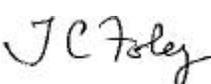


# COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<p><b>AGENDA TITLE:</b> Fire Services Agreement Between the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County</p> <p><b>SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST:</b> Termination of Fire Services Agreement effective June 30, 2013</p> <p><b>STAFF CONTACT(S):</b> Messrs. Foley, Elliott, Davis, and Eggleston</p> <p><b>LEGAL REVIEW:</b> Yes</p>	<p><b>AGENDA DATE:</b> December 7, 2011</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> X      <b>INFORMATION:</b></p> <p><b>CONSENT AGENDA:</b> <b>ACTION:</b>      <b>INFORMATION:</b></p> <p><b>ATTACHMENTS:</b> No</p> <p><b>REVIEWED BY:</b> </p>
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**BACKGROUND:**

In May of 2000, the County entered into an agreement with the City of Charlottesville for the provision of fire and emergency services for defined response areas of the County. The fire services agreement was not intended to be a long term solution for the County, but rather to provide coverage while the County developed its fire rescue system to more effectively address current and future service needs. The agreement was for an initial term of 10 years beginning July 1, 2000 and expiring June 30, 2010. In 2008, the agreement was amended to allow the County to extend the term of the agreement for up to three additional terms expiring June 30, 2013. The County has extended the agreement under existing terms twice, most recently in December of 2010 when the agreement was extended through June 30, 2012. In 2010, the agreement was again amended to allow the extension of the agreement for an additional five year term. If the agreement is extended beyond June 30, 2013, pursuant to the terms of the amended agreement, it would end on June 30, 2018 unless terminated by the City or County with two years advance notice.

The need to provide fire rescue services to the County urban areas around the City, including the Ivy area, was originally identified in a 1994 report to the Board (commonly referred to as the "Deatley report"). Over the years, priority was given to open the Monticello and Hollymead stations with the Ivy and Pantops stations being delayed, mainly due to economic conditions.

During last year's budget work session, the Board became aware that the City's response times to the Ivy area would significantly increase (it is estimated that the response time to Neighborhood 6 would increase to 8:54 minutes) once the City relocates its fire station from Ivy Road in the County to Fontaine Avenue in the City. Given the planned relocation of the City's fire station and the critical need to provide protection to Ivy and the surrounding development areas, the Board directed staff to prepare to end the fire service agreement and redirect the related funding to construct and staff the East Ivy Fire Rescue station.

**DISCUSSION:**

Fire Services Agreement Overview

In general, the fire services agreement allows for up to two City fire engine companies to respond to County fire and emergency incidents in certain predetermined areas of the County. During FY11, the City responded to approximately 1,800 calls for service in the County, with the highest concentration of calls generated from the County's development areas surrounding the City.

The cost for services is basically determined by adding a base annual payment plus a per call charge. Both the base annual payment and the per call charge are increased by 5% annually. The chart below illustrates the call load and net cost/budgeted amount since the agreement was approved in 2000:

	FY01	FY12	FY16 <i>(estimate if contract were extended)</i>
Net Call load	2,425	1,800	1,800
Net Cost/Budgeted Amount	\$644,427	\$845,638	\$1,027,878

Evolution of Albemarle County Fire Rescue System

The County's Fire Rescue system has evolved significantly over the last 14 years pursuant to a plan to improve the system to meet current and future service needs. The 1997 Deatley report indicated that there were approximately 500 fire and rescue volunteers serving from seven volunteer fire stations and three volunteer rescue stations at that time. By 2000, when the fire services agreement was initially negotiated, daytime career staff (12 personnel) had been hired to supplement volunteer forces in three of the fire stations, but rescue stations had yet to request assistance. The County's fire rescue system still lacked the resources needed to provide primary fire rescue coverage, particularly in the contiguous development areas around the City and extending north on Seminole Trail to the Hollymead area. One fire station, the Seminole Trail Volunteer Fire Department, was located within those development areas. The lack of basic fire station coverage required the establishment of the fire services agreement, signed in 2000.

Today the fire and rescue system in Albemarle County has matured considerably. Primary service is provided by more than 700 volunteers and 80 career personnel. The County has constructed two additional fire rescue stations within the development areas: Monticello Fire Rescue in 2003 and Hollymead Fire Rescue in 2008. With the addition of the East Ivy Station in 2013, four stations will be located within the contiguous development areas around the City and north on Seminole Trail, up from only one in 2000. At the request of volunteer stations, the County has hired additional career staff for one additional fire station and two rescue stations to provide supplemental daylight staffing. In addition, day shifts for career staff in all stations were extended to ensure coverage from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. five days per week, covering more daytime hours in volunteer stations.

Financially, the County has invested a significant amount of operational and capital funding in the fire rescue system. Since 2000, the County has funded the basic operating costs for volunteer stations, hired 62 career personnel for staffing and administrative duties and invested over \$16 million in capital funds to replace fire and rescue apparatus. Because of the evolving nature and needs of this system, Fire Rescue's operating budget has increased from \$2.4 million in FY00 to \$8.7 million in FY12.

<b>Albemarle County Fire Rescue System</b>	<b>Comparison</b>	
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2013</b>
Fire and Rescue Stations	10	13
Fire Stations in Contiguous Development Areas around City	1	4
Stations with Career Staff	3	9
Fire and Rescue Volunteers <sup>1</sup>	500	Over 700
Fire Rescue Career Personnel (operations & administration)	17	87 <sup>2</sup>
Operating budget	\$2.4 million	\$8.7 million <sup>3</sup>

Notes

1 – Total volunteers in year 2000 derived from 1994 Deatley Report – unclear if number included operational and administrative volunteers; 2013 volunteers include both operational and administrative personnel

2 - Includes 8 FTEs for Ivy staff

3 – Budget in FY12

Transition to an Automatic Aid Relationship with the City

County and City fire rescue staff have met on a number of occasions to discuss the concept of transitioning to an automatic aid arrangement between the City and County departments. Under an automatic aid agreement, County and City units would respond to first alarm assignments in the County/City under predetermined conditions and at no cost. Augusta County and the City of Waynesboro have recently entered into an automatic aid agreement.

The key to establishing a mutually beneficial automatic aid agreement is to balance the workload so that no one jurisdiction is unfairly burdened. During 2011, the City responded to 1,800 unit calls for service in the County and the County responded to approximately 100 unit calls for service in the City. Of the 1,800 unit calls for service in the County, approximately 900 calls were EMS related and about 75 calls were to a report of a building fire.

Staff believes there are opportunities to balance the County/City workload by modifying dispatch procedures and shifting lower priority calls currently covered by the City under the fire services agreement to existing County stations while retaining procedures to send the maximum resources for higher priority calls such as building fires. If the Board chooses to terminate the current fire services agreement, staff will continue to work with City fire staff to plan and implement an automatic aid agreement.

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**BUDGET IMPACT:**

The FY12 budgeted amount for the fire services agreement is \$845,638.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Staff recommends that the Board give notice to the City to extend the fire services agreement through June 30, 2013 and to terminate the fire services agreement effective at midnight on June 30, 2013 and direct staff to work with City fire staff to plan and implement an automatic aid agreement to be effective upon termination of the fire services agreement.

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