

Commissioner President Collins,
Commissioner Bowling,
Commissioner Coates,
Commissioner Rucci,
Commissioner Stewart,

There's a single word that comes to mind with the recent budget request of the Charles County Department of Emergency Services- Emergency Medical Service division: DECEPTION.

In previous years, the EMS Division has requested funds for additional staffing for the Waldorf area. Last year, they received funds for additional staffing, however that crew wasn't placed in Waldorf. This was used to establish a "Flex Crew." This crew is sometimes used to back-fill a vacancy to avoid overtime. However, if the ALS provider is used to back-fill a vacancy, it leaves a BLS provider on-duty without any specific assignment. This crew has not increased any capacity to provide emergency medical services to the citizens of Charles County.

A portion of this request shows an upgrade of five paramedics to lieutenants. If they are given funding to hire five new paramedics, and five paramedics are promoted, how does that increase service to the community? The Lieutenants act as Duty Officers, and they are in a passenger vehicle by themselves. They are not typically used as an ALS resource on emergency scenes, and they are not capable of transporting ill/injured patients to an emergency facility. Each day, there are delays in patient care by not having enough transport units available. Moving resources out of transport-capable vehicles into passenger vehicles will only increase these delays.

The request also identifies the creation of two new Captain Positions. The department currently has four captains, all of whom have "take-home" vehicles. Two of the Captains live outside of Charles County. During the unprecedented times of this Global Pandemic, all four of the current Captains have been spending most of their work hours working from home. During a time where all across the country, all-hands are needed for Emergency Medical Services, the Captains of Charles County Emergency Medical Services have barely been required to step outside of their homes for work. While they expect their employees to carry out a mission on the front-lines of the pandemic, they haven't faced any of the issues themselves. Current duties of the Captains include scheduling training, scheduling employees for work/filling vacant shifts, and Quality Assurance. All of these are secretarial-level functions, and should not be filled with an ALS provider with a supervisory-level salary. This should definitely be proof that additional captains are not needed.

An additional request identifies a need to upgrade an EMT position to the "Assistant Chief of Special Operations." The Charles County Volunteer Fireman's Association has had a Special Operations Division since approximately 2004. A position for an elected Chief of the Special Operations Division was created in approximately 2008, and has been filled each year. The volunteer fire departments in the County have the primary responsibility of covering Special

Operations, and many of the departments have committed to strenuous training and ensuring staffing for daily responses for each individual area of Special Operations.

During this Global Pandemic, DES has shown a lack of commitment to serve the citizens of Charles County. On Friday, April 17, 2020, the ALS service was removed from Cobb Island. The EMT-B was sent home due to a COVID-19 exposure and the requirement for mandatory quarantine. Instead of leaving the ALS provider in place and finding an additional EMT-B to staff the ambulance, the decision was made to remove the ALS provider and place them in a "Chase Car" by themselves in LaPlata. This was in addition to the two Medical Duty Officers already working in the same capacity. That evening, the ALS resource in LaPlata (EMS Station 51) was the only career EMS transport resource available from LaPlata to the King George County line. On the following Monday, April 20, the same actions were taken with a transport unit in Waldorf at EMS Station 3. The EMT-B went home due to illness, and the unit was placed out of service instead of filling the vacancy with another capable provider.

The lasting economic effects of COVID-19 should be heavily weighed when considering this funding request. The volunteer Fire and EMS departments in Charles County have continued to provide Fire and EMS services to the citizens of Charles County. The volunteer departments have the financial responsibility of purchasing and maintaining the emergency vehicles and facilities that house them. Over the years, our funds distributions have continued to shrink, this year reaching just over 85% for the Fire budget and 75% for the EMS budget. We can only anticipate these distributions will drop drastically for the years to come. It's irresponsible for our career partners to request a budget increase when every other county agency is facing huge reductions.

From the outside, it would appear this is an attempt to increase staffing to provide a better service to the citizens. Again, the numbers of personnel don't add up to any additional service. This is just another example in a long string of deception.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Respectfully,

Daniel H. Hudson

Lifelong Charles County Resident

Chief, 10th District Volunteer Fire Department