



Department of Emergency Services

Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

March 20, 2025

Executive Director Haas has called this in-person and virtual meeting to order at 6:00 PM on March 20, 2025. We have a quorum.

Present:

- **Non-Voting Members:**
 - DES Director Scott Haas
 - DES Medical Director Dr. Joseph Ciotola
 - Assistant Chief Jeffrey Morgan
 - Assistant Chief Zach Yerkie
 - Assistant Chief Phil English
 - Captain Kevin Brenner
- **Voting Members:**
 - Gabriel Ripley
 - Raymond Aaron
 - Sandra Early
 - Buddy Thomas
 - Ben Hammock
 - Steve Pringle
 - Taylor Oldershaw
- **Support Staff:**
 - Fiscal Administrator Kelly Nelson
 - Office Coordinator II Amanda Darling

Approval of Minutes:

- February 20, 2025
 - Minutes are approved
 - Motion: Steve Pringle
 - Second: Taylor Oldershaw

Budget Review: FY26

- **Overview**
 - Will review what we asked for
 - The budget is constantly changing
 - What we asked for is not what we will be receiving

Capital Requests:

- 4.5 million requested
 - 3.1 million is grant funds
 - Not County funds
- Capital requests are listed in order of priority
 - EMS Vehicle Replacement - \$732,997.00
 - 1 Transport replacement
 - We are on a 2-year cycle to get them
 - If we ordered them today it would take 24 months to receive them
 - Supervisor truck replacement
 - High potential that this will be cut during budget process
 - Transport unit is the top priority
 - Willing to sacrifice the Supervisor truck
 - SCBA & Protective Gear & Ventilator upgrades - \$176,115.00
 - Finance merged SCBA and Ventilator projects
 - \$101,000 for SCBA
 - \$75,000 for ventilator bi-pap upgrades
 - Radio Tower Inspections/ Repairs - \$15,000.00
 - Tower climbs are required every 5 years
 - Unless there is a hurricane or severe weather that comes through the area
 - After the climb there is a 12-month deadline to complete repairs
 - We are responsible for 2 towers
 - Rt. 18 tower
 - Tower right out back
 - The following year there will be \$150,000-to-\$200,000 request to complete repairs to the towers
 - This amount will fluctuate
 - Q: Are you anticipating anything being wrong with the towers?
 - A: Last climb there was \$100,000 worth of equipment they had to change on the Rt.18 tower
 - The tower outside of this building had \$50,000.00 in repairs
 - Just to change a light bulb costs about \$10,000.
 - Emergency Plan Updates - \$10,000.00
 - COOP plan is scheduled for this year
 - Is the least expensive of the plans
 - Looking to contract the Smith Group to complete
 - Used previously
 - Based out of Western MD
 - This Department is responsible for 5 core plans for the county
 - Plans are updated on a 5-year basis
 - 1 plan per year
 - COOP plan is required by the State

- Cardiac Care Equipment - \$101,407.00
 - Replace one Cardiac monitor a year
 - AED replacement and supplies for County AED program
 - Sheriff's Office fleet
 - Parks and Recreation
 - All County Buildings
- Public Safety Network - \$190,000.00
 - 911 center equipment
 - Equipment is replaced over a 5-year period
 - Monitors
 - Keyboards
 - This includes purchases for the backup center
 - Is a pretty critical project
 - We could go one year without it
 - Would be more expensive in the future
- Radio Subscriber Replacement - \$200,000.00
 - We currently have until 2030 to replace all old radios
 - 5 years to complete this
 - Trying to scatter across fiscal years
 - We utilize the State radio system
 - We must get to the level they mandate
- 9-1-1 Phone Refresh - \$2,400,000.00
 - Maryland 911 Board will fund every 5 years
 - We purchase and request reimbursement from the Board
 - Will be replacing the current phone system and the electronics that go with it.
- Voice Recording System - \$740,000.00
 - Replaced on a 5-year rotation
 - Maryland 911 Board will fund
 - 911 Board will only cover phone lines to the 911 Center
 - The current system records all 911 lines and Sheriff's Office administrative lines
 - The Sheriff's Office will have to get their own system
 - We will no longer be responsible for their recordings
 - Q: Where will that be housed?
 - A: The recorder is housed in our on-site server room
 - Current system:
 - has a play back live feature
 - Helpful to go back and get all information from a call
 - Stores recordings for 366 days
- Radio Amateur Civil Emergency (RACES) - \$15,000.00
 - Is an amateur group
 - All members are volunteers
 - Functions as our radio back up in severe emergencies

- DES supplies them with equipment
 - Antennas
 - Radios
 - They have agreements in place to utilize
 - Kent Island Volunteer Fire Company
 - Sudlersville Volunteer Fire Company
 - United Communities
 - Conduct drills and meetings:
 - Yearly drill weekend at White Marsh Park
 - MEMA drills them monthly
 - Have monthly meetings
 - The budget has been submitted
 - We have nothing in hand to say what has been cut
 - Budget meeting with the County Administrator and Finance
 - Focused on Capital requests
 - Expected delivery dates of items
 - Ambulance was approved but not in this budget year
 - Present budget to the Commissioners next Thursday (3/27/25)
 - Expect to see the paperwork the day of the meeting
 - Budget is being cut without knowing what Annapolis is going to do.
 - We do not know what to expect at the State level
 - Board of Education is 43% of the proposed budget for this year

Enhancements:

- Any request that is not currently in the budget is considered an enhancement.
 - Ex: Fuel line item increases from \$10,000 to \$15,000
 - The \$5,000 additional is considered an enhancement
 - Unless this can be proved by a price increase
 - Salaries and Fringe are included in the requests
- Requested 5 position enhancements
 - Grant Position (Top Priority)
 - This position provides CERT training for the county
 - FEMA is currently frozen and under review
 - Not sure of the status and if the funds will be released
 - Was supposed to be a 30-day freeze
 - Tomorrow (3/21/25) is the 30th day
 - MDEM was not aware they were locked out of the system until they tried to log in
 - They remain unsure if/ when they will be granted access back into the system
 - With the possible loss of funding, we are pushing hard to salvage the grant position
 - No guarantees were made
 - Seemed receptive after several mentions

- Fleet Coordinator - \$81,527.00
 - Was requested last year
 - Currently have 1 EMT managing the whole fleet
 - We either must:
 - Pay overtime
 - Pull off unit
 - Need to hire someone to keep everything up and running
 - Equipment maintenance
 - Electronics
 - Services
- Day Shift Captains
 - Communications Captain - \$104,224.00
 - EMS Captain - \$135,517.00
 - Positions for both COM and EMS
 - Phil and Zach are the only Monday through Friday positions in their divisions
 - Their staff work 24/72 shifts
 - Causes cohesive and coordination difficulties
 - COM Captain was requested last year
 - Was cut
 - EMS Captain is a new request this year
- Emergency Management Senior Planner - \$109,758.00
 - We have 1 person on staff to do all the planning tasks
 - Drills
 - Exercises
 - Plans
 - The loss of the Grant Position would also affect the Planner position
 - Would be an impossible workload
- Meeting today:
 - County Administrator's draft budget will be revealed Tuesday at the Commissioner Meeting
 - There are 22 requested position enhancements county-wide.
 - All have been cut from the budget
 - Everything we just went over we will not be getting.
 - Sheriff's Office might be the only Department to possibly get new positions
 - Will be mandated by the State if an additional Circuit Court Judge is appointed
 - Would need to hire 4 additional deputies

Budget 26:

- There are increases for every division
 - Communications has the most service contracts
 - These have increased

- Increases factor in
 - Inflation
 - Benefit increases
 - COLA
 - Pay for Performance raises
- **Administration:**
 - FY24- \$743,568
 - FY25- \$805,281
 - Proposed FY26- \$914,092
 - Staffing:
 - 3 Administrative Staff
 - 1 Director
 - Responsible for
 - Service contracts
 - Office supplies
 - Headquarters
 - EMS stations
 - Satellite buildings
- **EMS**
 - FY24- \$9,389,840
 - FY25- \$9,785,200
 - Proposed FY26- \$10,536,194
 - There have been talks about tariffs and price increases
 - This has not been included in this budget request
 - Occurred after the budget was submitted
 - There is no opportunity to include this into the budget
 - Increasing medical supply line item
 - Have seen 50 to 200 percent increases overnight
- **Communications**
 - FY24- \$3,156,574
 - FY25- \$3,554,907
 - Proposed FY26- \$3,885,284
 - This is a modest request
- **Support Services**
 - FY24- Closed
 - 4 employees were in this division
 - They handled all our IT work
 - Were transferred to IT department
 - Entire budget line item was transferred to IT
- **Emergency Management/ Special Operations**
 - FY24- \$759,440
 - FY25- \$1,031,971
 - Proposed FY26- \$1,051,617
- **Animal Control**

- FY24- \$432,022
 - FY25- \$451,901
 - Proposed FY26- \$447,535
 - Submitted a full budget
 - Possibly being transferred to Animal Services
 - Will find out Tuesday
 - Their budget would transfer with them
 - Animal Control backstory
 - Used to fall under Animal Services
 - Animal Services as privatized in 2010
 - The enforcement aspect of Animal Control cannot be privatized
 - Were moved to the Sheriff's Office
 - Were there for 5-years
 - Became a stand-alone department for 2-years
 - Transferred to DES
 - Have been with us for about 12 years
 - There are 4 personnel
 - There is someone on shift 7 days a week
 - Also, are on call 24/7
- **Fire Marshal**
 - FY24- \$311,159
 - FY25- \$461,708
 - Proposed FY26- \$ 437,303
 - Decreased for FY26
 - Was able to get an additional Fulltime position in FY25
 - 2 Fulltime
 - 4 part-time
 - No expected service loss with the decrease in budget

Grants:

- The Federal grant status is unknown
- \$2-3 million in funds are funneled through our department annually
 - Most of these funds are for other agencies
 - Cloverfield's Mitigation Project
 - Flooding issues in this community
 - Assisted DPW with a scoping grant
 - Contracted a company to determine what can be done to alleviate the problem
 - Is a multimillion-dollar project
 - Millington homes
 - Extreme flooding area
 - Are working to purchase the homes
 - Will have to return the property back to its natural state

- This will be forever
 - Could be made into a park
- \$500,000 project in this area

Important Dates:

- **Budget Work Session**
 - March 27, 2025, in the Liberty Building at 5PM
 - Division Chiefs and Kelly will also be in attendance
 - We will not find out what has been cut until the morning of
 - Will spend most of the day figuring out what has been cut
- **Commissioner Budget Presentations**
 - May 19,2025 – Kent Island Library – 7PM
 - 1st year being hosted there
 - May 20,2025 – Liberty Building – 7PM
 - May 21,2025 – Sudlersville Middle School – 7PM
 - We are not allowed to speak at the Presentations
 - We show up to support the budget
 - Members of this group are welcome to attend and support
- **Next DESAC Meeting**
 - June 12, 2025 – DES – 6PM
 - Hybrid meeting

Vote of Support:

- Would like to have a vote of support on the budget from this group
 - Motion: Sandra Early
 - Second: Ben Hammock
 - The FY26 budget has the approval of the committee
- C: Expected the budgeted amount to be higher based on costs of goods.
 - The budget will be tight
 - Tariffs and price increases have not been factored in
- Zero complaints on how the budget was made
 - It's the same 100% across the board for all agencies
 - County Administrator is pushing to keep the current workforce intact
 - Staffing
 - Services
- Sandra typically reviews the budget before this meeting
 - This year we did not have anything to give her
 - Thank you for being through in years past

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- None

For the Good of the Order:

- None

Adjournment:

- Motion to Adjourn: Taylor Oldershaw
- Second: Gabriel Ripley
- This meeting is adjourned at 6:44 PM