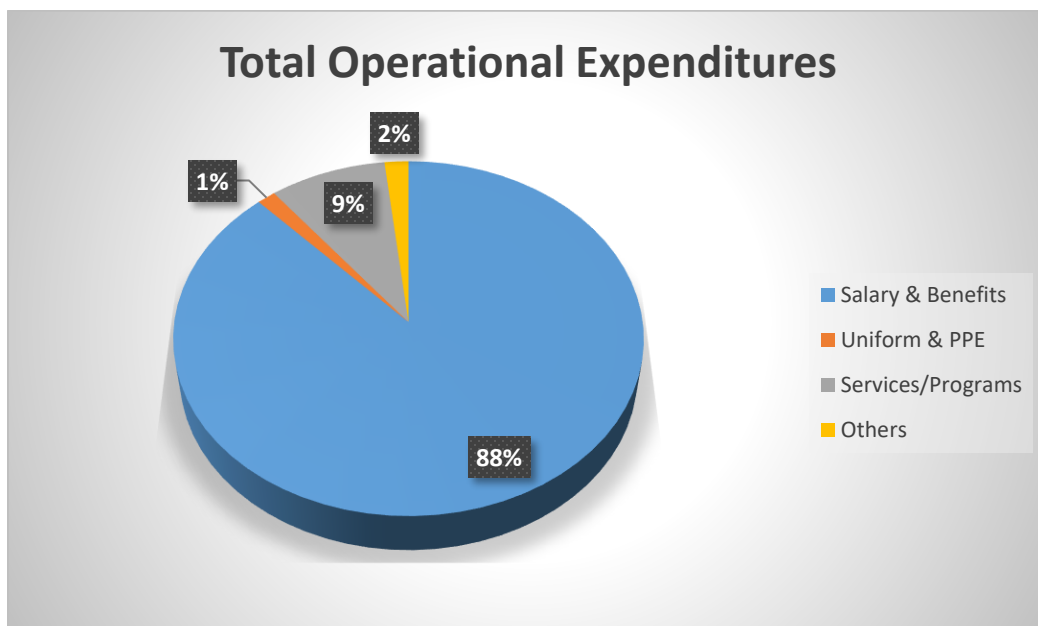


Chart 2

Services/Programs Include:

- Billing Company
- Scheduling system
- Vehicle inventory and tracking system (PSTrax)
- Reporting system (Image Trend)
- EMS Supply Program
- Fuel Program
- Mobile Data Terminals/Reporting Computers
- Public Education
- Career certification tracking
- Medicare Compliance
- New Applicant Testing
- EOC Operations
- Radio maintenance

Revenue

The Revenue Recovery Program also known as Fee-For-Service (FFS) Program has seen only modest increases since 2017 (see chart 2 below). The COVID pandemic is having an effect on Fiscal Year 2021's revenue, with decreases seen in the first 3 out of 4 months.

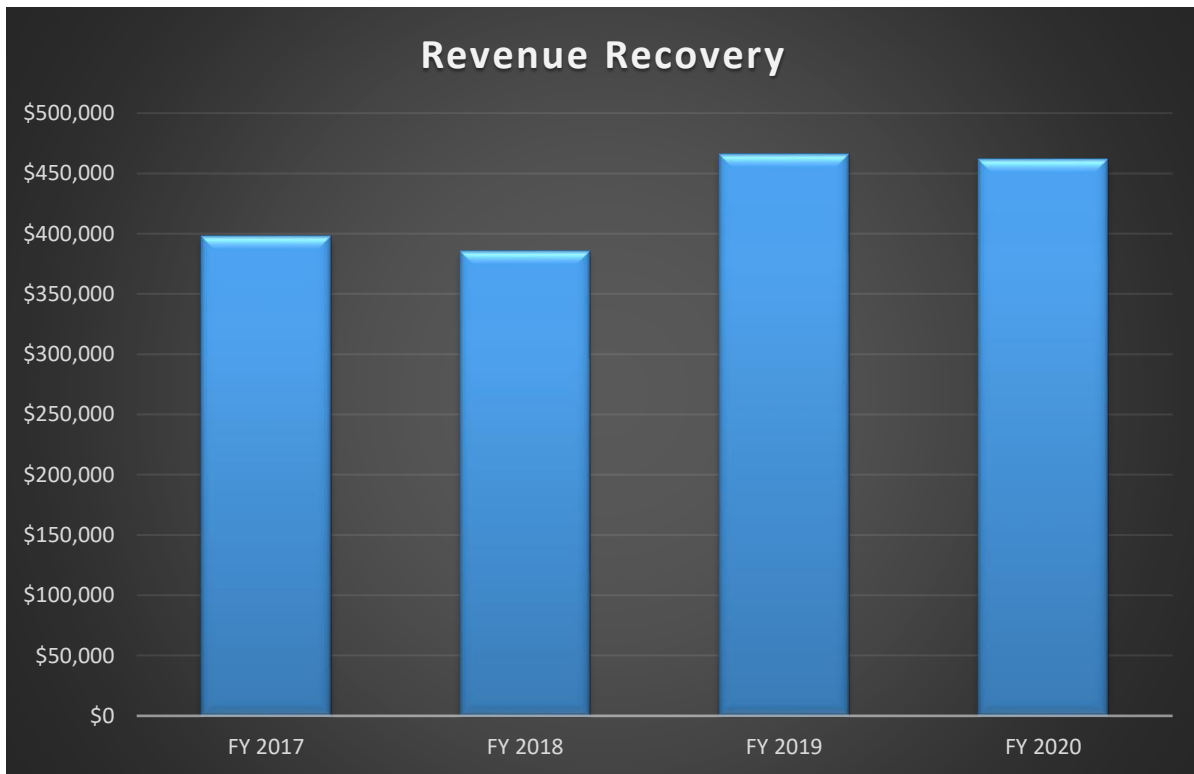


Chart 3

Fiscal Year 2022 is expected to see a very slight increase in revenue produced from this program for a total estimated revenue of \$460,000.

Grants

We continue to use grants to assist in meeting our system needs. The system has been very successful in obtaining grants to meet capital and operational needs.

The system has generated an estimated \$1.7 million in grant awards since 2016. Some of the grants awarded include:

- Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG)
- Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)
- Rescue Squad Assistance Fund (RSAF)
- Rural AED Grant
- Local Emergency Management Planning Grant (LEMPG)

In Fiscal Year 2022 the Clarke County Department of Fire, EMS and Emergency Management will continue the use of grants to assist with off-setting cost. Many of these items are part of the CIP Plan. Below is a list of grants that are planned for Fiscal Year 2022.

- Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG) – Radio & SCBA Replacement
- Local Emergency Management Grant – Emergency Management
- Rappahannock Electric Company – Volunteer Recruitment

Other Revenue

Some of the additional revenue received for the system include;

- Aid to Localities Funding (estimated to be \$34,200) – This funding is split evenly between the three Companies. These funds can be used for Public Education Programs, Training Facilities, EMS Equipment for Firefighters, Personnel Costs, Personnel Protective Equipment, Vehicles, Equipment and Supplies.
- Four for Life Funding (estimated to be \$19,000) – This funding is split evenly between the three Companies. These funds can be used for expenses associated with EMS training, EMS equipment, Supplies, and maintenance contracts.

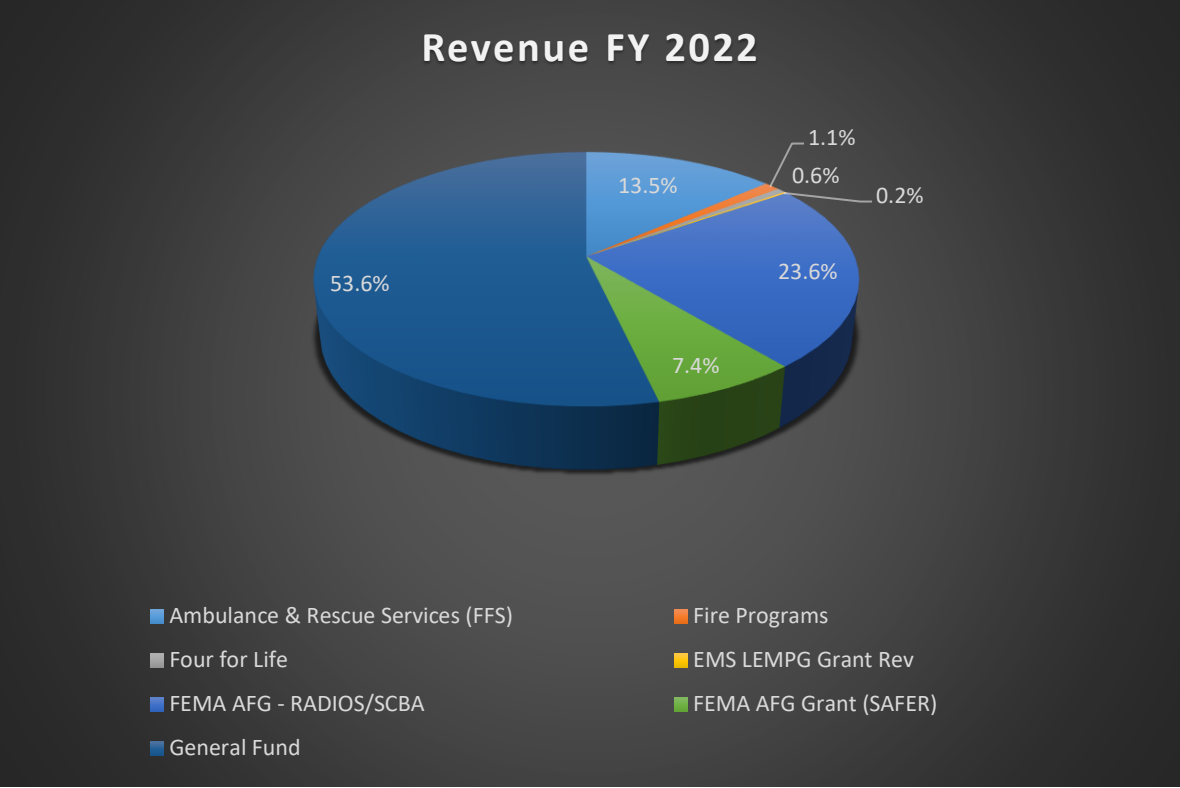


Chart 4

Revenue		
Ambulance & Rescue Services (FFS)	\$460,000	13.5%
Fire Programs	\$36,000	1.1%
Four for Life	\$20,000	0.6%
EMS LEMPG Grant Rev	\$7,500	0.2%
FEMA AFG – Radios/SCBA	\$800,000	23.4%
FEMA AFG Grant (SAFER)	\$252,221	7.4%
General Fund	\$1,819,633	53.9%
Subtotal-	\$3,416,354	

Table 10

Expense Summary	
Volunteer Expenses	\$596,577
Operational Expenses	\$2,798,777
Total All expenses	\$3,395,354

Table 10a

Capital Projects

Clarke County is currently developing a Capital Improvement Plan for 2021 – 2026. Capital projects are one time expenditures equal to or greater than \$50,000. This plan includes five projects associated with the Clarke County Fire – Recue System. Three of these projects are identified for this Fiscal Year.

Project 1 – Radio System Upgrade – Repeaters \$430,000

Year Requested: 2021-22

Description: This is Phase 4 of an approved capital project which was developed to improve radio capability for the Sheriff’s Office and Fire/Rescue. Phase 2 of this project is currently underway and involves equipment on the Mt. Weather tower. Phase 3 and 4 need to be evaluated once the tower equipment has been installed.

Justification: Once the Phase 2 equipment is installed (expected to be completed by June 2021) an on-the-ground evaluation of radio coverage will be performed to test coverage with the new equipment. This testing will determine if further tower improvements are needed and if repeaters in Fire/Rescue vehicles would improve radio operability. The Sheriff’s vehicles have repeaters currently so their vehicles can help us test the difference between having a repeater or not. Depending on the results of this evaluation, it may be necessary to equip Fire/Rescue vehicles with repeaters. We believe, at this time, that sufficient funds have been set aside in the capital budget to cover this project.

Project 2 – Radio Replacement –\$600,000

Year Requested: 2021-22

Description: This project will replace 110 mobile/portable radio units/headsets used by Fire & Rescue volunteers and career staff to communicate with dispatch and each other during incidents. Blue Ridge Fire Company is currently the only company with upgraded radios.

Justification: The radios currently in use are over 15 years old, have been discontinued by Motorola, and are not P25 compliant. Repair and replacement of these radios has become increasingly difficult and very costly. Radio functionality issues have been increasing over the years and it is currently estimated that 60% of radio traffic is repeated because of these issues. New radios/headsets will improve radio functionality, improve compliance with safety hearing standards, increase interoperability with regional partners, and reduce repair costs. We have applied for an AFG grant for this equipment with a 20% local match required. If the grant is unsuccessful, we suggest a phased approach to spread these costs over several fiscal years. It is

also possible that there will be funds leftover from the Radio System Upgrade project to help cover some of these costs.

Project 3 – Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) –\$400,000

Year Requested: 2021-22 and 2022-23

Description: SCBA's provide breathable air to volunteer and career staff on calls where fresh air is not available in the call environment (usually fires). There are currently 115 cylinders and 60 assemblies in the system.

Justification: This equipment has an expiration date set by National Fire Protection Association standards. The majority of our current equipment will expire according to this standard in 2021 and 2022. This is critical life safety equipment for our volunteers and career staff. We are applying for an AFG grant (80/20 split) to replace this equipment, and if not received, we propose to spread these costs over two fiscal years.

Project 4 – Cardiac Monitors –\$150,000

Year Requested: 2023-24, 2024-25, and 2025-26

Description: These devices are a critical component of care for volunteer and career EMT's and are used in every day responses. The devices can perform functions as simple as reading blood pressure to as complex functions as defibrillation. There are currently seven of these devices in the System and this project would replace three devices.

Justification: The industry standard for these units is typically between 10-15 years and some of our units are approaching this age. The manufacturer may also choose to suspend support on these older units at any time (they do provide sufficient notice). We are applying for a Rescue Squad Assistance Fund (RSAF) grant for this equipment but if unsuccessful would need County funds for this replacement project. The RSAF is typically a 50/50 split for the County and an 80/20 split if the fire company applies.

Project 5 – Apparatus Replacement –\$50,000 (annually)

Year Requested: Each Year

Description: This is a placeholder to create a fund to assist the fire companies in replacing aging apparatus. A system will need to be developed by the companies and county to assess needs, develop funding formulas, and to forecast the timing of major purchases.

Justification: It is prudent to plan ahead for major apparatus replacement.

Summary

Fiscal Year 2021 like calendar year 2020 has been a roller-coaster of ups and downs. We have experienced a Pandemic that has affected us all in some way. In our Fire – Rescue System the uncertain revenue during this trying time has shown we must stay vigilant in order to meet our financial needs. We must take advantage of the resources we have and look for new ways of meeting the goals of tomorrow. The CARES Act Funding of 2020 played a key role in meeting those goals. Through this funding we have been able to purchase essential personnel protective equipment (PPE) for all of our providers while limiting the impacts on our Volunteer Companies. Additionally, this funding has allowed us to be more self-reliant for the future.

Our System continues to make every decision in the best interest of our customers; the citizens and visitors of Clarke County. This year the Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire Department requested staffing assistance as they continue to struggle to find volunteers. This is our highest priority in Fiscal Year 2022. Priority 2 focuses on the change outlined in the 2020 revision of the Fire – Rescue Use Agreement. An estimated \$115,000 will go back to the Companies, this should help each Company with rising maintenance costs and apparatus replacement. The third and final priority is focused on two new programs Training; establishing a training line items as we work to meet our systems needs and, a Tuition Reimbursement/Assistance Program.

Fire – Rescue has always worked diligently to insure that funding is used as efficiently as possible, keeping costs down and productivity high. Again, the priority this fiscal year is to assist our volunteer partners in both funding support and staffing. Although we cannot predict when the next incident will occur we can make sure we are ready with personnel and the equipment.

On behalf of the Clarke County Fire – Rescue system I would like to thank the Board of Supervisors for their support over the years.