



Report to CCVESA

January 2, 2024

Chief Michael W. Robinson, Director

A happy New Year/2024 to all and on behalf of the DFEMS, my sincere gratitude for your significant contributions to Carroll County and its citizens! Cy-23 was a milestone year for DFEMS as we hired our initial personnel and began staffing for six fire stations, implemented ALS chase vehicles and established the shift commander. On all fronts we continued to create a “combination system” to best serve the needs of Carroll County and its citizens and visitors. I thank CCVESA and its officers for continuing a collaborative relationship that assures a partnership and the development of a viable emergency services delivery system. As we move into 2024, we will continue to diligently move forward and meet challenges as they occur.

Hiring Process: We are currently at 155 positions which includes six civilian administrative positions. We are also preparing to advertise for the FADO, FF/PM, Paramedic and FF/EMT positions by January 8th and the application period will extend until February 5, 2023. This will be to finish out the three-year staffing plan which includes medic unit and FADO staffing for stations: 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14. That is contingent on the budget approval by the Commissioners for a total of 84 additional positions. We will see how well we do in recruitment and those who were unsuccessful in our prior processes due to the written exam will all be eligible to apply. This breaks down to 28 FF/EMT’s, 28 FADOs and up to 28 PMs or FF/PMs.

We have 5 new FF/PMs who will begin employment this Thursday 1/4/23. They will be assigned to the PSTC for an orientation process until Wednesday 1/10/23 and will then be assigned with preceptors until they validate their ALS skills and will be released accordingly. A General Order will be forthcoming to show their assignments. We also have 9 additional PM and FF/PM candidates who are going through the hiring/testing process currently and this will complete our field staffing of 148 positions for FY 24 and provide us with 6 floaters/shift or 24 total.

We have also asked for a third assistant chief to manage field operations (4 shift commanders and assigned personnel) This will balance the duties better among three chiefs and allow a single point of contact for all operational issues. This is in the FY 25 budget along with two training/safety lieutenants, an office assistant and the upgrade of the shift commanders to the captain rank and for one ALS car to be upgraded to four lieutenants. This would allow for greater supervision and create a back-up officer for the shift commander.

Transition to county employees: There are undoubtedly a multitude of questions and how? Why? What if? Etc. that will be raised by this transition. This will include some emotion as this is a big step by all companies! It is my intent in the near future to schedule meetings with at least the president, chief and (boards if desired) of each impacted company to go over such concerns as “interim staffing” contingencies once current employees are hired but not yet reporting to stations? Who will be assigned? The transition to county billing? . Our goal is to assure continuity of service and a smooth overall transition. This is

many years in the making, we have a signed MOU, and our goal is to make this seamless with our objective to address your concerns. In the interim, the chief of each company may contact the shift commanders if they have a void with current EMS position staffing. We recently provided personnel to staff the Hampstead EMS unit when there was no corporate staff available.

Response profiles: (ALS incidents) I am very aware of the many response issues that exist with these units. These issues will be mostly resolved after July when all Carroll transport units are staffed as ALS. In the interim please review General Order: 12-7-23 for clarification as to how these units will function until we have full staffing in July 2024. We have listened to the issues, met with ECC and believe that we can best serve the system with these interim changes. This will include responding a chase car to ALS incidents where a Medic is down staffed to BLS and allow ALS to be initiated sooner. The ultimate decision to upgrade or have an ALS unit transport will be incident specific and in the best interest of patient outcome.

(Unconscious) General Order: 12-2-23 assures that unconscious subjects all have a support apparatus responding on the initial response as these are usually critical patients and additional staffing is required to support such incidents. The minimal staffing level for such units is two personnel and with the responding ambo/medic and ALS chase car there will be a minimum of 5 personnel on such calls.

FY-25 Budget/CCVESA: Multiple budget meetings were held with all companies over several months to discuss the FY-25 budget. A lot of concerns and issues were brought up. Your treasurer did a great job of managing the process and is ready with the finished product going to the budget analyst for review and follow up meeting with our budget analyst. My sincere thanks to all of those involved as this will be I expect a “challenging” budget year. During the next several weeks DFEMS will be meeting with the Department of Management & Budget to put forth our FY-25 operating budget. We have heard your budget concerns along with our overall needs and we will certainly advocate to assure your concerns are heard. Please understand that there is a process, and we can hopefully be successful in our funding. There will be public budget hearings in the Spring, and we will ask for your support there as well.

SOPs: We are continuing in our process with FROPS and ESAC to move forward with our operational SOPs. The prior CCVESA approved SOPs where applicable will become part of the DFEMS SOPs. Both ESAC and FROPS continue to work along with DFEMS and are working collaboratively to move this forward. The previously approved communications policy has some issues and has been sent back to FROPS for additional review/revision.

State of the County: This annual event sponsored by the Carroll Chamber of Commerce will be held on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, beginning at 8 AM at the Carroll County Arts Council (Theatre) located at 91 W. Main Street, Westminster, MD 21157. This is a public event, and the County Commissioners of Carroll County will preside and each will provide insight on Carroll County and its direction and initiatives for 2024. Although seating is limited this is open to the public.

Data Analyst: Katie Spurrier, has hit the ground running and is becoming acclimated to both Keystone and ERS. She is going to be developing an “annual report” which should go out in February and will show data at various levels to include responses, staffing and GIS mapping of her findings. She will be looking at all data points and we will be standardizing our reporting which will include an upgrade to new reporting software for DFEMS which will mean that the current ERS will be replaced with a new product

and that will be ESO. This is a complex process that will take at least a year to transition. Included will be single silo reporting where all data will be sent to the data analyst v. the OSFM. This will enable us to provide grants and on-going data to the Commissioners, MIEMSS and OSFM/NFIRS. Part of this process will be the end of NFIRS reporting and a migration to a new federal system known as NERIS or National Emergency Response Information System. ESAC Chair Ricky Baker is very active with this along with Chief Ruch, Richard Koons and other representatives from IT as well as the ECC, and IT. This will be a participative process with our goal of centralized data repository and recognition as a jurisdiction which will then enable us to compete for AFG, SAFER and other grants in the future.

LMS (Learning Management System) Our thanks to the CCVESA Liaison-Richard Koons for his valuable assistance with getting some compliance programs up and running. We are looking to expand this system for training delivery and tracking. A recent MOSH complaint has established that we must centralize compliance and other training information.

Training Center Expansion: As most are aware the Phase II of the PSTC which is an expansion of the practical training area to include a new burn facility, flammable liquids/gas props and other enhancements has been held up by the presence of PFAS compounds in the soil. The county did an \$80K assessment of the site which was submitted to the MDE for review. The county's Department of Land & Resource Management has been tasked to oversee the site remediation. AC Dennis Brothers is the DFEMS point of contact, and we are moving forward with some site remediation.

Along with this project we are moving forward with a logistics/warehouse facility on the PSTC campus. Working with facilities we have established a temporary warehouse in an unused area of the barn on the first floor. That is currently operational, and we are storing medical supplies, PPE and other items since last year. Dennis Brothers is leading the project and is also coordinating the rehab of the block building that was in use by the Sheriff. We will do a rebuild of that building which will become the DFEMS warehouse and office of the quartermaster. This project has been approved and is moving forward with an anticipated Spring 24 completion. This will house our quartermaster who is working out of a temporary office at the PSTC.

We did meet recently with the CCVESA leadership regarding ongoing and future needs of the PSTC for space as DFEMS expands while meeting the needs of the association. We are looking at repurposing some space by the late Spring in anticipation of our training staff. The long-range plan will be for a DFEMS HQ facility on the main county campus and in the design, we will incorporate permanent space for CCVESA and assure that the DFEMS needs are met with adequate office, meeting and support facilities. This is a long-term project.

Incident Response: The end of CY 2023 actually shows decreases in our overall responses although not that significant we are working on the final data and await station end of year reporting via our data analyst.

EMS Billing: Along with our EMS Billing Technicians Amy and Jennifer we are making progress in this area. We are working directly with the VFCs that have come on board with our vendor Digitech and although slow to come in the revenues appear to be steady and thanks to feedback from the users, we are making improvements towards greater efficiency and quicker turn-around. proposal) to solicit and select a new billing vendor. Those that currently have a contract with Advent-Edge, should hopefully see no changes on your end. More to follow and once we select a new vendor it may be more advantageous to

allow the county to bill on your behalf and working with the comptroller's office we can streamline and provide you with monthly billing payments and other services. If you have any issues, you can contact Tracey at her office: (410) 386-6800 and she can assist you.

MD Fire Chiefs: Will host on Saturday 1/20/24 the Mark Falkenhan Operational Leadership Seminar with an all day (0800-1600) presentation at the PSTC which includes a free lunch. The seminar has relevance for operational and administrative officers and will be presented by Chief Tiger Schmittendorf who is an award-winning fire service educator and speaker. You can pre-register: via MFRI.

Background checks: We were approved for \$50,000 recently by the Commissioners. We are now finalizing the logistics and hope to begin later in the month. I may need to request a training session for each company and include the president or designee who will have access to a portal to begin the process. The next question is who will need these backgrounds:

1. All riding/operational members
2. All new applicants for a VFC
3. Anyone who participates in LOSAP and is a functional administrative member.

I realize that there may be some additional questions and you can email these to me, or we can discuss at the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Chief Michael W. Robinson

Director- DFEMS