



## **Report to CCVESA**

**July 7, 2025**

**Chief Michael W. Robinson, Director**

I have the below report for CCVESA for you to read and update yourselves with current issues and areas relevant to DFEMS. I will not be in attendance at your meeting this evening. Please forward any questions or concerns by email. Best wishes for a successful meeting.

**MSFA: Congratulations!** To the new MSFA President Charlie Simpson who was installed on June 17 and become the president of the state association. Charlie has a 50+ history in Fire & EMS serving in many positions. He will certainly be an advocate for the volunteer system and throughout the state. I was honored to be in attendance and presented him with a recognition award from the County Commissioners. Also, congratulations to CCVESA Liaison Richard Koons who will serve as an assistant secretary for MSFA, Sam Mann who is an assistant chaplain and PP Mark Bilger who will chair the MSFA Exec Committee. Certainly, a lot of Carroll influence at the state level. Also, congratulations to Westminster who received several awards from the parade including Chief 3 as the best appearing Chief's vehicle. DFEMS also had a successful recruitment booth in the exhibits area. Also, Doug Alexander of Mt. Airy was recognized with the prestigious Gladhill-Thompson Award.

**Congratulations: To Chief Eric Zaney** who has been appointed by the Governor to serve on the state SEMSAC committee under the state EMS board. Chief Zaney will be representing the Metro Chiefs organization on the group.

**The Maryland EMS Protocols:** For ALS and BLS providers are in effect as of 7/1/25. We have added several additional medications as a result of these changes, and they are being placed on all ALS vehicles. All MIEMSS ALS and BLS providers were required to complete the protocol training by the 7/1/25 date. Chief Zaney has provided a list to all Chiefs and EMS officers of those who are not compliant with this training mandate. Any personnel who are not validated as having completed the applicable protocol training are suspended from functioning as EMS providers within Carroll County. Once training has been completed as validated by MIEMSS and verified by DFEMS, then personnel will be able to resume EMS functioning. Please refer any questions to Chief Zaney.

**Staffing (VFCs):** Our staffing as of today is 216 of 224 budgeted positions with a net vacancy of 8 positions. We had 10 personnel released for staffing at the end of May and 5 are FF/PMs, 1-PM and 4 FADOs. There are several paramedics who continue to be precepted prior to their release. Assignments were sent out with a recent transfer list. Our goal is obviously to fill all vacancies and finally gain some consistency with staffing. We currently have 7 personnel who started on Thursday 6/5 and 4 are PMs or FF/PMs and 3 are FADOs or FF/EMTs. They were released on 6/19 for staffing with some being held for ALS precepting. We have an additional 5 personnel, and they are processing with a July 17 start date. This finalizes staffing for all station positions and 16 floaters for 4/shift. We currently have at least 6 personnel out on long-term leave (FMLA) or on modified duty which also impacts our staffing. We are testing again this

week to establish an eligibility list for some anticipated vacancies.

Our goal continues to be to staff all 16 transport units to ALS. We have begun that with the return of Gamber (M-139) and soon with Union Bridge (M-89) to ALS staffing. This is occurring partially based on the shift working. Mt. Airy's second ALS will follow. This will give us a total of 16 EMS (ALS) transport units with three stations having two units (1, 3, 12.)

Our budget initiatives for FY-26 will include an upgrade of 12 ALS car paramedics to Lieutenant/paramedics. Our request for two training/safety lieutenants and 12 requested additional floaters to offset leave, sick and injury staffing were not recommended in the operating budget. We did receive four (4) floater positions in the budget which will increase our floaters to 4/shift. This brings our total staffing to 236 in FY 26 as approved.

**Future staffing** growth is obviously tied to the budget, and we will determine our needs jointly through VFC requests, ESAC recommendations and based on our ongoing data analysis which will be enhanced with the advent of our new ESO reporting system which is in the implementation phase and will go live by 12/25 or sooner if we are comfortable with the implementation progress. Melissa has begun to bring stations "on board" for the testing phase of the new NERIS system.

Everyone will be an integral component of this, and we must all concur on the "What, How and Why" with regards to NERIS reporting which will drive our staffing needs. Ultimately any new DFEMS staffing is determined by the Commissioners and it is solely their decision.

Our work group, under the coordination of our data analyst continues to move forward on this project and an implementation schedule is ongoing. There was a great presentation on NERIS at the convention and provided the national perspective. Melissa recently completed training at the NFA for NERIS and related data management. We will be meeting with the OSFM NERIS coordinator in the next several months to further integrate our transition with the state reporting which will transition with NERIS. This will occur at a time/date to accommodate representation from all companies. If you haven't done so already, please determine who your front person is for NERIS reporting as well as an alternate.

**Budget:** The operating budget for FY-26 has been approved on May 20 and is published on the county web site. The budget analyst should have been in touch with your treasurer as the FY 26 budget is in effect as of July 1, 2025. Those companies who were approved for the supplemental funding for corporate staffing should have been reimbursed. If not, then contact the CCVESA treasurer as those funds are managed by her.

We were successful in securing a third medic unit which was originally removed from the proposed operating budget. There was no movement on the request for a replacement reserve engine and this will be increasingly problematic. We will continue to validate this need. We will also receive two additional Tahoes to have reserve units in our fleet. Other operational expenditures were increased at 3%. We have secured additional funding for some of our programs to include special operations, ICS simulations and some EMS equipment upgrades.

All employees have received a 5% raise under the new budget which will allow us to be competitive with surrounding jurisdictions. Also, after a year long project with HR and DFEMS there are some position reclassifications and upgrades as the result of comprehensive job analysis and a restructuring of the county's pay scales. Some but not all positions were reclassified.

Accordingly, we congratulated Callie Williams who has been reclassified with a new title of Administrative Analyst.

Also, within DFEMS we will be allowing “acting” pay for personnel to act in higher classifications. The upgrades of the ALS cars will result in 12 current FF/PMs being promoted. This is an involved process, and testing will be both a written exam and then a multi-tiered assessment center using evaluators from other jurisdictions. We anticipate that these promotions will be in place by 9/1/25 and the positions will be fire lieutenant and not EMS only positions. The official titles will be lieutenant paramedic, and they will hold the same position as station lieutenants within the chain of command. On fire boxes they will serve as the initial safety officers and if first in or the only officer on the scene then they will function as the initial incident commanders. There will be some revision of running assignments and relevant SOPs.

**County funding of apparatus loans:** On 5/8/25 representatives from Winfield and New Windsor along with myself and the Comptroller, presented loan requests to the commissioners. A \$1 million loan was approved for New Windsor for a new engine (2000gpm with 1000 gal. tank) and Winfield for \$700,000 for a new tanker (3500 gallon/elliptical) The county can only provide loans up to 5% of the total funding of public projects which are covered by a bond issue as VFC loans constitute a loan to a private organization. That specific amount has been satisfied to its maximum extent for the FY-26 fiscal year by the recent approval of loan funding to New Windsor and Winfield. The application on the comptroller’s site has been removed at this time as no additional funding is available. I am currently working with them for a revised application process for the FY-27 budget and beyond.

There is also no funding available from the state loan fund which is complicated by the recent lowering of the state’s credit rating. If you follow the news, there was an audit done on the state loan funds which are under MDEM and they are unable to account for about 62 company loans so I would not anticipate much funding availability from the state VCAF loan funds. Your MSFA officials can provide some further insight direction into this funding and its future.  
<https://www.baltimoresun.com/2025/05/15/audit-maryland-department-emergency-management/>

**Meetings with all corporations/VFCs?** I have completed meetings with about 10 of the 14 companies and the discussions focused on moving together, as we progress in the future. I have many of these already scheduled or will schedule at a mutually agreeable time at each company. I am still awaiting meetings with stations 2, 3, 11 and several others are scheduled. I will attend along with DC Supko, and we would like to have an open, civil and honest conversation with each company to get some feedback and determine where we are going. I am doing the same with each shift/station for our career employees to create a dialogue and to discuss their issues and concerns. A lot of good feedback and we are making changes as needed. Most of the discussions have been about in station duties, maintenance and additional funding. I will be sure to notify each chief when we will be holding meetings with career personnel, and these are open and not exclusive meetings with many in station volunteers attending so far.

The work will begin on July 21 on our warehouse building on the PSTC campus. We anticipate a completion by early fall. This will provide needed space for our growing stores of uniforms, EMS equipment and PPE. The Quartermaster and their operation will relocate here as they are currently working from several locations on the campus.

**MOU:** I received some correspondence from CCVESA leadership, concerning a review of the current MOU and discussion and movement to make some substantive changes. A response has been made by Commissioner Kiler, President of the BOCC and your leadership should have received his responses on behalf of the Commissioners.

**CLC-Chief's Leadership Council:** I am currently putting together a new focus group which will meet every other month. The goal of this group is to have the organizational leadership: CCVESA, ESAC, FROPS and Career FF/PM association to meet with myself and my command staff. This will not replace the defined work of any of the organizations. The group will look at a submitted agenda and discuss areas of mutual concern so we can approach issues and resolve with a single focus. The operational rule of this group will be that we will have "only" the leader of the organization and no alternates. All parties must be present, or we will not meet. Our first meeting will be held this Wednesday, July 9. This will be a working group with transparency, equity and no hidden agendas only systemic issues and mutually agreeable resolutions. This will hopefully create greater trust and unity with a single unified front for Fire & EMS issues. The minutes of each meeting will be published and distributed. All of the respective members have been notified and provided with a set of operating guidelines. I look forward to some productive discussion and movement with this concept.

**The "draft" operational SOPs** are being reviewed by the subcommittee and will then be submitted to ESAC for their process and then we are looking for approval as early as August unless there are significant modifications to be made. The designated FROPS members have had several meetings and we are moving towards consensus.

**An interim "Heat Policy"** which is an SOP under the safety section of our SOPs has been published and distributed. This is in response to a new state law and OSHA's revision to their weather extremes policy. We are under a mandate to have this in place, so it is out in "interim" status to meet this direction. The policy includes several levels of weather status and includes a radio notification when activated. The main areas within the policy involve a work/rest cycle on active incidents based on prevailing weather conditions. Weather instruments are carried on DFEMS shift commanders, staff vehicles and ALS chase cars so we will use "on site" conditions to guide our use of this policy.

**Special Operations:** There is some enhancement of our funding for our specialty teams in the new budget and Chief Supko will be meeting with the respective team leaders to determine expenditures and available funding. Chiefs Supko and Coe are meeting regularly, and we now have HM techs on each shift, and you will see those on duty techs noted in the daily staffing from the shift commanders.

**An ICS simulation** system is funded in the FY 26 budget, and we will be using the Sim u share system that is in place in several surrounding jurisdictions. This will be a "work in progress" with the ultimate goal being implementation of annual command competency assessments for all Carroll County officers within the "chain of command." This along with progress on our officer standards revision will be moving forward to standardize our supervision countywide through our integrated chain of command.

Respectfully submitted,

*Chief Michael W. Robinson*

MWR/mr

