

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 15, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE KERRY DONLEY, VICE MAYOR
THE HONORABLE FRANK H. FANNON, IV, COUNCILMEMBER

FROM: ADAM K. THIEL, FIRE CHIEF *AK*

SUBJECT: DELIVERY OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) BY THE
ALEXANDRIA FIRE DEPARTMENT (AFD)

The purpose of this memorandum is to address concerns raised by Ms. Pamela Copley, Chair of the Alexandria Emergency Medical Services Council, in a letter dated December 10, 2009.

From my perspective as staff to the City Council Strategic Planning Goal #6 workgroup, it seems clear that participants' references to changing citizens' expectations were not directed towards core law enforcement and emergency services missions. Given the severe constraints imposed by the fiscal environment, the expert panel's discussion appeared to be centered on improving the delivery of mission-critical services, while seeking further opportunities to streamline, cross-train, and economize in other service areas.

The AFD's firefighter-paramedic program has existed for many years. The current effort to enhance this program is squarely targeted at improving the delivery of fire and emergency medical services across the City; it has been jointly endorsed (see Attachment 1—*Service Delivery Enhancement*) by AFD labor groups and communicated throughout our Department on multiple occasions during the past year. The Alexandria Emergency Medical Services Council was briefed on the planned program enhancements at its October 5th and November 16th meetings.

It is absolutely true that firefighter-paramedic programs are the norm in National Capital Region fire departments, as well as in many major cities across the United States. In fact, the AFD is the only department in northern Virginia, suburban Maryland, and Washington, DC that does not routinely deliver advanced life support (ALS) emergency medical care from both fire engines and ambulances, using cross-trained ("dual-role") firefighter-paramedics.

It is also true that continually rising demand for all-hazards fire and emergency services (fire, EMS, hazardous materials, technical rescue, marine operations, etc.) represents a salient challenge for both the AFD and our regional partners in surrounding fire departments. As you know, both the City Manager and City Council are aware of these issues and have funded/planned additional resources to improve our Department's capabilities across all mission

areas. Furthermore, in concert with our internal/external stakeholders, we are re-launching a robust planning process (“EMS 5/10/20”) to develop a shared vision for a contemporary EMS system that efficiently and effectively provides high-quality clinical care in a dense urban environment.

As mentioned in several Goal #6 meetings, workforce recruitment and retention is a high priority for all the City’s public safety departments. The AFD has committed, in collaboration with its labor groups, to identifying further opportunities to leverage the diversity, talent, experience, and perspective within its ranks, whatever our financial situation.

Please feel free to contact me directly with any additional questions or concerns.

Attachments (1): *Service Delivery Enhancement*

Cc: James K. Hartmann, City Manager
 Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager
 Tom Gates, Assistant City Manager
 Rose Boyd, Office of Citizens Assistance
 Alexandria Emergency Medical Services Council
 City Council Strategic Planning Goal #6 website

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

COPY

DATE: OCTOBER 28, 2009

TO: ALL AFD EMPLOYEES

FROM: JOHN MOREHEAD, PRESIDENT
BLACK FIRE SERVICE PROFESSIONALS OF ALEXANDRIA

LONNIE PHILLIPS, PRESIDENT
ALEXANDRIA MEDICS ASSOCIATION

ROBERT ROBINSON, PRESIDENT
ALEXANDRIA PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS LOCAL 2141

ADAM K. THIEL, FIRE CHIEF

SUBJECT: SERVICE DELIVERY ENHANCEMENT

The purpose of this memorandum is to reiterate our shared commitment to moving our Department forward through the continued enhancement of our capability to safely prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies of all types (EMS, fire, hazardous materials, marine, technical rescue, etc.).

In pursuit of this goal, we jointly agree to the following:

- Expanding the AFD's existing Firefighter-Paramedic program as a way to immediately address increased service demand and ALS first response times;
- Re-launching the EMS 5/10/20 Planning process, involving our internal/external stakeholders, to develop a clear vision for a contemporary EMS system providing the highest-quality clinical care in a dense urban environment; and
- Identifying further opportunities to unify our entire Department by leveraging the diversity of talent, experience, and perspective within our membership(s).

Especially during these challenging fiscal times, it is vitally important that we continue working together to define our collective future on behalf of our most important resource, our members.