



Telephone (703) 971-6262  
Fax (703) 971-3032  
E-mail: [leedist@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:leedist@fairfaxcounty.gov)  
Web site: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/lee](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/lee)

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
**COUNTY OF FAIRFAX**



6121 Franconia Road  
Alexandria, VA 22310

**Rodney L. Lusk**  
**LEE DISTRICT SUPERVISOR**

## **Board Matter**

**October 5th, 2021**

Mr. Chairman – The current pandemic has put unprecedented strain on our public safety personal.

It has also greatly magnified many of the staffing challenges that were persistent in our public safety system even before Covid-19. I look forward to continuing the conversations that this Board has already initiated aimed at addressing many of those challenges, however its also critical that we look for smart fixes that can be made on a more immediate timeline.

Supervisor Alcorn, Supervisor Gross and I believe that we have identified once such opportunity within our Fire and Rescue Department (FCFRD). For every entry-level firefighter/EMT position advertised by the County we receive approximately 4,000 applications. Following the transmission of those applications, applicants then move through a structured screening process that includes the review of a personal profile, background check, fitness evaluation, medical screening, written exam and polygraph.

Each of these screening and evaluation measures are critical to ensuring that FCFRD remains the premiere fire and rescue department in the nation.

However, Supervisor Alcorn, Supervisor Gross and I were surprised to learn

that of the 4,000 applicants that begin this process, approximately 75% drop out of the process on the very first step—the personal profile.

Unlike in surrounding jurisdictions, as well as in most comparable jurisdictions across the country, firefighter/EMT applicants Fairfax County are required to collect and mail in physical copies of their employment, education and personal reference documents.

This antiquated process is likely responsible for a substantive portion of the early attrition in the hiring process, largely based on a combination of inconvenience and that simple fact that an applicant can advance through the process in a neighboring jurisdiction much more quickly simply by being able to submit their application materials digitally.

Therefore Mr. Chairman, Supervisor Alcorn, Supervisor Gross and I move: That the County Executive direct the appropriate staff to undertake a review of the information technology support, resources, and timeline necessary to convert any applicable portion of the FCFRD application process over to a digital portal;

- That staff specifically designate any best practices or adjustments that could potentially be coordinated and streamlined with parallel hiring process across other public safety departments;
- And that staff report back on their findings to either the Public Safety Committee of the Information Technology Committee before the end of 2021 with interim-update or implementation recommendations.

I'll note that these motions have been made following consultation with the Director of Human Resources, Director of Information Technology, Fire Chief, and County Executive—and are supported by each.

Thank you.