

Board of Supervisors
Safety and Security Committee

November 28, 2023 at 1:30 PM
Government Center Conference Room 11

Board of Supervisors (Board) Members present:

Jeff McKay, Chairman – In Person
James Walkinshaw, Braddock District – In Person
John Foust, Dranesville District – In Person
Walter Alcorn, Hunter Mill District – In Person
Rodney Lusk, Franconia District (Committee Chair)
Penelope Gross, Mason District (Vice Chairman) – In Person
Dan Storck, Mount Vernon District – In Person
Dalia Palchik, Providence District – In Person
Pat Herrity, Springfield District – In Person
Kathy Smith, Sully District – In Person

The Safety and Security Committee (Committee) meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

EMS Service Delivery Update: 1:35 p.m.

Fire Chief Butler provided an introduction of the presentation on FRD countywide staffing and EMS service delivery changes. He highlighted recruiting challenges and the FRD's use of data to inform decisions.

Assistant Chief Shaw provided details of how decisions to reorganize the delivery of EMS services throughout the County were made. He provided a history of the previous changes that have been made to convert EMS units from BLS to ALS. This conversion has been the result of ensuring the correct level of response is delivered, in addition to a limited availability of paramedics. Assistance from DPSC was provided in developing new dispatch protocols for the correct resource deployment, thereby using our resources more effectively. The EMS Specialist position was also explained.

Challenges remain in recruiting for public safety professions, which will necessitate continuous attention and evolution of the FRD, including staffing models, overtime, and resource deployment.

Next steps are for Battalion Chiefs to brief the individual board members on the specific changes. A future NIP will be developed providing more detail on recruiting efforts and staffing challenges.

Discussion from board members followed with the following items of note:

- Analysis of staffing and future staffing models.
- Questions around the EMS Specialist position.
- Discussion of the supervisor/paramedic dual role.

- VCU in-house paramedic program.
- Question about single-role paramedic providers.
- How the cost of living in the County relates to recruitment and retention.

Jail Based Programs: 2:20 p.m.

Sheriff Kincaid presented information on jail-based and transitional programs designed to treat addiction, including opioid use disorder. Sheriff Kincaid highlighted the Striving to Achieve Recovery (STAR) program and the Medication for Addiction Treatment (MAT) program for opioid use disorder, and she referenced Diversion First. She explained the development and progress of these treatment and recovery programs, including her own experiences and observations while working in the jail over her 36 years with the agency.

Sheriff Kincaid stressed that after numerous site visits and consultations with experts, she knew what change was needed. She pointed out that 50% of the jail population are residents of Fairfax County; these crucial programs help ensure that the incarcerated population returns to our community healthy and less likely to recidivate, which makes all of Fairfax County healthier and safer. Sheriff Kincaid stressed the need to invest in human capital and that many individuals who come into the Adult Detention Center (ADC) are not in the best of health. Many are suffering from one or more chronic ailments and, for the first time, may be receiving health care for these ailments. Sheriff Kincaid explained that 60% of past STAR participants have returned to the community and not recidivated. This compares to a report from the U.S. Bureau of Justice that found, in general, 68% of released inmates were arrested again within three years, 79% within six years, and 83% within nine years. Sheriff Kincaid also noted that studies have shown that inmates suffering from opioid use disorder and released without treatment are at a much higher risk of overdosing and that MAT helps lower this risk. She stressed that none of these programs would be as successful without the care and dedication of her Sheriff's Office staff. The Board expressed their appreciation for the presentation, which they found very informative, and commended the efforts of the Sheriff and her staff. Board members were happy to hear about the program's success, especially the reduced recidivism rates. Board members also commented on the lack of state funding for these initiatives.

When asked specifically about Project Lifesaver, Sheriff Kincaid explained that this is a highly valued program within the Sheriff's Office; however, given the high vacancy rate faced by the agency, the program cannot be expanded beyond existing clients. She expressed a desire to expand the program once staffing issues are alleviated.

Additional Information: N/A

The Committee meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for January 30, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.