



# ***FIRE RESCUE***

## **ALBEMARLE COUNTY**

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**To:** Jeff Richardson, Doug Walker  
**From:** Dan Eggleston  
**Date:** November 15, 2019  
**Subject:** Transfer of Emergency Management Position

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### **Proposal**

Staff is recommending that Albemarle County transition from a regional, centralized emergency management staff to a locality-centric staff that strategically coordinates planning and resources to better prepare the region for a natural, technological or man-made disaster.

### **Justification**

A regional emergency management approach has served the area well for years. However, there are significant differences in emergency management needs that justify a change in how the localities approach management of planning, mitigation, response, and recovery from man-made and natural events.

Based on the historical review of the region's activities, the City of Charlottesville and the University of Virginia Emergency Management activities appear to center around planning for and management of special incidents such as sporting and entertainment venues.

While Albemarle County also plans for special events, the County experiences the high majority of widescale natural and man-made emergencies such as large brush fires, aircraft crashes, flash floods, snow storms, and high winds/tornadic activity. In addition, Albemarle County has over 30 identified mitigation strategies outlined in the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) Regional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, however, there is no intentional and consistent effort to ensure mitigation strategies are prioritized and executed.

The differences in locality needs on occasion creates conflict in terms of how the region allocates resources and time to plan and manage various events. Because of its size, risk factors, and vulnerability profile, Albemarle County requires a change in approach to the operation of emergency management activities to ensure we are best prepared to address the public's safety.

*" We will provide the highest quality services to protect and preserve the lives, property, and environment of our community."*

### **Reassignment of Resources**

To better manage the unique and challenging aspects of Albemarle County's emergency management activities, like the City of Charlottesville and the University of Virginia, it is recommended that the County establish its own Emergency Management Division under the Albemarle County Department of Fire Rescue (ACFR).

To better serve the County needs, staff is proposing the transfer the current Emergency Manager position from the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) to ACFR. See Financial Plan for further information and alternative options.

### **County Emergency Management Program Goals**

The County's Emergency Management Program will be designed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Coordinate the County's response to emergencies and disasters.
2. Complete and maintain a Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (HVA).
3. Develop and maintain Emergency Operations Plans (EOP).
4. Coordinate the staffing of the Regional Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
5. Organize and implement disaster tabletops, drills, and full-scale exercises.
6. Provide educational opportunities for employees at all levels in order to establish and sustain Emergency Management competencies.
7. Research, apply for, and maintain state and federal emergency management grants.
8. Work with County Communications staff to utilize emergency mass-messaging/communications systems.
9. Coordinate the Incident Action Plan (IAP) process and After-Action Reviews (AARs for significant events.
10. Liaise with state, regional and local emergency management and emergency response personnel.
11. Assist County Departments with establishing a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

### **Establishment of the Regional Emergency Management Technical Advisory Committee**

To continue with the spirit of collaboration, the region would establish a Regional Emergency Management Technical Advisory Committee (REMTAC). REMTAC would be comprised of Emergency Management Representatives from the City of Charlottesville, University of Virginia, and Albemarle County. The mission of the Committee is to strategically coordinate planning and resources to better prepare the region for a natural, technological or man-made disaster.

The goals of REMTAC would include:

Provide policy direction and oversight for the development and maintenance of a coordinated and integrated regional approach to emergency management planning and response systems and identify ways for the region to work together and combine resources to address planning gaps.

1. Develop and maintain a regional Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and regional Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
2. Develop and maintain interoperable and operable communications capabilities and associated emergency communications activities.
3. Foster regional collaboration and communication for various preparedness stakeholder groups.
4. Foster regional communication and coordination for community education and citizen preparedness.
5. Strengthen mass casualty response, medical surge and mass prophylaxis capabilities.
6. Develop and coordinate hazard mitigation programs among the member jurisdictions.

7. Develop and acquire Federal, State and private grant funding opportunities on behalf of the region and make recommendations as to how the region can most efficiently and effectively utilize financial assistance made available for disaster planning, mitigation and recovery.
8. Provide technical guidance and serve as a clearinghouse for homeland security issues for the region.
9. Develop a partnership approach to planning and preparedness by including jurisdictions outside the region and representation from critical entities such as the military, National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), non-governmental organizations and private service agencies and industry.
10. Conduct Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessments (THIRA) on behalf of the region on a periodic basis as recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the National Preparedness System and the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP).

The concept of the REMTAC aligns with the current model used by the City of Harrisonburg, County of Rockingham, and James Madison University where each entity employees its own Emergency Manager yet collaborate to establish a regional Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), operate and maintain a regional Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The Harrisonburg/Rockingham/JMU Task force meets quarterly and rotates the responsibility of the chair.

### Financial Plan

There are several options to consider with the transfer of Emergency Management staff from ECC to ACFR:

- **Option 1** - move the entire ECC Emergency management function – salary for two positions, associated personnel costs, contract services, etc.to ACFR. This option would cost **\$146,000** annually in addition to our contribution to ECC
- **Option 2** - move just the two personnel and associated costs. This option would cost **\$85,000** annually in addition to our contribution to ECC.
- **Option 3** – move Allison’s position from ECC to ACFR. This option would cost approximately **\$50,000** annually in addition to our contribution to ECC.

Based on the workload and financial considerations, staff is recommending **Option 3**.