



Fire, Rescue & EMS

Serving
Bethesda
Chevy Chase
NW Washington DC

5020 Battery Lane
Bethesda
Maryland 20814-2699
www.bccrs.org

Business: 301.652.0077
Fax: 301.656.6523
Voice Mail: 301.656.5423
Emergency MD: 911
Emergency DC: 301.652.1000

BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE RESCUE SQUAD, INC

April 7, 2021

Request for In-Kind Funding for Maintenance and Repairs for Emergency Vehicles

The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad, Inc., respectfully submits this written testimony in support of its request that the County Council provide funding to cover the costs of providing maintenance and repairs for BCCRS emergency apparatus at the County's Central Maintenance Facility (CMF).

Executive Summary

BCCRS is requesting that the County Council increase the budget for the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) to cover the costs for MCFRS to provide maintenance and repairs for BCCRS emergency vehicles (*i.e.*, heavy rescue squads, BLS and ALS ambulances, and command vehicles) at CMF.

The County Fire Chief estimates the approximate cost of providing such service as \$150,000 per year. Importantly, these funds will not be provided to BCCRS; rather, the funds will be provided to MCFRS to cover its costs in servicing BCCRS apparatus. CMF provides such service to all other local fire and rescue departments (LFRDs) but not to BCCRS.

We are requesting access to CMF at this time because: (1) the costs of providing such services, which have risen substantially due to the complexity of providing service on heavy diesel apparatus, continue to outstrip BCCRS' funding sources; (2) the pandemic reduced or eliminated several BCCRS revenue streams; and (3) the County provides such services to all other LFRDs. BCCRS is simply asking to be treated consistently as are the other 18 LFRDs.

Support for BCCRS Request

The Montgomery County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (MCVFRA) strongly supports this request and is submitting testimony to express its support.

We also understand that County Fire Chief Scott Goldstein supports this request.

Background and Justification

We believe this request should be approved by the County Council for the following reasons:

- BCCRS is managed 100% and staffed primarily by volunteer fire/rescue personnel. We have County taxpayers more than \$4,000,000 annually in personnel costs alone.
- It has become increasingly difficult for BCCRS to cover these costs on its own because of the increasing complexity to service and repair heavy apparatus and limited number of local diesel apparatus repair facilities. For historical reasons, BCCRS previously covered these costs on its own; however, for the reasons explained below, these costs are increasing at a rate that is simply unsustainable for BCCRS, particularly in light of the pandemic.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the BCCRS lost several predictable and steady income streams while experiencing increased costs for COVID-related expenses. On the income side, the BCCRS has lost income from rental of our banquet hall, rental of parking spaces to individuals who live and work in downtown Bethesda, and funds from BCCRS Alumni Association events. On the expense side, we have seen expenses jump due to increased demands for PPE, apparatus cleaning and disinfection, and in-station COVID precautions (including design and equipment changes to reduce the spread of infectious diseases through the air and surfaces).
- BCCRS frequently has loaned one of its heavy fire/rescue squads to other MCFRS stations when one was experiencing shortages of heavy fire/rescue squads. Such loans have resulted in additional substantial “wear and tear” on BCCRS apparatus – the costs of which have been covered by BCCRS.
- BCCRS is not asking for the County to provide funds directly to BCCRS; rather, we are asking the County Council to increase the MCFRS budget to cover the costs to CMF of providing maintenance and repairs to BCCRS vehicles in the same manner and on the same terms as all of the other LFRDs.

Respectfully Submitted,



Edward G. Sherburne
Fire/Rescue Chief