

# Frederick County Fire and Rescue Advisory Board Meeting

## Meeting Minutes

APPROVED

**Date:** July 14, 2025 1900 hours

**Location:** Winchester Hall  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Meeting Room  
12 E. Church Street, Frederick, MD 21701

**Attendance:**

Battalion 1 (Todd Johnson).....	Present
Battalion 2 (David Fox) .....	Present
Battalion 3 (Cassie Goodman) .....	Present
Battalion 4 (Michael Wiand) .....	Absent
Battalion 5 (Mike Duble) .....	Present
Career Rep (Brandon Burke) .....	Present
Career Rep (Anthony Gramiccioni) .....	Present (phone)
Citizen Rep (Mark Kirchman) .....	Present (phone)
Citizen Rep ( <i>Vacant</i> ) .....	<i>Vacant</i>

**Nonvoting Reps:**

Frederick County Executive (Jessica Fitzwater).....	Absent
Jurisdictional Medical Director (Dr. Jeffrey Fillmore) .....	Present
Fire & Rescue Services (Chief Tom Coe).....	Present
Volunteer Fire & Rescue Assoc. (President James May) .....	Absent
Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services (Deputy Chief Shane Darwick) .....	Present
Local #3666 (President Stephen Jones) .....	Absent

**Guests:**

Pete Raumann, Citizen  
Jeffrey Scire, Incoming FCVRA President  
Daniel Moré, Chief - Libertytown Vol. Fire Department  
Jeana Panarella, FCVFRA EMS Committee Chair  
Marc McNeal, Deputy Chief - United Steam Fire Engine Company 3  
Renetta Morelli, Board Member - United Steam Fire Engine Company 3  
James Graham, President - United Steam Fire Engine Company 3  
Robin McNeal - United Steam Fire Engine Company 3  
Susie Nicol – FCVFRA  
Tawanda Bailey, Board Member - United Steam Fire Engine Company 3  
Patrick Dugan, Board Member - United Steam Fire Engine Company 3

**VOTE: YES: 7 NO: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 PASSED**

## **VI. REPORTS:**

### **a. Ex-Officio Member Reports**

#### **i. Frederick County Executive, Ms. Jessica Fitzwater**

As County Executive Fitzwater was absent, no report was given.

#### **ii. Jurisdictional Medical Director, Dr. Jeffrey Fillmore**

##### State Level Items of Interest

- Discussion on new BLS CPAP protocol. Trial and review committee coming forth soon
- Medication replacement for Verapamil. May be using Metoprolol
- Review for jurisdictional use – Abdominal Junctional Tourniquet
- Forthcoming of new reporting laws for Adult/Child abuse. EMS will have new requirements
- BUPE protocol for review all jurisdictional use. Outside MIH program
- Near drowning patients- May be required transport to ECMO facility via aviation.
- Ketamine as back up for status epilepticus patients
- Potential review of licensing from Health department to all jurisdictions participating in the Whole blood programs. May need to be registered as a blood bank. More to come.

#### **iii. Fire & Rescue Division Director, Chief Tom Coe**

##### Division Updates

Apparatus Committee will complete inspections on the following:

- Engine 52 – End of July
- Tower 7 – August 28<sup>th</sup>
- Volterra – January 9, 2026

Also, awaiting two replacement ALS Chase vehicles and 4 ambulances

D Shift staffing at Wolfsville to start on July 28<sup>th</sup>.

Paramedic Engine at Brunswick Fire Station will start around September 6, 2025.

##### Facility Construction:

- Bids for Green Valley are due on July 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Carroll Manor Fire Station – expect 90% drawings in August
- Westview Fire Station – expect 100% drawings in August
- PSTF Multipurpose Building – will go out to bid soon
- Tilco improvements – Fire Marshal's expected to move in mid-August

SCBA replacement – order has been placed, training and fit testing information to be released soon.

EMS Billing Specialist – Leslie Zike started today.

Recruit Classes 38 & 39 will graduate on July 25<sup>th</sup>. Night operations will be held on Friday, July 18<sup>th</sup> from 6pm-8pm.

Recruit Class 40 will start on January 26, 2026, with 30 recruits.

FFY24 SAFER Grant application authorization received from the County Executive.

Submit any ideas/suggestions for the 2026 General Assembly Session by September 5<sup>th</sup>.

iv. **President, FCVFRA, James May**

As President May was absent, no report was given.

v. **Local #3666, President, Stephen Jones**

As President Jones was absent, no report was given.

**b. Committee Reports**

i. **Director of Volunteer Fire & Rescue**

Awards: The 2025 MSFA Convention awards were presented to Brunswick Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Company, recognizing them with the Top Training Award for small to medium-sized companies statewide. In the parade category, Brunswick VFD secured the 2nd Longest Distance award. Additionally, Jenna Lakin from Jefferson was honored with the Oscar Baker Rookie of the Year Award 2025.

Annual Compliance Training: Out of 839 volunteers enrolled, 672 completed. The remaining 167 are inactive, and we are coordinating with companies to update the list.

APS: All fire station installations are complete, with walkthroughs finished. APS is addressing a few final items to wrap up.

911 Phones on Exterior of Stations: County Voice Services and their vendor are handling installations. Several stations need to be connected and tested, with about 10 more left to install.

EMS: 2025 EMS Protocols completed, and notifications were made to those that did not complete.

Executive Committee: Met June 24th, discussion held on MSFA Convention activities, next meeting is July 29th.

Fire/Rescue Work-Based Learning Internship Program: Begins August 22, 2025. Applications are now open. Graduation is scheduled for May 22, 2026.

Fire/Rescue Planning/Research Workgroup: No Report

Recruitment & Retention: Class started today and runs through the 19<sup>th</sup>. This class is M-F 0800-1500 each day. The new updated Gear Up flyer is out on the FCVFRA website.

PPE Voucher Program: New voucher allotment will be posted as soon as we reconcile the past year's allocation. Passport Accountability Tags will be issued with gear starting in July.

Operations Committee: The committee met on June 10th. Updates from various divisions were presented. There were no items of business requiring a vote, nor were any new business introduced. The next meeting is scheduled for August 19, 2025, at 1900 hours – Committee Meeting.

Standards Committee: DRAFT: All-Terrain Vehicle Equipment and Operator Standard Introduction is awaiting battalion review.

Training: 2025 Command Comps development and planning is underway. The recent Managing the Mayday class counts towards COPD hours.

Special Events: Frederick Pride Festival and July 4th were joint operations with LE, Fire/Rescue and EM using one Incident Action Plan. Planning underway for High School football games and the Great Frederick Fair.

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **a. Ad Hoc Committee Report**

Chairman Johnson gave a brief overview of the background of the Ad Hoc Committee Report.

Chief Coe shared a presentation on his response to the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations (Attachment 2).

Correspondence received from Vigilant Hose Company (Attachment 3). This correspondence was inadvertently omitted from the meeting and, per request, is being included in the minutes.

## **VIII. ACTION ITEM(S)**

### **a. Vote on Request to go into Closed Session**

Motion to go into Closed Session – Personnel

Maryland Annotated Code General Provisions Article §3-305(b)(1) To discuss (i) The appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction; or (ii) Any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.

Topic: To evaluate and interview possible candidate(s) that the Fire and Rescue Advisory Board may consider for recommendation.

A motion was made at 8:12 p.m. to go into Closed Session: Moved by David Fox  
Seconded by Cassie Goodman

**VOTE: YES: 7 NO: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 PASSED**

The Board reconvened the Open Session at 8:40 p.m. and Chairman Todd Johnson re-established a quorum.

A motion was made by Brandon Burke and seconded by David Fox that Pete Raumann be recommended to the County Executive for appointment to the Fire and Rescue Advisory Board as a Citizen Representative.

**VOTE: YES: 7 NO: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 PASSED**

## **IX. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chief Coe reminded everyone that August 11<sup>th</sup> will mark the 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the LODD of Josh Laird. A training event will be held at PSTF on the 11<sup>th</sup>, in honor of Josh.


Battalion 5 Representative, Mike Duple expressed his concerns about unannounced vendors showing up to perform work at the station.

Battalion 3 Representative, Cassie Goodman mentioned that the August 5th EMT class will likely be over capacity and asked Companies to help provide the needed resources for the students.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

***APPROVED***

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Todd Johnson, Chair

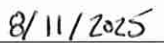
***APPROVED***

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Approval

***APPROVED***

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Anthony Gramiccioni, Co-Chair

***APPROVED***

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Approval

## Fire and Rescue Advisory Board

### PRESIDING OFFICER'S WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR CLOSING A MEETING "CLOSING STATEMENT" (General Provisions Article § 3-305)

Form to be completed before closing the meeting. May be prepared in advance.

1. Recorded vote to close the meeting:

Date: 7/14/2025; Time: 8:12 p.m.; Location: Winchester Hall 1st Floor Meeting Room;  
Motion to close meeting made by: D. Fox Seconded by C. Goodman;  
Members in favor: All present; Opposed: None;  
Abstaining: None; Absent: M. Wiand.

2. Statutory authority to close session (check all provisions that apply).

**This meeting will be closed under General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b) only:**

(1) ☒ "To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals"; (2) ☐ "To protect the privacy or reputation of individuals concerning a matter not related to public business"; (3) ☐ "To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto"; (4) ☐ "To consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State"; (5) ☐ "To consider the investment of public funds"; (6) ☐ "To consider the marketing of public securities"; (7) ☐ "To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice"; (8) ☐ "To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation"; (9) ☐ "To conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations"; (10) ☐ "To discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or to public security, including: (i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and (ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans"; (11) ☐ "To prepare, administer, or grade a scholastic, licensing, or qualifying examination"; (12) ☐ "To conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct"; (13) ☐ "To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter"; (14) ☐ "Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, to discuss a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process." (15) ☐ "To discuss cybersecurity, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to: (i) security assessments or deployments relating to information resources technology; (ii) network security information . . . or (iii) deployments or implementation of security personnel, critical infrastructure, or security devices."

3. For each provision checked above, disclosure of the topic to be discussed and the public body's reason for discussing that topic in closed session.

Citation (insert # from above)	Topic	Reason for closed-session discussion of topic
§3-305(b) ( <b>1</b> )	Evaluate/interview possible candidate for Citizen Rep. on FRAB	Allow open discussion with an unappointed applicant, while protecting applicants privacy.
§3-305(b) (   )		
§3-305(b) (   )		
§3-305(b) (   )		
§3-305(b) (   )		

4. This statement is made by Todd Johnson, Presiding Officer.

## SUMMARY MINUTES OF CLOSED SESSION HELD ON JULY 14, 2025

**1. Statement of the time, place and purpose of the closed session**

Time of closed session: 8:12 p.m.

Place (location) of closed session: Winchester Hall, 1st Floor Meeting Room

Purpose of the closed session: Interview and evaluate candidate for Citizen Representative

**2. Record of the vote of each member as to closing the session**

Name of member voting aye: Chairman/Battalion 1 Representative Todd Johnson, Vice Chair/Career Representative Anthony Gramiccioni, Battalion 2 Representative David Fox, Battalion 3 Representative Cassie Goodman, Battalion 5 Representative Mike Duple, Citizen Representative Mark Kirchman, Career Firefighter Representative Brandon Burke

Members Opposed: None

Members Abstaining: Battalion 4 Representative Michael Wiand (Absent)

**3. Statutory Authority to close session**

This meeting was closed under the following provisions of General Provisions Article §3-305 (b)(1).

**4. Listing of each topic actually discussed, persons present, and each action taken in the session**

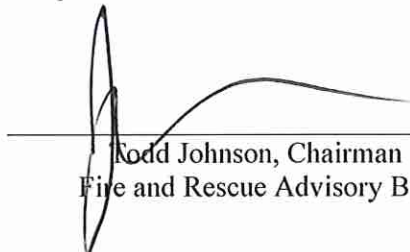
**Topic Description:** To evaluate and interview applicant that the Fire and Rescue Advisory Board may consider for recommendation.

**Persons present for discussion:** Chairman/Battalion 1 Representative Todd Johnson, Vice Chair/Career Representative Anthony Gramiccioni, Battalion 2 Representative David Fox, Battalion 3 Representative Cassie Goodman, Battalion 5 Representative Mike Duple, Citizen Representative Mark Kirchman, Career Firefighter Representative Brandon Burke

**Action Taken/Each Recorded Vote:**

No actions were taken, no motions were made, no votes were recorded.

The closed session adjourned at 8:40 p.m.



Todd Johnson, Chairman  
Fire and Rescue Advisory Board

Battalion 4 appreciates this opportunity to present our response to the draft recommended changes to the Fire and Rescue Advisory Board (FRAB).

First, it is important to raise the awareness level of citizens in Frederick County of the tremendous contributions the 24 independent volunteer corporations provide to the taxpayers of Frederick County.

- We own our stations with an estimated replacement value of 165 million dollars.
- We own our apparatus and ambulances: some 205 vehicles; including 48 pieces of heavy apparatus and 26 ambulances with a total replacement value of over 61 million dollars—in fact we own and operate the majority of apparatus and ambulances in the County.
- It is easy to calculate our investment contributions and savings to Frederick County: it would cost the County well over 200 million dollars if they had to incur these costs and this does not include paying for our volunteer personnel labor costs!
- And it is important to also note all of the fundraising we do to help ease the financial burden to the County of providing day to day operations costs.

Second, we are a major stakeholder in protecting and serving the citizens of Frederick County and thus we need to have an opportunity to review and provide feedback to policy and changes through our Battalion Reps on the FRAB.

- Consequently, there needs to be no changes to the FRAB makeup/and or number of personnel on it. The Career IAFF 366 has adequate representation now with the County Fire Chief to

suggest changes in policy through contract arbitration, therefore they no need no additional personnel on the FRAB.

- Both the FRAB and the FCVFRA Executive Committee need to have the opportunity to review and vote on policy and changes and to provide feedback not only to the Fire Chief but to the County Executive in order to address potential concerns and provide an opportunity for the Fire Chief to respond to address those concerns before implementing policy.

Third, we do not support the recommendation to change the current FCVFRA Director/Deputy Chief to report directly to the Fire Chief.

- This realignment could have serious negative consequences to the volunteer fire and rescue services.
- It is understood by all that the Fire Chief has the ultimate operational authority; but as the current Fire Ordinance defines: there needs to be two independent identities: the Fire Chief and the FCVFRA Director/Deputy Chief that report to the County Executive.
- The time necessary to fully support all 24 independent volunteer corporations and their personnel is not feasible for County Fire Chief alone.

Fourth, we support the recommendation to change FRAB meetings to the third Tuesday of each odd numbered month.

In closing, Battalion 4 thanks the FRAB for giving us the opportunity tonight to have our response heard and recorded in the minutes

# Chief Coe's Response to the FRAB Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations

July 14, 2025



# This presentation is intended to review:

- My observations on the daily management, oversight and stakeholder input of Frederick County Fire and Rescue Service
- Opportunities to both streamline and improve stakeholder input to improve our COMBINATION Fire and Rescue System



# Observations

- Volunteer leadership carries a heavy meeting schedule
- Volunteer leadership need to be provided information, and an ability to provide feedback but their time should be focused on their home organization.
- Both the Union and FCVFRA are concerned about committee make-up and representation



# Observations

- The battalion representation structure for the current operations committee does not function as designed and rarely is stakeholder input received
- The current policy approval process is slow, laborious and inefficient



# Opportunities

**The FCVFRA should review their bylaws and make changes to their committee structure:**

- **Constitution and Bylaws** (*retain*)
- **Legislative** (*retain*)
- **Department Data** (*dissolve*)
- **Standards** (*transition to DFRS*)
- **Tags** (*retain*)
- **Budget** (*retain*)
- **LOSAP** (*retain*)
- **Planning and Research** (*dissolve – already a DFRS committee*)



# Opportunities

**The FCVFRA should review their bylaws and make changes to their committee structure:**

- **EMS** – (transition to a new County EMS Officer's MEETING)
- **Operations** – (transition to a new County Chief Officer's MEETING)
- **Fire Police** – (retain)
- **Fire and Injury Prevention** – (retain)
- **Awards** – (add, not currently listed as a committee)
- **Training** – (add, not currently listed as a committee)



# DFRS Committees

- The Planning and Research and Standards Committee would be
  - Managed by DFRS
  - Joint representation from DFRS, FCVFRA, IAFF Local 3666



# County Chief Officer's MEETING

- The Operations Committee would transition from a standing committee of the FCVFRA to a Chief Officers Meeting
- The meeting would be led jointly by the Deputy Chief of Volunteer Services and the Deputy Chief of Emergency Services
- All career and volunteer chiefs would then meet quarterly (instead of the current three times a year) and have a venue to share information, exchange thoughts ideas and concerns



# County EMS Officer's MEETING

- The EMS Committee would transition from a standing committee of the FCVFRA to an EMS Officers Meeting
- The meeting would be led by the Battalion Chief of EMS
- All EMS Officers would meet quarterly and have a venue to share information, exchange thoughts, ideas and concerns



# Stakeholder Engagement

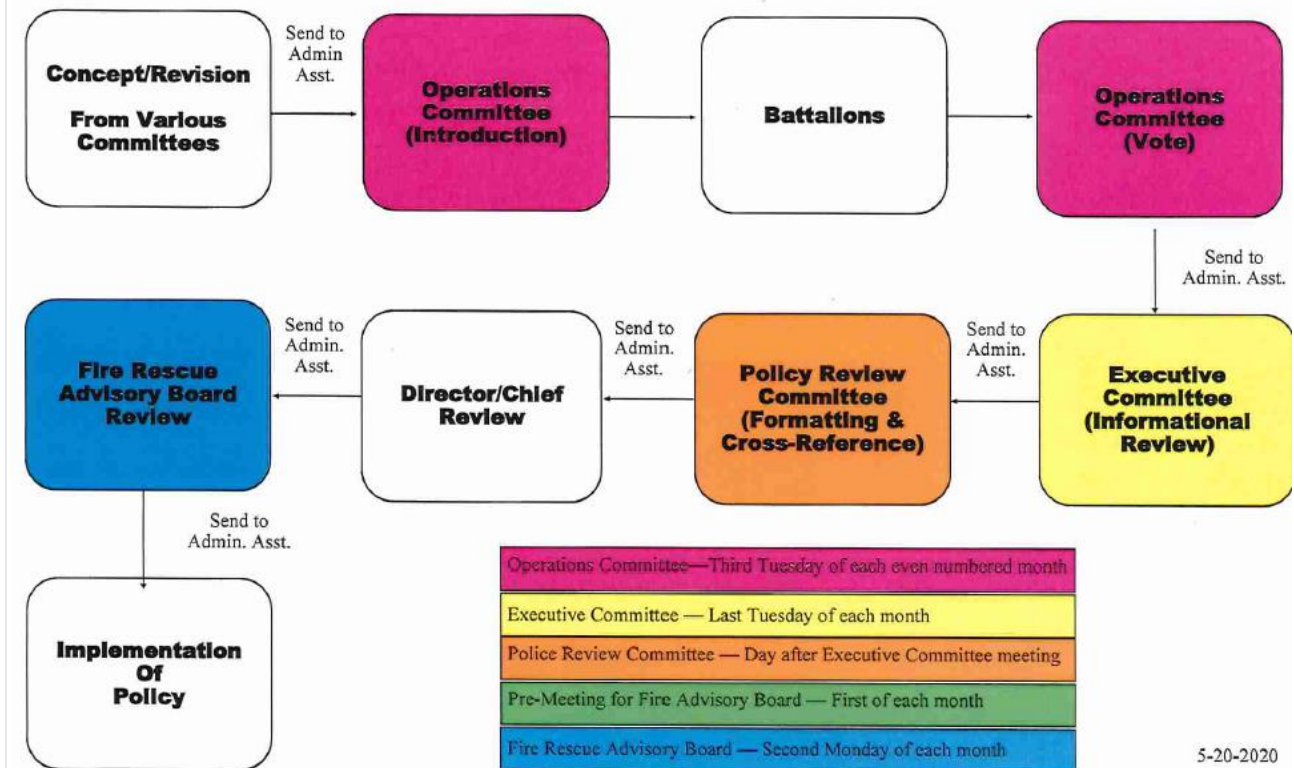
- FCVFRA Leadership would have monthly structured and scheduled meetings with the Fire Chief and the Director of Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services
- IAFF Local 3666 would continue their monthly structured and scheduled meetings with the Fire Chief
- In addition to the Chief Officer's and EMS Officer's quarterly meetings we add a President's Meeting to be conducted quarterly and led by the Director of Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services.



# Current Policy Flow

- Introduction of a draft policy to Operations (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of January)
- Out for Battalion Review
- Operations Committee Vote on draft policy (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of March)
- Briefing of the FCVFRA Executive Committee (Last Tuesday of March)
- Policy Committee Review
- Fire Chief Review
- Introduction of draft policy to FRAB (Second Monday of April)
- Out for FRAB Battalion Review
- Final Vote of FRAB on Policy (Second Monday of May)

## Policy Flow for FCFRS



# Policy Engagement

- Stakeholder input has strengthened and improved the policy development process in Frederick County.
- To ensure opportunity for stakeholder input continues for policy development in a more efficient manner:
  - Draft policies that are deemed “non-emergent” will be posted to a SharePoint site that FCVFRA and Union Leadership as well as all Chief Officers have access to for comment.
  - An email will be sent to stakeholders to make them aware a policy has been posted.



# Policy Engagement

- Comments will be taken for 30 days and responses will be provided to those who submitted comments
- The Chief will discuss the draft policies with the FCVFRA and Union and their monthly meetings
- After the comment period policies will be enacted and will report on enacted policies at the Quarterly Chief's, EMS Officer's, President's meetings as well as the FRAB meeting



# Proposed Policy Flow

- Introduction of a draft policy (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of January)
- Comment Period (30 Days)
  - Includes Discussion at Monthly Management Meetings
  - Written responses to comments submitted
- Policy Implementation (Last week of February)



# Fire and Rescue Advisory Board

The purpose of the Advisory Board is to provide a functional management structure that ensures that input from volunteer, career, and citizen stakeholders is provided and considered during the policy making and policy review process and to keep stakeholder representatives engaged in the management of an integrated countywide fire and rescue system

The Advisory Board shall serve as a policy review and advisory board to the Director of DFRS and the County Executive. The Advisory Board Members shall consist of representatives of the fire and rescue system stakeholders and non-affiliated citizens of Frederick County, appointed by the County Executive for a specified term of office, subject to confirmation by the County Council

-FRAB Charter



# Future of the Fire and Rescue Advisory Board

- If the FRAB is to continue.....
  - The Fire and Rescue Advisory Board (FRAB) should focus on system quality assurance and the accreditation process
  - Move to bi-monthly meetings on the odd numbered months
  - As the policy flow process has been proposed to be restructured, the make-up of the board should be considered for realignment
  - Volunteer representatives retain regional representation responsibilities



# Division of Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services

- The structure of the Executive Branch of County Government is the responsibility of the County Executive
- No matter the format, Frederick County DFRS participants need to focus on the “One Team, One Mission” flow of Fire Service issues



# What does this look like??

- January
  - Chief Officer's Meeting
  - FRAB Meeting
- February
  - EMS Officer's Meeting
- March
  - President's Meeting
  - FRAB Meeting
- April
  - Chief Officer's Meeting
- May
  - EMS Officer's Meeting
  - FRAB Meeting
- June
  - President's Meeting
- July
  - Chief Officer's Meeting
  - FRAB Meeting
- August
  - EMS Officer's Meeting
- September
  - President's Meeting
  - FRAB Meeting
- October
  - Chief Officer's Meeting
- November
  - EMS Officer's Meeting
  - FRAB Meeting
- December
  - President's Meeting

\*\*Monthly Meetings with FCFVRA and IAFF

# Summary

Achieve a One Team, One Mission concept through:

- Realignment of Committee Structure
- Improved Stakeholder Engagement
- Streamlined Policy Process



# Where do we go from here...

- Work towards a consensus of positive direction forward
- That consensus could necessitate an:
  - Update to the FCVFRA By-Laws
  - Update to the County Code
  - Update to the FRAB Charter and Bylaws





# VIGILANT HOSE COMPANY

25 West Main Street  
PO Box 171  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727  
301.447.2728 | vhc6.com

Frederick County Fire/Advisory Board  
c/o Todd Johnson, Chair  
12 E. Church St.  
Frederick, MD 21701

July 14, 2025

On behalf of the membership of the Vigilant Hose Company we write to detail our strong opposition to the FRAB's Ad-Hoc Committee's recommendation to dissolve the DVFRS and transition all volunteer oversight to the Division of Fire & Rescue Services.

This proposed restructuring would effectively remove the volunteers' voice and direct line of communication with county leadership. It's no secret that the Division has been aggressively moving toward diminishing the role of volunteers, and this move further confirms that intent. Eliminating the volunteer component—or marginalizing it—would lead to a significant budget crisis, compromise emergency service delivery, and ultimately put the safety, well-being, and financial security of our residents at risk.

Volunteers save this county millions of taxpayer dollars annually. In most cases, volunteer corporations fund the majority of their apparatus and equipment independently:

- A new fire engine costs approximately \$1 million.
- An ambulance ranges from \$350,000 to \$450,000.
- Specialty apparatus can run between \$1.5 million and \$2.5 million.
- Outfitting each piece of equipment with the necessary gear adds another \$50,000 to \$100,000.

These figures represent only the cost of equipment. When considering personnel, the numbers become even more alarming. To match the volunteer coverage in Emmitsburg alone, the county would need to employ at least 40 full-time staff. At a conservative estimate of \$100,000 per employee (including salary, benefits, training, and other costs), that's a \$4 million annual cost for just one station.

Further, the county owns very few fire stations outright. Building and maintaining these facilities—currently provided and maintained in large part by volunteers—would add staggering additional expenses to the county's budget.



# VIGILANT HOSE COMPANY

25 West Main Street  
PO Box 171  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727  
301.447.2728 | vhc6.com

The sheer cost savings that volunteers provide should underscore the need for continued representation and inclusion in all planning and decision-making processes. Right now, our voice is being silenced, and our contributions are being overlooked. We must advocate strongly to preserve the role of volunteers in Frederick County.

Regrettably, the current administration—along with some within the leadership of Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services—has failed to adequately support our interests. If this course continues unchecked, it will undermine a centuries-old system that has served this county with dedication and efficiency, leaving residents vulnerable and placing an enormous financial burden on taxpayers.

The pinnacle of fire service training is based here in OUR community of Emmitsburg. We welcome visitors from across the globe each day who are in awe of the service that we deliver 365 days a year. Many are from career only organizations who have never set forth in a volunteer firehouse in their life. They see that what Emmitsburg and Frederick County has is a vibrant combination system, of course it's without it's issues. Making such a drastic change in operational and administrative oversight would be detrimental to all this.

While we appreciate the Ad-Hoc Committee's time and effort with their recommendations we cannot support the dissolution of DVFRS. It remains too vital a division of county government to be absorbed into the largest. We remain committed to the citizens we are entrusted to serve and protect and will appropriately engage with the citizens of Emmitsburg and surrounding communities to ensure they know of our staunch opposition to this recommendation and be guided with facts and our honest thoughts.

In service,

Thomas R. Ward  
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Joshua A. Brotherton  
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