

May 14, 2019

At the special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Court House, thereof, on Tuesday, the 14th day of May, 2019; at 5:30 p.m., there were present:

J. David Emert

Llew W. Gilliam, Jr.

Robert M. Jones

Odessa H. Pride

Gene A. Southall

Jerry R. Townsend

James R. Wilck

Absent: Pattie Cooper-Jones

Also present: Wade Bartlett, County Administrator; Sarah Elam Puckett, Assistant County Administrator; Farmville Volunteer Fire Department Chief Dean Farmer; Hampden-Sydney Volunteer Fire Department Chief LW Gilliam; Pamplin Volunteer Fire Department Chief Shane Richardson; Prospect Volunteer Fire Department Chief Al Mason; Meherrin Volunteer Fire Department Chief Trey Pyle; Darlington Heights Volunteer Fire Department Chief Dallas Tinsley; and Rice Volunteer Fire Department President Andy Ellington.

Chairman Wilck called the special meeting to order.

In Re: Work Session with Fire Chiefs

Chief L. W. Gilliam, Hampden-Sydney Volunteer Fire Department, stated his department is requesting an additional \$20,000 for the Fire Department and \$10,000 for the EMS. He stated the maintenance for vehicles was costly and the call volume is increasing; their department is second or third due with almost all calls in the County.

Chief Trey Pyle, Meherrin Volunteer Fire Department, stated the department is requesting, for the EMS portion, an additional \$5,000 operational cost along with a Vehicle Acquisition Fund to be started with \$12,000 a year for six years. It was noted Meherrin VFD received a donation of \$17,500 from Container First Services (CFS).

Supervisor Cooper-Jones entered the meeting at this time.

Mr. Bartlett asked if Lunenburg County provided an additional funding for FY20. Chief Pyle said they did not.

Chairman Wilck expressed his concern that currently, the Board provides equal funding to all departments; if one [department] is given more, he is concerned that there will be complaints from the other departments.

Mr. Bartlett asked if the Fire Association has taken a stance on this request.

Chief Dallas Tinsley, Darlington Heights Volunteer Fire Department, stated the Association voted to not ask for additional funding, with the exception of Hampden-Sydney and Meherrin voted for additional funding for the rescue side of theirs. Chief Tinsley said the Darlington Heights department has always stuck to their budget, and sometimes they haven't been able to get things they wanted due to lack of funding. He said his department holds fund raisers to get the things that are not in the budget; he spoke about the budget for his department.

Chief Tinsley stated he understands the challenges Chief Gilliam faces with bigger turnover of personnel and the process of always having to train new staff. He said he is not opposed to EMS receiving more, and acknowledged there are no instructors to do the training free of charge. The cost of \$300-\$600 per person to train, plus materials, for EMS, and recertifications, is an expense other Volunteer Fire Departments do not have to figure in.

Chief Al Mason, Prospect Volunteer Fire Department, said he is satisfied with what the department receives. He said he is not aware of their budget. He said years ago, his department sat on \$6,000-\$8,000 and then the Committee was formed because costs were going up. He said maybe the amounts need to be revamped.

Chief Shane Richardson, Pamplin Volunteer Fire Department, said Pamplin also has an EMS department; they are currently having difficulty trying to sign a contract with a paid two-man EMS crew. He said it is costly, and calls are about equal between Appomattox and Prince Edward Counties.

Chief Dean Farmer, Farmville Volunteer Fire Department, thanked the Board for the support given and said this Board provides more funding than the surrounding localities provide to their departments, and the funding is adequate. He said his department has \$88 to last until July, but uses the funds wisely. He said the EMS agency costs have to be kept in mind and everything cannot be bought within a year. He said they

do fund raisers for things that are wanted or needed. Chief Farmer said their department needs turnout gear and EMS equipment, but will need to get it during the next budget cycle. He said Meherrin has much higher costs because they transport patients to the hospital, provide a special vehicle for transport and have many more costs associated with that. He said the other departments understand it costs more to provide that level of care and recommended more fund raisers.

Andy Ellington, President, Rice Volunteer Fire Department, thanked the Board for its support and said they are hurting for volunteers. He said they have a lot of expenses and would love to have a new tanker as theirs is a 1996 model. He said each year, there had been about \$10,000 surplus from County funds which were carry-over and insurance funds. He said it has been a tough year and now has \$3,000 to get to July; he said pumps, a four-wheel drive mechanism and a transmission all broke down this year. He suggested a committee be formed to start looking at next year's budget and a possible 2% increase. Mr. Ellington said his department tries to do three fund raisers each year. He said they have to look at the future, adding that if they cannot get volunteers, paid fire departments will be necessary in the county and taxes will have to be raised.

Chief Tinsley said that Hampden-Sydney is not being cut out of the funding, he said everyone is running close [to their budget]. He said his department does not have the call load or EMS as Hampden-Sydney does, but it may cause issues because everyone's budget is tight. He said it would be good to find out if the departments can be funded a little more.

Supervisor Gilliam said the main reason the Board gathered all the Fire Chiefs was to commend them on their service, and while the Board understands prices of everything have gone up, it has to be fair to all the departments. He said they are all for helping the EMS but the main thing the Board wants is to ensure that all is fair with all departments and to hear their thoughts, now and for next year. He said the Board cannot do it all at once.

Supervisor Jones asked if funds could be switched from the Fire to the EMS and leave the fire funding as it is. He said each department has its own unique situation.

Chief Gilliam thanked the Board for the funding for the Fire Department; he said the only reason they came [to request additional funding] for the EMS side is that they currently supplement the EMS with the funding for the Fire Department. He said they are a transport agency like Prince Edward Rescue. He

said the request is strictly to offset rising costs. He said it would not be fair to the citizens of Prince Edward County for them to continue to use the Fire Department funding for the EMS.

Mr. Bartlett asked if the other departments are supplementing the EMS from the Fire funding.

Assistant Chief Todd Pugh, Hampton-Sydney Volunteer Fire Department, said that they are also supplementing their EMS with Fire funds. He said his department carries disability and full insurance on their members, which equates to approximately \$20,000+ each year. He said if it were to be fair, each department would need to submit their budget, with justification. He said all departments are not equal and cannot operate with equal funding due to the nature of the County and the jurisdictions, the areas served. He said his department had over \$100,000 surplus but it has been used in the past few years. He said all apparatus is certified. He said they do fund raising.

Chief Gilliam said volunteerism is down and people want to know what they will get in return.

Discussion followed on workers compensation and insurance on volunteers, apparatus, AirPaks, fire trucks and ladder trucks.

Chief Tinsley said the normal truck is the pumper, which carries the fire hose, ladder and forceful entry tools. He said their main function is forcing entry and finding victims. The truck company is set up to do ventilation, to go to the roof, look for extension and to assist with search, but their compliance with tools is different from the engine. They provide water and engine help. He said the ladder truck has a place on every structure fire; the ladder must be certified every year.

Mr. Bartlett asked if the increased cost is from the training or is it due to more calls run, causing the increase in the operational costs. Chief Gilliam said they are both costly. He said there is a higher turnover rate; they had 21 new members last year, all of which need turnout gear and the Firefighter I classes.

Mr. Bartlett said membership consists of 10 or less Prince Edward County citizens and the rest are students.

Chief Gilliam said they had 28 total members; now, due to classes letting out for the summer, they are down to six members.

Mr. Bartlett said over the years, an organization gets a personality of their own, and it has become a "student department." He asked how they might be able to recruit more permanent citizen members and not as many students. Chief Gilliam said firefighters are always training; he said due to the location and the name of the department, citizens feel that it only covers the college grounds or that the college students will

take care of it. He added that much of the citizen population is older. Discussion followed on recruiting motivated volunteers that have the time to devote to the training hours, and said volunteerism is down, nationwide.

Chief Tinsley said the Board can do things to help get people involved. He said people now want to know what they will get from volunteering. He said some other areas provide \$8 per call worked, and some receive a percentage off their taxes. Discussion followed.

Supervisor Southall asked if Hampden-Sydney College provides any funding. Chief Gilliam said the College gave \$17,000 last year.

Supervisor Wilck said the Board members don't think about these things because they're not involved; he said a committee will be set up to discuss these issues for next year's budget. He thanked the Fire Chiefs for attending and providing their input.

Mr. Bartlett said the County may have recently received ATL funds; he said the ATL funds can only be used for certain things. Discussion followed.

Supervisor Jones asked if money could be given to the Meherrin and Hampden-Sydney EMS and mark it as EMS funding; Mr. Bartlett said he would have to research to be certain as they may need to be separate. Discussion followed on the members of the committee.

On motion of Supervisor Emert, seconded by Supervisor Cooper-Jones, and adopted by the following vote:

Aye:	Pattie Cooper-Jones	Nay: None
	J. David Emert	
	Llew W. Gilliam, Jr.	
	Robert M. Jones	
	Odessa H. Pride	
	Gene A. Southall	
	Jerry R. Townsend	
	James R. Wilck	

the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.