



# Albemarle County

## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 18-298, **Version:** 1

---

**AGENDA DATE:** 7/11/2018

**TITLE:**

Volunteer Fire Rescue Capital Funding

**SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST:** Approve amendments to the Albemarle County Fire Rescue Volunteer Funding Policy to provide financial support to volunteer agencies for Annual Maintenance and Capital Maintenance.

**ITEM TYPE:** Regular Action Item

**STAFF CONTACT(S):** Walker, Kamptner, Farley, Eggleston, LaBelle

**PRESENTER (S):** Dan Eggleston, Fire Rescue Chief

**LEGAL REVIEW:** Yes

**REVIEWED BY:** Doug Walker

**BACKGROUND:** The Albemarle County Fire Rescue (ACFR) volunteer funding policy SAP-DEP-007 (Attachment A) was approved by the Board in 2008 to provide volunteer organizations with clear guidance regarding funding for annual operating costs and the purchase of emergency response vehicles according to the approved System Fleet Plan and County Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The policy provides for a case-by-case review of capital maintenance expenditures and full access to the County CIP process and is reflective of the Board's desire at that time to have the County fund the daily operations of volunteer organizations, while leaving the responsibility of funding facilities maintenance to volunteer fundraising efforts.

At its March 28, 2017 work session, the Board directed staff to review the ACFR volunteer funding policy and make recommendations regarding opportunities to address volunteer organization budget shortfalls, including possible funding for building maintenance. As part of this review, at its May 24, 2017 work session, the Albemarle County Fire and EMS (FEMS) Board along with volunteer treasurers and ACFR staff, considered modifications to the volunteer funding policy. Though changes to the CIP process were discussed during this meeting, there were several unresolved questions and the FEMS Board voted to maintain the existing policy of case-by-case consideration of capital funding while staff worked out more details on a revised CIP process.

At the July 12, 2017 Board meeting, ACFR and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) staff provided recommended changes to the annual operating policy for consideration starting in the FY 19 budget process. The Board approved those specific recommendations and further directed staff to report back with suggested changes and impacts for the inclusion of maintenance items for volunteer fire and rescue organizations, including the use of the County's CIP, in time for the FY 20 budget process.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:** *Infrastructure Investment:* Prioritize, plan, and invest in critical infrastructure that responds to past and future changes and improves the capacity to serve community needs; *Quality Government Operations:* Ensure County government's capacity to provide high-quality service that achieves community priorities.

**DISCUSSION:** ACFR staff worked with OMB, the FEMS Board, and the Albemarle County Department of Facilities and Environmental Services (FES) to determine the scope of this funding initiative. Following these discussions, staff is suggesting an amendment to the existing policy to provide three distinct funding opportunities for volunteer organizations (See Attachment C). The proposed policy changes will continue to provide access to CIP funds and provide for two distinct additions to determining funding for the volunteer organizations.

- Annual Operating Maintenance
- Capital Maintenance
- Capital Building Replacement/Renovation/Expansion

#### Annual Operating Maintenance

It is proposed that Annual Operating Maintenance (AOM) be an annual operating donation intended for the use of ongoing maintenance of volunteer stations. ACFR will manage a contracted four-year Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA) whereby buildings and systems are evaluated to determine what maintenance projects are required to preserve the building. The FCA will also determine the Plant Replacement Value (PRV) for the facility. As part of this program, FES will create an Annual Preventative Maintenance Plan (APMP) of cyclical and preventative items for each volunteer organization, informed by the FCA and volunteer leadership. The AOM will be based on a percentage of PRV. This percentage is established each year and based on industry standards. This donation is intended to address organization needs outlined in the APMP as well any maintenance deemed necessary at by the local organization.

Although volunteer organizations will not be required to request AOM funding, participation in the four-year assessment will be required. This assessment will allow volunteer organizations to plan their maintenance, regardless of the source of that funding. Volunteer organizations using AOM funds will affirm compliance with the APMP.

#### Capital Maintenance

It is proposed that Capital Maintenance (CM) funding be used for significant items that are part of the volunteer department's building or complex (i.e., replacing the roof or HVAC system). The FCA process will help develop and revise the 10-year capital maintenance needs assessment to inform volunteer CM proposals for consideration in the County CIP process. As with other Fire Rescue projects in the CIP, FES will manage all CM projects, and ACFR will serve as the fiscal agent for these projects. Volunteer participation in the CM program will be voluntary. Given that these funds are a donation and that the buildings are not owned or co-titled with the county, only cash funds can be used for these projects. *To achieve these goals and administer the program, FES will require an additional FTE.*

#### Capital Building Replacement/Renovation/Expansion

It is proposed that Capital Building Replacement/Renovation/Expansion (CBRRE) be defined as a capital project intended to completely replace, substantially renovate, and/or expand a volunteer building. Under current policy, volunteer organizations may work with ACFR to request County funding through the existing CIP. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Volunteer organizations providing matching funds in these requests will see a positive impact on their score during the County CIP process. *Under the proposed policy, this process will not change.*

#### Concerns Expressed by FEMS Board Representatives:

The FEMS Board and ACFR staff discussed the proposed policy at the December FEMS Board work session. Several members of the FEMS Board expressed concern (Attachment B) with the Capital Maintenance portion of the policy - specifically with the involvement of FES. However, FES ensures compliance with state procurement laws and County policy and provides the technical expertise required to make certain projects ultimately meet the needs of the volunteer organization.

**BUDGET IMPACT:**

Annual Operating Maintenance: The proposed volunteer funding policy changes would increase volunteer operational funding in FY20 by an estimated \$177,180.

Capital Maintenance: The Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA) conducted in FY17 indicates that total capital spending over fiscal years 20-24 may total as much as \$3,164,467 (cash only), depending on volunteer station participation.

Further, it is expected that FES will require an additional FTE to manage the proposed maintenance program at a projected FY20 cost of \$107,403 (includes onetime costs).

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff is proposing specific modifications to the ACFR Volunteer Funding Policy to provide for annual operating maintenance financial support and capital maintenance financial support in response to Board direction provided in July, 2017. If and when the Board is satisfied that the modified policy accomplishes its goals in this regard, it is recommended that the Board then approve the policy as amended. Once approved, the policy will guide relevant funding assumptions for FY20 and thereafter.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A: Current ACFR Volunteer Funding Policy  
Attachment B: FEMS Board Engagement  
Attachment C: Proposed Volunteer Funding Policy (Redlined)