



**BOOK 38**  
**Page 904-909**



**AMHERST COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**Board of Supervisors**

Tom Martin, Chair  
District 1  
Drew Wade, Vice-Chair  
District 5  
Claudia Tucker, Supervisor  
District 2  
David W. Pugh, Jr., Supervisor  
District 4

**MINUTES**

**October 3, 2023**  
Administration Building - 153 Washington  
Street - Public Meeting Room  
Amherst, Virginia 24521  
Meeting Convened - 3:00 PM

**County Administrator**  
Jeremy Bryant

**County Attorney**  
Mark Popovich

**I. Call to Order**

At a regular meeting of the Amherst County Board of Supervisors held on October 3, 2023 at 3:00 p.m., the following members were present:

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

Tom Martin, Chairman  
Drew Wade, Vice-Chair  
Claudia D. Tucker, Supervisor  
David W. Pugh, Jr., Supervisor

**ABSENT:** None

**STAFF:**

Jeremy S. Bryant, County Administrator  
Stacey McBride, Deputy County Administrator/Finance Director  
Mark Popovich, County Attorney  
Kristen Freeman, Clerk

Chairman Martin called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**NOTE: All Board of Supervisors' meetings are now being streamed live on Facebook and on YouTube.**

**II. Approval of Agenda**

By motion of Vice-Chair Wade and with the following vote, the Board approved the agenda with the amendment of adding Item C. under Section XVI. Closed Session.

**AYE:** Mr. Martin, Mr. Wade, Mrs. Tucker and Mr. Pugh

**NAY:** None

**ABSENT:** None

**III. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Vice-Chair Wade led the Invocation and Chairman Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**IV. Citizen Comment**

There was no public comment.

## **V. Ordinance - First Read**

### **A. Ordinance 2023-6, Revenue Sharing Solar**

Staff worked with the County Attorney to determine how the county should pursue taxing of utility-scale solar farms. Currently, utility-scale solar farms are taxed through the machinery and tools (M&T) tax. The ordinance attached proposes a code change to allow such facilities to be taxed through a revenue share agreement. Staff believes that through this ordinance, the County is able to receive higher tax revenue from utility-scale solar generation facilities.

By motion of Supervisor Pugh and with the following vote, the Board directed staff to advertise Ordinance 2023-6 for public hearing at their October 17, 2023 meeting.

AYE: Mr. Martin, Mr. Wade, Mrs. Tucker, and Mr. Pugh

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

## **VI. Consent Agenda**

By motion of Supervisor Tucker and with the following vote, the Board approved the Consent Agenda for October 3, 2023.

AYE: Mr. Martin, Mr. Wade, Mrs. Tucker, and Mr. Pugh

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

### **A. Minutes - September 8, 2023 Planning Retreat**

It was moved that the Board adopt the minutes of the September 8, 2023 Planning Retreat.

### **B. Adoption of Strategic Plan and 2023/2024 Action Work Plan**

It was moved that the Board adopt the Strategic Plan and 23/24 Action Work Plan as presented.

### **C. Minutes - September 19, 2023**

It was moved that the Board adopt the minutes of September 19, 2023.

### **D. Reimbursement - Monelison Fire Department**

It was moved that the Board approve the reimbursement of \$34,000.00 to Monelison Fire Department for the installation of HVAC to the back building of Monelison Fire Station 1 from ESC Capital Expenditure funds.

## **VII. Special Presentation**

### **A. Amherst County Fire and EMS Study Report**

Abbey Johnston, Vice-Chair of the Virginia Fire Services Board, addressed the Board with a presentation. (SEE ATTACHMENT 1)

Board directed staff to share the study report with the Fire and EMS chiefs and staff will set up a work session for the Board after the chiefs make their recommendations on what aspects of the plan should be implemented. .

### **B. Parks and Recreation Master Plan Presentation**

David Hill with Hill Studios presented the Board with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan presentation. (SEE ATTACHMENT 2)

### **VIII. Old Business**

#### **A. Resolution 2023-17-R, Modification of ACSA Water and Sewer Revenue Bond**

By motion of Supervisor Pugh and with the following vote, the Board adopted and executed Resolution 2023-17-R, authorizing the modification of the water and sewer system revenue bond anticipation note Series 2023 A and documents related thereto.

AYE: Mr. Martin, Mr. Wade, Mrs. Tucker, and Mr. Pugh

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

### **IX. New Business**

#### **A. Renaming of a Road - Rutledge Creek Trail**

By motion of Vice-Chair Wade and with the following vote, the Board approved the naming of Rutledge Creek Trail. This name will be assigned to the road that currently serves the residents in the area referred to as Rutledge Creek Estates.

AYE: Mr. Martin, Mr. Wade, Mrs. Tucker, and Mr. Pugh

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

### **X. County Administrator's Report**

#### **A. Designation of VACo Proxy**

By motion of Chairman Martin and with the following vote, the Board chose Claudia Tucker to serve as the Amherst County voting representative to the annual VACo meeting, and Jeremy Bryant as the alternate.

AYE: Mr. Martin, Mr. Wade, Mrs. Tucker, and Mr. Pugh

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

#### **B. Cancellation of November 7, 2023 Meeting Discussion**

By motion of Supervisor Pugh and with the following vote, the Board canceled their November 7, 2023 meeting.

AYE: Mr. Martin, Mr. Wade, Mrs. Tucker, and Mr. Pugh

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

#### **C. Central Virginia Training Center (CVTC) Response Letter**

By motion of Supervisor Tucker and with the following vote, the Board directed the County Administrator to sign the attached letter and mail it to the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of General Services.

AYE: Mr. Martin, Mr. Wade, Mrs. Tucker, and Mr. Pugh

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

## **XI. County Attorney's Report**

The County Attorney had no matter to discuss.

## **XII. Liaison and Committee Reports**

### **A. Planning Commission - David Pugh**

Supervisor Pugh reported that at the last meeting of the Planning Commission there was a special exception approved for a short-term tourist rental on River Road that was approved, they also approved of Ordinance 2023-6, Revenue Sharing Solar, and they approved of the updating of the Comprehensive Plan including the Madison Heights Master Plan. They also had a unanimous denial of the Piney River Solar plan. The Planning Commission is also looking into some code changes.

### **B. Parks, Recreation & Cultural Development Board- Tom Martin**

Chairman Martin reported that the Halloween Spooktacular is on October 27th at the Coolwell Recreation Center. He also reported that pickleball is a hot sport in Amherst County right now, and they are looking into expanding that offering from one to two days a week. Mr. Martin also stated that Caitlyn Baxter, a high school student and Girl Scout, gave a presentation to the Parks & Rec Board. She came up with a passport system for our parks. This was for her silver award for the Girl Scouts. This encourages people to go and visit our parks and they can go and collect a medallion and you make a rubbing of it if you collect all six the citizen gets a patch. Mr Martin instructed Mr. Nixon and Mr. Bryant to get together and invite Ms. Baxter to a future meeting.

## **XIII. Departmental Reports**

### **A. Community Policy Management Team (CPMT) - Annual Report**

Amanda Sheppard, CPMT Chair, presented the Board with their annual report. (SEE ATTACHMENT 3)

## **XIV. Citizen Comment**

There was no public comment.

## **XV. Matters from Members of the Board of Supervisors**

Chair Martin had no matter to discuss.

Vice-Chair Wade had no matter to discuss.

Supervisor Tucker stated that at the most recent Agriculture Committee meeting, there was a discussion about the influx of Chinese Fountain Grass in Amherst County and that the Extension Agent and the County Administrator are working together to reach out and give public service information to land owners.

Supervisor Pugh had no matter to discuss.

## **XVI. Closed Session**

- A. A closed session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(7) of the Code of Virginia for the limited purpose of consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members pertaining to actual litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the litigating posture of the public body as it relates to a filed Petition for Declaratory Judgement.

Vice-Chair Wade motioned to go into closed session and was approved with the following vote:

AYE: Mr. Martin, Mr. Wade, Mrs. Tucker, and Mr. Pugh  
NAY: None  
ABSENT: None

- B. A closed session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A)(7) for the limited purpose of consultation with legal counsel retained by the Board regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel related to a tax abatement request from the Monacan Indian Nation.

**Item added by agenda amendment**

- C. A closed session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) for the purpose of discussion related to consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, specifically related to the acquisition of property located in District 3.

Supervisor Pugh motioned to come out of closed session and was approved with the following vote:

AYE: Mr. Martin, Mrs. Tucker, Mr. Wade, and Mr. Pugh  
NAY: None  
ABSENT: None

**XVII. Certification of Closed Session  
CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING**

I move that the Amherst County Board of Supervisors certify by a recorded vote that, to the best of each Board member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorizing the closed session were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed session.

Mr. Martin: AYE  
Mr. Wade: AYE  
Mrs. Tucker: AYE  
Mr. Pugh: AYE

**XVIII. Adjournment**

By motion of Vice-Chair Wade and with the following vote, the Board adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

AYE: Mr. Martin, Mr. Wade, Mrs. Tucker, and Mr. Pugh  
NAY: None  
ABSENT: None



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Tom Martin, Chair  
Amherst County Board of Supervisors



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Jeremy Bryant, County Administrator

# Amherst County

## FIRE & EMS STUDY

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In consultation with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and the Virginia Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services.



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APPENDIX E: County of Amherst Fire and EMS Study Report (2013)

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.



**STUDY TEAM**

**Virginia Fire Services Board**

Donald Hart  
Abbey Johnston  
Jess Rodzinka

VA Association of Counties  
VA State Firefighters Association  
VA Professional Fire Fighters

**Virginia Department of Health – Office of Emergency Medical Services**

Chris Vernovai

EMS Systems Planner

**Virginia Department of Fire Programs**

Tom Berry  
Ken Brown  
Spencer Willett

Division Chief  
Coordinator of Community Risk Reduction  
Government Affairs Manager

The group above is herein after referred to as “Study Team.”

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The Virginia Fire Services Board would like to extend thanks to the following organizations and individuals for their contribution to this study:

Amherst County Board of Supervisors

Pedlar Volunteer Fire Dept.

Jeremy Bryant, County Administrator

Amherst Life Saving Crew

Bradley Beam, Director of Public Safety

Monelison Volunteer Rescue Squad

Amherst Volunteer Fire Dept.

Amherst County Public Safety

Monelison Volunteer Fire Dept.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents the findings and recommendations for the Amherst County Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Study. This study and the information contained herein should not be construed as legal advice or as binding recommendations for Amherst County. This report provides guidance to the Amherst County Board of Supervisors, the Amherst County Administrator, its fire and EMS organizations, and other stakeholders in the community regarding public safety. Amherst County should strive to meet and/or exceed the recommendations contained in this report to enhance the overall quality of fire-rescue delivered to citizens and visitors of Amherst County.

This study was requested by a resolution of the Amherst County Board of Supervisors to analyze five working areas which include:

- Organization
- Budget and Administration
- Training
- Delivery of Services/staffing
- Fleet Design and Management (Equipment/Apparatus)

In addition, community risk reduction was included by members of the study team because it encompasses all the above areas. The Resolution of the Amherst County Board of Supervisors also specified that the Emergency Services Council requested input on sustainability, retention, and recruitment.

The study was conducted by the Virginia Fire Services Board, in partnership with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and the Virginia Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services. The above referenced working areas served as a guide for the study team to identify issues, evaluate current fire-rescue operations, and make recommendations to improve Amherst County fire and rescue services.

Amherst County created a Department of Public Safety in 1998 to oversee fire and EMS in the county. This department is led by the Director of Public Safety, which has direct oversight over career staff members. Amherst County ordinance requires that fire departments in the county "coordinate their operations and activities with the department of public safety".<sup>1</sup> This report makes recommendations that should be carried out by the Director of Public Safety with the support of the County Administrator and the Amherst County Board of Supervisors.

Amherst County should further develop its Department of Public Safety to better reflect current job duties and possible expansion of the department over the next 5-10 years. As a part of this development, consideration should be given to a dedicated fire marshal position to assist in plans review and the enforcement of the Statewide Fire Prevention Code. The department should be reorganized to split services into three areas: EMS, fire, and support services. A volunteer division chief should lead the fire division, highlighting the important role of volunteers in the combination Department of Public Safety.

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<sup>1</sup>Sec. 11.5-12, *Amherst County Code of Ordinances*

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines must be reviewed and strictly enforced to ensure the safety of personnel and those who rely on the Amherst County Department of Public Safety. Specifically, it is recommended that an accountability system be in place and utilized on incident scenes. Of note, any SOP or SOG developed is only as good as its enforcement and the training that personnel receive related to it.

Volunteer personnel should be further supported through enhancements to interdepartmental communication, greater financial incentives, and better training opportunities. Training should be coordinated by a dedicated volunteer or career position and be available to all personnel. This training should involve both career and volunteer personnel, ensuring that all members of the department know and understand how to work with one another effectively.

The decline in volunteers at county EMS entities requires that the Department of Public Safety begin providing greater EMS coverage. Requiring a “peak” ambulance to be staffed and the establishment of an advanced life support capable quick response vehicle is recommended to meet growing EMS demands. The department must begin planning for the phase-in of additional full-time transport capable EMS units in conjunction with applicable components of community medicine.

The county should establish countywide minimum equipment and apparatus specifications to create operational uniformity and ensure appropriate access to county funds. A fleet needs assessment should be conducted to assist with this, as well as future planning as it relates to emergency response. The Department of Public Safety should consider the purchase of a reserve engine that can also serve in a training capacity.

Other important recommendations for Amherst County include a community risk assessment, establishment of cancer prevention practices, reviewing public safety communications, and a review of the 2013 County of Amherst Fire and EMS Study Report.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The following is an overview of the study process:

### **PHASE I: INITIATE PROJECT**

#### ***Objectives: Initiation of Study***

To initiate the study, the Amherst County Administrator sent a Resolution, on behalf of the Amherst County Board of Supervisors, to the Virginia Fire Services Board requesting a complete and thorough review of the fire and EMS system in the county (Reference Appendix A).

The county requested the following areas of concentration:

- Organization
- Budget and Administration
- Training
- Delivery of Services/staffing
- Fleet Design and Management (Equipment/Apparatus)

A study team was convened and the study team began by reviewing county-submitted data including the self-assessment questionnaire completed by the county. The team also began collecting and reviewing existing data, memorandums of understanding and relevant policies and procedures.

As part of Phase I, the study team met with leadership from Amherst County to establish working relationships, make logistical arrangements, and determine communication lines. During these meetings, the study team discussed the objectives of the project and identified any issues and concerns central to the study.

### **PHASE II: OBTAIN STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

#### ***Objectives: Conduct Leadership Interviews & Capture Input from the Departments***

The second phase of the study consisted of leadership interviews and department evaluations. The expectations were as follows:

- Identify opinions of department personnel concerning the operations and performance of their department and county coordination;
- Identify issues and concerns of personnel regarding fire and rescue services;
- Identify perceived gaps in existing service levels and new priorities in mission; and,
- Identify strengths and weaknesses as perceived by departmental personnel.

The study team, in coordination with county leadership, developed a schedule of face-to-face interviews with the three fire departments to include: Amherst, Monelison, and Pedlar. The study team also conducted face-to-face interviews with EMS organizations in Monelison and Amherst.

The study team met with leadership from Amherst County to include the Director of Public Safety, Deputy Director of Public Safety, EMS Supervisors, and other public safety staff.

All interviews were conducted during an allotted timeframe and a considerable amount of information was collected. A public hearing was advertised by the county and held on August 9, 2023 to give the public an opportunity to share feedback with the study team regarding the Fire & EMS system in Amherst.

During the interviews and public hearing, the study team received information regarding volunteer staffing levels, service delivery, budget information, apparatus, relationships between career staff and volunteers, and other information about the operation of each volunteer department. The discussion also provided an opportunity for each organization to share comments regarding service delivery of fire & EMS services in the county and possible areas for improvement.

### **PHASE III: PREPARE ANALYSES AND DEVELOP CORE STRATEGIES**

#### ***Objectives: Evaluate Current Trends and Prepare a Report***

The third phase of the study involved further investigation and understanding of the organizational structures, operations, limitations, achievements, and opportunities for improvement within the fire and EMS delivery system. The activities that supported this process consisted of additional requests for information not already obtained in Phase I and II of the work plan. Data requests, made in this phase of the study, attempt to address any issues that emerged from the interviews, and further evaluate implications of the operational issues cited. During this phase, the study team worked with the Department of Public Safety to obtain additional information. Data obtained during the study process also assists the study team in identifying issues influencing the current levels of service.

After receiving and critically evaluating information from the interviews and all supporting materials, the study team began identifying the necessary and critical components to achieve effective and uniform service levels throughout the county.

### **PHASE IV: PREPARE FINAL REPORT**

#### ***Objectives: Prepare and Present Final Report***

The final phase of the study involved documenting the results of all previous tasks into a written report with critical components, such as an executive summary, methodology, background, and findings and recommendations. Once completed, a draft report was shared with the Amherst County Administrator to ensure the technical content in this report is accurate. Upon receiving corrections, the study team revised the draft report, as needed, to assist in the preparation and issuance of the final report.

## COUNTY INFORMATION

Amherst County is a rural community located North of the City of Lynchburg, Virginia with significant recreational areas such as the Appalachian Trail and the George Washington National Forest. Amherst County is bordered by five other counties (Rockbridge, Nelson, Appomattox, Campbell, and Bedford) and the City of Lynchburg. The county was developed in 1761 from portions of Albemarle County, taking its final shape in 1807. The county is named for Lord Amherst, commander of British forces in Canada during the Seven Years War.<sup>2</sup>

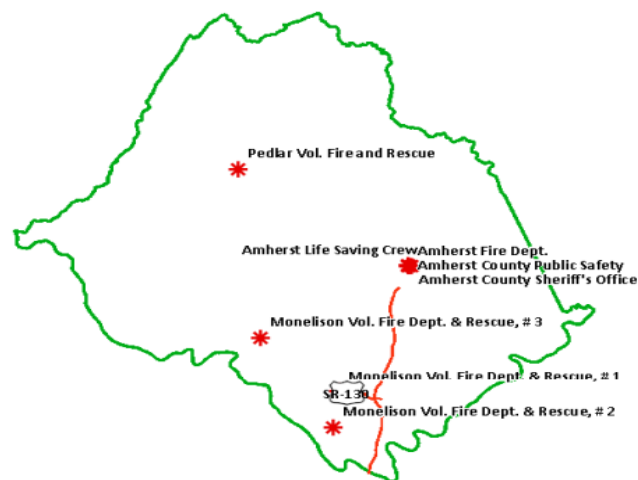
The county has 479 square miles of land, with one incorporated town that serves as the county seat, the Town of Amherst. Major transportation in the area is provided by U.S Highway 29, U.S Highway 60, and State Route 130. The Blue Ridge Parkway also travels through the county.

The estimated population in Amherst County in 2021 was 31,589 people with a household income of \$60,876 and a total of 14,336 housing units. Most of the county's population is present in the South end of the county, near the City of Lynchburg.<sup>3</sup>

The county operates under the guidance of the Board of Supervisors. Board members represent each of the five magisterial districts. The County Administrator serves as the Chief Administrative Officer and executive for the county. The Director of Public Safety serves as the Emergency Services Coordinator, 911 Communications Director, fire marshal, and oversees the Department of Public Safety.

### FIGURE 1: AMHERST COUNTY EXISTING FIRE/EMS FACILITIES

A snapshot of Amherst County GIS mapping software shows the location of each fire station and rescue squad in the county.



<sup>2</sup> "History". *Amherst County Museum*

<sup>3</sup> U.S Census Bureau

## **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations contained in this study are not a requirement for the county to implement. The recommendations are to be used as a guideline of potential solutions that will assist the county as it further develops its capabilities to provide fire and EMS services. The purpose of the study is to review weaknesses and strengths of Amherst County’s current fire and EMS practices, providing recommendations to better serve the citizens and visitors of Amherst County.

Recommendations below refer to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, including NFPA 1720: Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments. According to chapter 1 of NFPA 1720, the standard defines “levels of service, deployment capabilities, and staffing levels for substantially volunteer fire departments. It contains minimum requirements for deploying fire suppression and EMS for service delivery, response capabilities and resources. It also contains requirements for managing resources and systems such as health and safety, incident management, training, communications, and pre-incident planning. It addresses the strategic and system issues involving the organization, operations, and deployment of a volunteer fire department.”<sup>4</sup>

The National Fire Protection Association provides industry-wide best practices for fire and EMS service. Although the NFPA standards are considered best practices, the study team understands that not all NFPA standards are attainable in individual jurisdictions. Amherst County should strive to meet NFPA standards to provide best-in-class service to its citizens and visitors.

It is important to keep in mind who the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) is, which in this case could be the Amherst County Department of Public Safety. In accordance with all NFPA codes the AHJ is “an organization, office, or individual responsible for enforcing the requirements of a code or standard, or for approving equipment, materials, an installation, or a procedure. (1720 -2020, 3.2.2)

### **I. FURTHER DEVELOP THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

Although the Amherst County Department of Public Safety (DPS) is established in Chapter 11.5 of the Amherst County Code of Ordinances, in practice there are a number of operational issues that should be addressed moving forward. In order to provide better services and strengthen the safety of firefighters and EMS providers, the Amherst County Code of Ordinances should be revised to make the Director of Public Safety the ultimate authority responsible for fire and EMS, reporting to the county administrator and the Amherst County Board of Supervisors.

The further development of the Department of Public Safety, including the creation of specialized teams, a county volunteer program, the expansion of support staff, as well as changes to the Code of Ordinances, will ultimately lead to a more effective organization to provide greater services to citizens and visitors in Amherst County.

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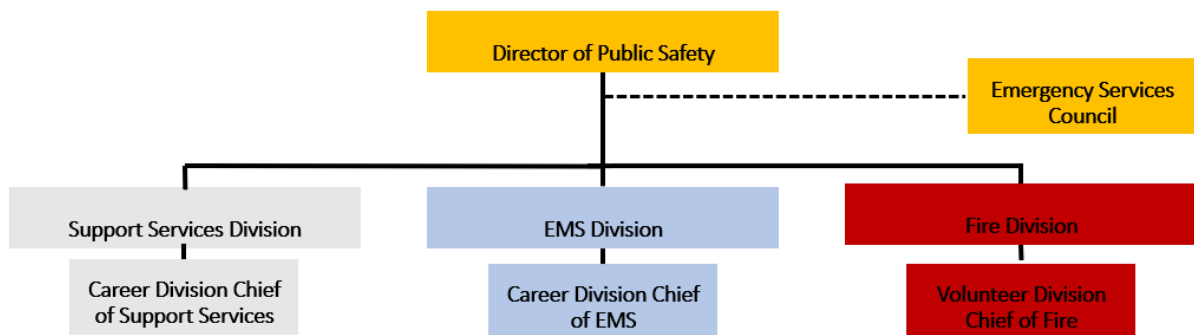
<sup>4</sup> NFPA 1720: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments.

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should change language to more clearly define the Department of Public Safety (DPS) as the authority for fire and EMS in Amherst County. This language should reflect changes below such as the reorganization of DPS. Currently, language in Section 11.5-12 states “organizations and groups mentioned in sections 11.5-11(b) and 11.5-11(c) shall coordinate their operations and activities with the department of public safety and will carry out their assigned tasks to the best of their ability.” The study team recommends that this language be clarified to place the Director of Public Safety as the ultimate authority for fire and EMS, responsible for the command and control of all fire and EMS entities operating in Amherst County.
2. The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should codify the reorganization of the Department of Public Safety. Section 11.5-2 of the Amherst County Code of Ordinances separates the Department of Public Safety into four divisions: fire division, EMS/rescue division, communications division, and emergency management division. Through interviews with DPS staff and volunteer providers in the county, the current organizational makeup of the department is not effective for future growth. The study group recommends that DPS be separated into three divisions, each led by a division chief as shown below. The Director of Public Safety, in consultation with the Amherst County Administrator and Amherst County Board of Supervisors, should review the Public Safety Ordinance to better reflect current operations of the department. This review should be holistic in nature and focus on making necessary updates to reflect changes in structure, operations, and the regular duties of the department.

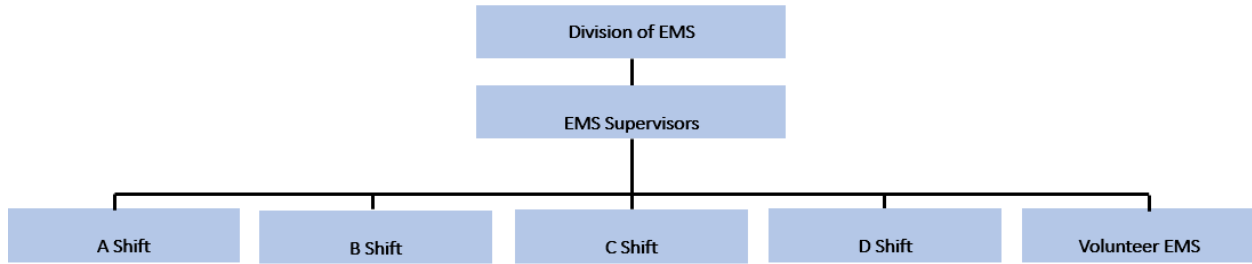
**FIGURE 2: AMHERST COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**



The three divisions of the DPS are further divided as shown below. The study team recommends the following changes to meet the multiple areas identified as duties by the DPS, including communications, fire prevention, fire protection, EMS, and emergency management.

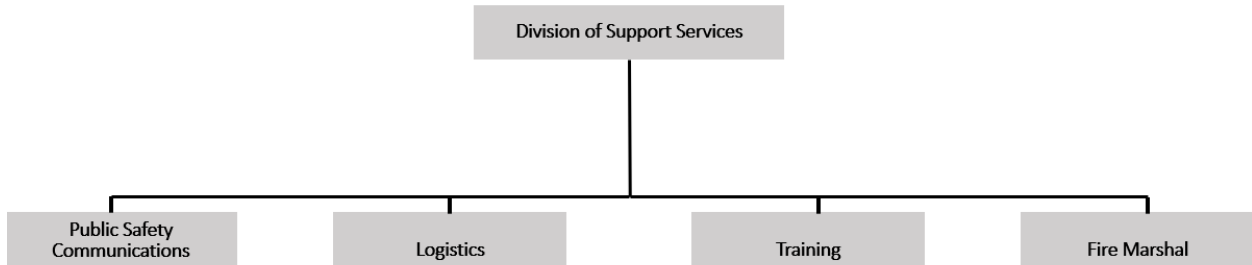


**FIGURE 3: AMHERST COUNTY DPS: DIVISION OF EMS**



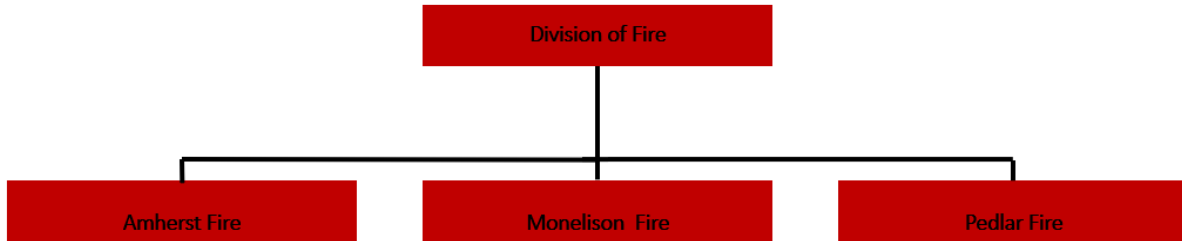
The Division of EMS should be primarily responsible for providing emergency medical services within Amherst County. This division should be led by a career Division Chief of EMS who would primarily oversee EMS operations and other areas identified by the Director of Public Safety as EMS roles. This division should also oversee EMS training and logistics until a Division of Support Services can assume these roles. The career EMS supervisors would report to this position, as well as each career shift and volunteer EMS providers from Amherst Lifesaving Crew, Monelison Rescue Squad, and any future county volunteer program.

**FIGURE 4: AMHERST COUNTY DPS: DIVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES**



The Division of Support Services should be primarily responsible for providing support to career and volunteer providers. This division would be responsible for public safety communications, emergency management, the fire marshal’s office, and future positions such as logistics and training. As explained further in this report, a dedicated fire marshal position is important to ensuring safe community growth in Amherst County. In addition, creating a training or logistics position with the assistance of volunteer personnel or the hiring of additional career staff is recommended.

**FIGURE 5: AMHERST COUNTY DPS: DIVISION OF FIRE**



The Division of Fire should be primarily responsible for providing fire protection in Amherst County. The Division of Fire would be led by a volunteer division chief, overseeing the three volunteer fire departments. The division chief should be responsible for enforcing the policies and guidelines of the department under the supervision of the Director of Public Safety. This division chief should be chosen by the Emergency Services Council and the Director of Public Safety. The volunteer division chief operates under the authority of the Director of Public Safety and reports to this position in the same manner as the career EMS and Support Services Division Chief's.

3. The Director of Public Safety should create specialized teams to handle specialized calls in Amherst County. Throughout meetings with staff and volunteers, mention was made of specialized calls and incidents that required greater resources than available. In order to maximize the use of funds and personnel, it is recommended that county-wide teams be created that bring together personnel from all components of Amherst County Public Safety (DPS). These teams could also involve regional partners. Examples of teams to create could include:
  - a. Heavy-Technical Rescue (HTR): A team composed of fire and EMS personnel from the DPS, and each fire department, that receive additional training and funds to respond to incidents defined as HTR. The Department of Fire Programs defines HTR as Trench Rescue, Confined Space Rescue, Vehicle Rescue, Water Rescue, Rope Rescue, Farm Machinery Rescue, and Structural Collapse Rescue. Not all the previous disciplines must be included in the team, with consideration going to what types of calls Amherst DPS responds to. It is recommended the Director of Public Safety reach out to the Division of Special Operations within the Training and Operations Branch of VDFP for assistance.
  - b. Search and Rescue (SAR): The large recreational areas present in Amherst County, as well as past incidents, suggest the need to create a Search and Rescue (SAR) team. This team could be composed of DPS personnel, as well as regional partners, federal agencies, and possibly civilians who undergo training to assist. The large amount of manpower and resources required to locate and extract patients from these recreational areas require specialized equipment and training. The Director of Public Safety should explore creating a partnership with surrounding jurisdictions, as well as additional training opportunities, to create a SAR team. The study team does not endorse any of the information contained in information produced by outside agencies.

- i. The Virginia Department of Emergency Management Search and Rescue Program<sup>5</sup>
  - ii. Virginia Search and Rescue (Christian Aid Ministries)<sup>6</sup>
  - iii. REACT International<sup>7</sup>
4. The study team recommends that the Director of Public Safety create a county volunteer program to allow volunteers to provide services in Amherst County if a volunteer organization can no longer carry out its duties or chooses to end operations. This volunteer program could be marketed for EMS providers to assist DPS career crews, staff additional units, or at stand-by assignments. Consideration should also be given to having driver only volunteers to assist EMS providers when staffing transport units that are BLS only. BLS only transport units could be provided by volunteer or career staff at the direction of the Director of Public Safety. Volunteer EMS providers should be held to the same standard and be provided the same opportunities as career staff. Multiple volunteer EMS providers expressed interest in a county volunteer program. Staff from the Department of Public Safety (DPS) stated this was the intention, but no program had been established. Although it is not recommended at this time, a county volunteer program may be expanded to include firefighters if the volunteer fire departments determine they can no longer adequately handle call volume.
5. The creation of a Division of Support Services in the Department of Public Safety (DPS) creates opportunity for future growth and greater involvement by volunteers in the DPS structure. Although public safety communications are already being provided by DPS, the other areas within this division are currently not a defined role within DPS. Logistics and training are important roles that must be considered by the Director of Public Safety. The Director should seek additional positions to fill these roles or ask that volunteer personnel, with the approval of the Emergency Services Council, fill these roles.
6. It is recommended that the Director of Public Safety create a dedicated fire marshal's position to enforce the Statewide Fire Prevention Code, oversee plans review, and conduct fire prevention in Amherst County. Currently, the fire marshal role is held as one of many hats within the Department of Public Safety (DPS). Limited time and resources result in difficulty filling this role while also overseeing operations, public safety communications, and other duties. With the significant development occurring in the Southern end of Amherst County, and the constant need to better educate citizens and businesses on fire prevention, a dedicated fire marshal position could improve safety in Amherst County. This position should have the primary responsibility of a fire marshal, with the only other duties being related to active response to calls if the system requires it. It is recommended that the fire official designation remains with the Director of Public Safety.

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<sup>5</sup> "Special Operations". *Virginia Department of Emergency Management*

<sup>6</sup> "Virginia Search and Rescue". *Christian Aid Ministries*

<sup>7</sup> "Introduction to Land Search and Rescue". *REACT International*

## **II. BETTER SUPPORT VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMS PROVIDERS**

Amherst County has a long history of volunteers providing fire and EMS protection. Like much of the country, Amherst County is experiencing strain with less volunteers providing service and increasing calls for service. Priority should be given to supporting active volunteers and incentivizing new volunteers from around the region to join in Amherst. Although each individual component of the Department of Public Safety (DPS) does recruitment, the county must take a more active supporting role or risk losing this vital asset.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety, through the Division of EMS, should explore offsetting the costs of EMT training for volunteer personnel at local community colleges. Currently, the volunteer organizations provide some funding for personnel to attend training. Amherst County DPS offers \$5,000 a year for training. Volunteer agencies or providers should request this funding for future training costs. The Department of Public Safety should consider providing this training for county volunteers if that program is implemented as an incentive for citizens to volunteer in Amherst County. This should be explored with Central Virginia Community College.
2. The Director of Public Safety, through the Division of Support Services, should explore utilizing email groups or an online message board to provide information weekly. As explained in the “Communications” section below, the Director of Public Safety should provide weekly briefings with operational information, training information, and other important updates. Ensuring the volunteer members feel informed and prepared to assist their career counterparts is essential.
3. The Director of Public Safety should encourage regular communication and training between career members of the Department of Public Safety and volunteers. As a combination system, it is imperative that both career and volunteer personnel regularly interact and can work cohesively as one unit.
  - A. The creation of regular training sessions between each component of DPS, volunteer and career, could be a good step in improving relationships and operational abilities. Volunteer personnel should attend county-wide training, such as the training offered by the DPS.
4. The Director of Public Safety should consider the creation of a Recruitment and Retention Coordinator in the Division of Support Services. This positions, whether a volunteer or career personnel member (full or part-time) should develop a Recruitment and Retention Plan. As part of this plan, the Director or his designee should:
  - a. Utilize the National Volunteer Fire Council outline for volunteer agencies.<sup>8</sup>
  - b. Market volunteer departments through social media and other means to solicit volunteers.

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<sup>8</sup> “Develop a Recruitment and Retention Plan” *National Volunteer Fire Council*

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

- c. Review Fire Department Culture: Each volunteer fire chief, as well as the Director of Public Safety, should encourage a modification of the “how we do things culture”. Each department should assess what the main operational areas are for their organization (fire protection, administration, community events, etc). This would allow for the targeted recruitment of individual members to handle non-emergent functions such as fundraising, entering fire reports, marketing/social media initiatives, fire & life safety education and community programs, human resource management, station & apparatus maintenance, and In-house training. By utilizing these specialized groups to achieve specific tasks, it works to free up the demands on those members that are interested in responding to emergencies and maintaining the necessary training.
- d. Utilize the “Make Me a Firefighter” Recruitment Tool: Each volunteer agency should utilize The NVFC’s “Make Me A Firefighter” recruitment tool if not already being done. This features a department portal filled with resources and tools for implementing a local recruitment campaign as well as a public web site to allow potential volunteers to find local opportunities. There are step-by-step guides and resources on marketing and planning events to engage prospective recruits. It allows the posting of volunteer opportunities by entering them into a database which is searchable to potential volunteers who can connect directly with the department through MakeMeAFirefighter.org. It is possible to customize campaign materials with departmental specific information and customize outreach materials for each individual department for use in the community.

### **III. DEVELOP AND ENFORCE SOPS AND SOGS**

The Department of Public Safety provided the study team with standard operating guidelines (SOG) developed in 2012. Many of these SOG’s fall in line with common fire department SOGs, including command procedures, accountability, personal protective equipment, and others.

Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) are written guidelines that explain what is expected of emergency personnel in performing their duties. SOGs are a “how-to” guideline to follow in order to achieve a desired goal. SOGs are not necessarily rules or regulations, but rather a path to achieve specific goals and objectives. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are formal policies that specify a course of action, thereby ensuring efficiency, predictability, consistency, and safety.<sup>9</sup>

However, multiple interviews with both career and volunteer fire and EMS personnel suggest that these SOGs are not being followed or enforced. The study team was significantly concerned over reports that personnel accountability was not being conducted on incident scenes, although this is covered in SOGs adopted by all fire departments in the county. Currently, Amherst County is extremely vulnerable to a firefighter injury or death.

The Director of Public Safety must have the authority and tools to enforce SOPs and SOGs, regardless if the personnel are career or volunteer.

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<sup>9</sup> “Standard Operating Procedures: The First Step to a Safer Fireground”. *Fire Engineering*

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

## **Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety, in consultation with the Emergency Services Council and the division chiefs, should review, develop, publish, and implement standard operating procedures for use by all public safety (fire and EMS) entities in the county. SOGs should reflect the capabilities of the fire and EMS departments in Amherst County and the safety of emergency personnel. NFPA 1720 recommends that fire departments have written administrative regulations, departmental orders, and/or procedures.
2. The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should codify that the Director of Public Safety has the ultimate authority in enforcing the above mentioned SOGs. Personnel, both volunteer and career, who fail to meet SOGs should be accountable to the Director of Public Safety. Operational effectiveness and the safety of both the public and personnel is dependent on the enforcement of SOGs.
3. The SOGs should contain reference to the use of personal vehicles when responding to an emergency call. The study team is not recommending the ending of this practice, but does recommend that an SOG be developed that specifies the type of incidents and the duties of the member once they arrive on the incident scene. Personnel who respond from home should not be permitted to operate without checking in with incident command.
4. Whether an SOP or SOG, minimum training standards should be reviewed, agreed upon, and enforced based on each level of approved membership without exception. If Amherst County determines that Firefighter I, as it is currently, is the minimum training standard for interior firefighters, then this should be enforced by the Director of Public Safety.
5. The Director of Public Safety should review, with legal representation for Amherst County, the legality of allowing volunteer members to also serve as paid, career staff. The study team is concerned that issues arising from having career staff also be volunteers could lead to labor law issues. Additional information should be sought from the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry or the U.S Department of Labor.

## **IV. EMS COVERAGE**

Throughout the study teams' visit to Amherst County, both volunteer and career staff expressed concern over the increasing call load related to EMS, especially in the Southern end of the county immediately surrounding the City of Lynchburg. Currently, Amherst County Public Safety provides three full time career transport units stationed in Amherst, Pedlar, and Monelison, as well as a career EMS supervisor. In addition, the county is currently conducting a pilot program that provides a "peak" transport unit staffed by overtime or part-time providers. This "peak" unit is not required to be staffed if no part-time or overtime staff are available. Amherst Lifesaving Crew and Monelison Rescue Squad also provide limited support by assisting career staff with staffing ambulances during periods of high call volume or at standby events

such as festivals. Volunteer EMS staffing is currently insufficient to meet the total EMS need in Amherst County.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety should require the “peak” unit mentioned above be staffed. This unit should be staffed by either career staff, volunteers, or a combination of both regardless of the availability of overtime or part-time staff. The director should explore making this pilot program permanent by securing funding from the Amherst County Board of Supervisors, or other means such as a grant through SAFER or other organizations. Of note, Amherst County DPS has already applied for a SAFER grant.
2. The Director of Public Safety should create a “Quick Response Vehicle (QRV)” unit with Advanced Life Support (ALS) capability for use in Amherst County 24/7. This unit, similar to the EMS supervisor, should respond to critical calls with transport units, freeing the EMS supervisor to more effectively manage the system. In the event that all transport units are already on a call, or the nearest transport unit is a significant distance away, this QRV could provide immediate care until the arrival of a transport unit or partner with other career staff or volunteers to man a 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> transport unit. The director should explore funding from the Amherst County Board of Supervisors, or other means such as a grant through SAFER or other organizations.
3. The study team recommends that Amherst County continuously reassess staffing and make appropriate modifications to ensure adequate EMS coverage. As the number of volunteer providers in Amherst County changes, and the calls for service increase, the Department of Public Safety will need to consider future staffing of a 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> full time transport unit.
4. The Department of Public Safety should utilize the Virginia OEMS Standards of Excellence Program. The purpose of the Virginia Standards of Excellence program is to identify and recognize EMS agencies that strive to operate above the standards and requirements of the Virginia EMS Regulations (12VAC5-31). The evaluation addresses several areas that collectively make up the operations of an EMS agency from several perspectives.<sup>10</sup>

**V. CREATE AND IMPLEMENT COUNTY LEVEL EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS**

Increasing costs and lead times for apparatus and equipment are leading to difficulties across the Commonwealth regarding the purchase and use of equipment. Amherst County does not currently have specifications for apparatus and equipment, although this was a recommendation contained in the 2013 County of Amherst Fire and EMS Study. Some interviewees recollected a county level apparatus specification being drafted but could not ascertain whether it was ever adopted or enforced. Additionally, multiple personnel expressed concern over the various levels

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<sup>10</sup> “Standards of Excellence”. *Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services*

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

of spending for different types of apparatus across the county, with some apparatus being much greater in cost than apparatus purchased for neighboring departments.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Emergency Services Council should develop minimum apparatus specifications for each apparatus type, allowing volunteer organizations to make customizations at their own cost in some areas. Amherst County should only fund apparatus that meet or exceed the county level specifications and not pay for additional “bells and whistles”. This will ensure uniformity across the system at the most basic level, making training and operations more effective.
2. The Emergency Services Council should develop common equipment specifications. Amherst County should only fund equipment that meets or exceeds the county level specifications and not pay for additional items. This will ensure uniformity across the system at the most basic level, making training and operations more effective. This is especially important concerning self-contained breathing apparatus, personal protective equipment, tools used on fire apparatus, and EMS equipment.
3. Apparatus specifications should reference NFPA 1901: Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus.<sup>11</sup>
4. It is recommended that the Director of Public Safety create an equipment maintenance program to increase the life of apparatus and reduce repair costs. This equipment maintenance program should consider variables such as age and mechanical condition, as well as the use level of each apparatus.<sup>12</sup>
  - a. Tennessee Fleet Maintenance Template:  
<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tdot/multimodaltransportation/5310callforprojects/Attachment%205%20-%20Sample%20Vehicle%20Fleet%20Maintenance%20Plan.pdf>
  - b. City of Rogers, Arkansas:  
<https://www.rogersar.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2752/RFD-Fire-Apparatus-Replacement-Plan-2014-PDF>

**VI. IDENTIFY APPARATUS FOR TRAINING/RESERVE STATUS**

The future training needs and growth in Amherst County suggests that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) should begin planning for the increased use of apparatus and the need for apparatus dedicated to training. Currently, each individual department has apparatus assigned to their station. In some cases, apparatus is loaned from other departments in the county to backfill when apparatus is being repaired or serviced. This informal means of providing apparatus will not be sufficient as Amherst develops. Additionally, the development of a training center in Amherst suggests an investment by Amherst County in better training and future training for firefighters. As a component of this, a dedicated piece of apparatus for training would prevent frontline units from being taken out of service for training.

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<sup>11</sup> NFPA 1901, Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus

<sup>12</sup> “Q&A: The art of fire department fleet management”. *FireRescue1*



**Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety should explore the purchase of a training/reserve engine that meets NFPA requirements and is similar to apparatus currently used in Amherst County. This engine should be owned by Amherst County and be utilized primarily for training purposes. This engine should be outfitted and prepared to serve in a reserve status, available to any fire department in Amherst County when other apparatus is out of service. As Amherst County purchases additional apparatus to replace aging units, these units could be placed in this training/reserve status. It is recommended that a SOG be developed to address the use of training/reserve apparatus.
2. The Director of Public Safety should explore the purchase of a reserve tanker that meets NFPA requirements and is similar to tankers currently used in Amherst County. This tanker would be utilized if other tankers are out of service and should be owned by Amherst County. The tanker should be outfitted and prepared to serve in front line service and could be used in the event that additional resources are required. As Amherst County purchases additional tankers to replace aging units, these units could be placed in this reserve status. It is recommended that a SOG be developed to address the use of training/reserve apparatus.

**VII. PLAN FOR INCREASED GROWTH IN SOUTH END OF COUNTY**

Amherst County is experiencing significant growth in the Southern end of the county immediately surrounding the City of Lynchburg. This area, including the specific area of Madison Heights, is being developed under the guidance of the Madison Heights Concept Plan. The majority of the land in this area is zoned for low density residential development, with a significant amount of land also zoned for general commercial.<sup>13</sup> As Amherst County further develops, the Department of Public Safety will need to address growing housing density and calls in this area. Many of the recommendations below are further developed from other areas of the report.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety should appoint a full-time fire marshal to work with Amherst County Planning and Zoning staff to review plans and future development in Amherst County. Staff from the Department of Public Safety should be significantly involved in future development. The fire marshal should review construction plans, site development plans, and new development for general compliance with adopted fire code and life safety standards.
2. If future development occurs or is desired, Amherst County must consider expanding the Department of Public Safety. This could include the addition of a ladder truck in the Monelison Fire Department's area of operations and additional EMS transport units.
3. It is recommended that the Director of Public Safety reevaluate the location of fire/EMS stations in this area of the county. Utilizing call volume data for both EMS and fire,

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<sup>13</sup> "Planning and Zoning", *Amherst County, Virginia*

future fire suppression and EMS resources should be located where they will best serve the public, regardless of the current location of facilities.

## **VIII. COMMUNITY RISK ASSESSEMENT**

Community Risk Reduction (CRR) is defined by Vision 20/20 as “a process to identify and prioritize local risks, followed by the integrated and strategic investment of resources (emergency response and prevention) to reduce their occurrence and impact.”<sup>14</sup> A component of CRR is a community risk assessment.

A Community risk assessment requires the identification of potential risks within a community and the process of prioritizing those risks. This process is based on the collection and review of community profile information including event history and the response capabilities of the community. Response capabilities specifically looks at the type of incidents to which public safety organizations in the community respond, and the capabilities of these organizations. Event history looks at past experiences and trends in response, losses and causes. A risk assessment helps focus the fire prevention/loss prevention activities of the community and department.

CRR provides a more focused approach to reducing local, identified, and specific risks. Although there is no specific blueprint for developing CRR plans, there are some common and essential steps. Much of the current literature and training materials suggest that community risk reduction programs use a six-step approach towards development.

- |                       |                                     |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1) Identify Risks     | 4) Prepare Plan                     |
| 2) Prioritize Risks   | 5) Implement Plan                   |
| 3) Develop Strategies | 6) Monitor, Evaluate, & Modify Plan |

Each locality should have a CRR plan that is unique to them, taking into account the target hazards, response capabilities, and other areas of their public safety community. Components of a community risk assessment could include specific areas as outlined below such as financial audits and a review of the emergency vehicle fleet.

### **Recommendations:**

1. To maintain financial stability and promote transparency for the citizens of Amherst County, each volunteer component should undergo annual audits by an outside entity. Each volunteer component may elect to have their own audit done, as long as it is independent of the organization. This information should be submitted to the Department of Public Safety and the Amherst County Administrator for review. When citizen’s tax dollars or donations are being utilized, a high level of accountability must be maintained.
2. The Director of Public Safety, through the Division of Support Services, should conduct a fleet risk assessment that includes:

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<sup>14</sup> “Vision 20/20”. *Institution of Fire Engineers*

- a. A focus on apparatus that meet community specific needs such as population density, zoning, development, previous call data, etc.
  - b. The assessment should examine what the adequate number of each category of response vehicle is for each fire district or EMS district. For example, if larger buildings are being constructed in the Southern end of Amherst County, consideration should be given to a ladder truck or similar unit being placed in this area.
  - c. All new apparatus purchased with county funds should continue to be co-titled with the volunteer agency that provides funds. If the county is the sole provider of funds, the vehicle should be titled under the Department of Public Safety.
  - d. A fleet replacement schedule, that considers the fleet risk assessment, funds, and the county equipment specifications, should be developed that purchases apparatus based on need.
3. The Director of Public Safety should conduct a community risk assessment to identify potential and likely risks within Amherst County, prioritize those risks, and analyze the capabilities of fire and EMS agencies. The Director of Public Safety can request the VDFP CRR Coordinator return and assist the county in its Community Risk Assessment (CRA)
    - a. NFPA 1720 indicates that the emergency services engage in the development of a community risk management plan for fire, emergency medical service, and hazardous materials use, storage, and transportation within the county. (NFPA 1720, 4.2;4.2.1;4.2.2; 4.2.3.1)
  4. The Director of Public Safety should ensure that all county fire departments are reporting via VFIRS. Not only does this process provide insight into the county’s emergency responses and trends, but it can also provide a means of comparing local trends to regional and national trends. Additionally, the Director of Public Safety should prepare for the transition from NFIRS to NERIS being administered through the U.S Fire Administration. As stated above, this information is critical for the identification and mitigation of any community risks. This is also applicable to EMS call data.

**IX. FURTHER DEVELOP TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

Citizens expect fire and EMS providers, volunteer and career, to be well training and equipped to respond to a growing number of issues. Training occurs at various levels, including certified training provided through the Department of Fire Programs or Office of EMS, local training occurring at the department level, or through classes and conferences offered throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia and nationally.

A review of training in Amherst County found that the Amherst Fire Department provided Firefighter I training in an academy format for volunteers in the county. Additionally, the Department of Public Safety holds training for EMS personnel during weekdays, while volunteer departments offer training on various nights of the month. The study team did not recognize a consistent training schedule or regimen for all fire departments or EMS organizations in the county. Amherst County does have minimum training requirements, Firefighter I, for interior

firefighters. This training requirement was reported by some as not being enforced. VDFP suggests that firefighters receive certification level training such as Firefighter I to be considered interior firefighters.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety should create a Training Coordinator position under the Division of Support Services. This position would be responsible for the coordination of training within Amherst County related to both fire and EMS. The position, which could be a volunteer or career member, would work with the Department of Public Safety and each component to schedule regular training, keep accurate training records, and work with agencies such as the Department of Fire Programs and the Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services. This position should also be responsible for overseeing minimum training such as Firefighter I. If a volunteer is chosen, it should be in an impartial manner as determined by the Director of Public Safety and the Emergency Services Council.
2. The study team was informed that Department of Public Safety (DPS) personnel conduct EMS training during the day to meet continuing education requirements and to better prepare to serve the citizens of Amherst County. The Director of Public Safety should designate the Training Coordinator or the Division Chief of EMS to schedule duplicate training during evening hours or on weekends when volunteer providers are more available to participate. This will further develop relationships between career and volunteer providers and provide greater training for all involved.
3. The Director of Public Safety should designate the Training Coordinator, or the Division Chief of EMS and Volunteer Division Chief of Fire, to publish a monthly training calendar available to all career and volunteer personnel. This calendar should include information such as the location, training type, date, and time of both internal training and training being offered in the region. As a component of this, all training being conducted by each of the components of the DPS should be open to all career and volunteer members.
4. The Director of Public Safety should implement the EMS Officer Program. The Office of EMS and the State EMS Advisory Board Workforce Development Committee has created an EMS Officer Program that can be implemented in EMS agencies to help boost leadership and help develop and maintain quality leaders in the EMS Community. The program covers topics like human resource management, community and government relations, administration and more, all useful information for the Department of Public Safety and the volunteer organizations contained within it.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "EMS Officer I". *Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services*

## **X. COMMUNICATIONS**

Public safety communications are a component of the Department of Public Safety (DPS). In general, the study team did not hear significant complaints concerning dispatch protocols or communication in Amherst County. Some personnel expressed concern over areas without radio coverage in Amherst County, specifically near recreational areas.

Internal communications within DPS were cited consistently by those interviewed as an issue. Personnel reported that training opportunities, changes in operations, and other information was not being received at all levels of the department.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety, through the Division of Support Services, should survey career and volunteer members about potential “dead zones” for radio coverage in Amherst County. This should include local law enforcement where applicable.
  - a. If “dead zones” are identified, the Director of Public Safety should work to address these areas by working with local tower providers and other partners deemed necessary.
2. The Director of Public Safety should provide weekly briefings with operational information, training information, and other important updates to all members of the DPS, both career and volunteer. This weekly briefing could be included on an online platform or in an email to all career and volunteer personnel. Email groups could also be created for specific areas, such as fire, EMS, training, etc. These weekly briefings would ensure that all department members receive the same information in the same format.
3. The Office of EMS recommends that Amherst County contact them regarding assistance and accreditation for emergency medical dispatch (EMD) and public safety answering points (PSAP).

## **XI. CANCER PREVENTION**

The following information is included in Virginia Fire Service Board reports to reflect the significant importance of cancer prevention in the fire service. As stated in the Lavender Ribbon Report developed by the NVFC and IAFC, cancer is the leading health risk facing firefighters, largely due to the chemicals and carcinogens they are exposed to while engaged in response activities.<sup>16</sup> Chemically based plastics are in use in nearly every product in our homes, business and vehicles and when they burn, their chemical composition changes.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Director of Public Safety should develop operational SOP’s that establish safe cancer prevention practices such as:
  - a. Gross decontamination after fire incidents
  - b. Washing of firefighter PPE following fire or hazardous materials incidents
  - c. A fire hood exchange program

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<sup>16</sup> “Lavender Ribbon Report-Best Practices for Preventing Firefighter Cancer” (2021) *NVFC & IAFC*

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

- d. Shower facilities at fire stations
2. The Director of Public Safety should encourage /facilitate National Firefighter Registry (NFR) sign up.
- a. The Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2018 mandated the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) create a voluntary registry of firefighters to collect health and occupational information to determine cancer incidence in the U.S. fire service. In response to this mandate, CDC’s National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) established the National Firefighter Registry (NFR).<sup>17</sup>
  - b. There have been no comprehensive, national data sources in the United States for studying the relationship between firefighting and cancer among all firefighters. The NFR will help researchers better understand and reduce cancer in firefighters by matching the information provided by participating NFR firefighters with cancer diagnosis information from state cancer registries. This matching process will allow NIOSH to study the relationship between firefighting and cancer outcomes over time.

Step 1: Firefighters sign up for the NFR.

Step 2: NIOSH researchers match firefighter profiles with potential information in state cancer registries over time. This makes it possible to study the relationship between firefighting and cancer over time, even if cancer diagnoses occur in the future.

Step 3: NIOSH captures work history details. This information can be used to better understand firefighters’ exposures and how they may be related to cancer.

Step 4: Stronger evidence can help inform new health and safety measures to protect firefighters from cancer. Combining information from firefighters across the U.S. will help researchers better understand cancer and its risk factors in the fire service, which could ultimately help reduce cancer among firefighters for generations to come.

## **XII. REVIEW OF THE 2013 VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD REPORT**

The Virginia Fire Services Board, with assistance from the Department of Fire Programs, the Department of Forestry, and the Office of Emergency Medical Services, conducted a fire and EMS study of Amherst County in 2013. A review by the current study team found that many of the 2013 recommendations were not present during the 2023 study. The study team encourages the Director of Public Safety and the County Administrator to review the 2013 report. The information below is not an exhaustive list but reflects certain recommendations from the 2013 report that should be noted. Please review the 2013 report for more extensive information

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<sup>17</sup> H.R. 931 “Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2018”. (2018) *115<sup>th</sup> U.S Congress*

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

contained below. Failure to adopt recommendations contained in reports such as this often lead to reoccurring issues.

1. The adoption of a strategic plan
2. Amherst County should “formally practice and strictly enforce” accountability practices.
3. Coordinated and structured training
4. The adoption of a countywide recruitment and retention plan
5. Standardization and centralization of purchasing.

## **REFERENCES**

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## APPENDIX A

Resolution requesting the Virginia Fire Services Board conduct a comprehensive analysis of the Fire and EMS system of Amherst County, Virginia



### **Agenda Item VII.A.**

**Meeting Date:** August 2, 2022

**Department:** Public Safety

**Topic:** **Virginia Fire Services Board Study.**

**Board Action:** The Board is being asked to approve the request of the Emergency Services Council to conduct a study of Fire & EMS services in the County of Amherst, VA.

**Attachment:**

1. VFSB Findings and Recommendation Report 2013

**Summary:** A Virginia Fire Services Board study is recommended by the Emergency Services Council (ESC) on Fire and EMS service delivery in Amherst County. Senior leadership of the organizations realize there are only a few members to answer calls and there is a struggle to cover the calls and all the other administrative duties. The ESC and local fire companies are looking for input on sustainability, retention, and recruitment. Providing the required services in the current environment is not sustainable in the long term.

The Fire Services Board is a 15-member policy board within the commonwealth's executive branch. It's members are appointed by the governor for 4-year terms. One of the services it performs is to provide localities reviews of the effectiveness of their emergency services systems.

This study is conducted by the Fire Services Board at no cost to the locality. The last study was done in 2013 and is known as a Report of Findings and Recommendations. A copy of the last study is attached.

**Recommended Motion:** I move that the Board direct staff to obtain a study of Amherst County Fire & EMS services through the Virginia Fire Services Board.

**Comprehensive Plan Impact:** This topic is not addressed in the Comprehensive Plan.

## APPENDIX B

### Scope of Agreement between the County of Amherst and the Virginia Fire Services Board



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**

**Kelth H. Johnson  
VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES  
BOARD CHAIR**

**Virginia Department of Fire Programs**

**Scope of Fire and EMS Study Agreement**

**between the**

*Locality Amherst County*

**and the**

**Virginia Fire Services Board**

#### **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this agreement is to establish mutually accepted duties, responsibilities, and expectations between the Virginia Fire Services Board, its designated Fire and EMS Study Committee and the locality which has requested the Fire and EMS Study/Technical Assistance from the Virginia Fire Service Board. The agreement is provided to help define activities and expectations between both parties.

#### **AGREEMENT**

- Study results/recommendations shall be comprehensive in nature and shall be consistent with and organized according to a final revised scope of work as negotiated between the Study Committee and the locality prior to the formal commencement of the Study. **\*\*Refer to Self-Assessment Questionnaire for Scope of Study.**
- While questions of staffing ratios, response time, capital equipment purchases, etc. are relevant to the Study process, the locality should not expect detailed recommendations in these areas beyond system-wide recommendations.
- Study Results will be openly presented to the elected/appointed governing body, the requesting agency as well as any additional requesting organization(s);
- The time frame noted for technical assistance will be accepted;

- All relevant organizational data will be made available to the study committee; and,
- Locality will provide to the Virginia Department of Fire Programs a central point of contact. Please ensure the contact is available Monday – Friday from 9 am to 5 pm, and nighttime and weekends as needed.
- Within 6 to 9 months of the Study completion, the Department of Fire Programs will email the locality a feedback follow-up survey. It is requested that the locality complete the survey so the Agency and Board can gain valuable in-sight into the success and areas of improvements for future studies. Your participation in the feedback survey is important to the Agency and Board.

**REVIEW AND TERM**

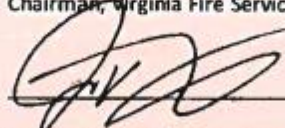
This agreement shall be in effect until the end of the Fire and EMS Study.

**SIGNED**

We do hereby acknowledge and agree to abide by the provisions of this Memorandum of Understanding.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Keith H. Johnson  
 Chairman, Virginia Fire Services Board

8/2/2023  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Authorized Locality Representative

1/26/23  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

**APPENDIX C**

Letter Requesting a Fire and EMS Study from the Amherst County Administrator



COUNTY OF AMHERST



**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

TELEPHONE (434) 946-9400

AMHERST COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
153 WASHINGTON STREET  
P. O. Box 390  
AMHERST, VIRGINIA 24521

FAX (434) 946-9370

January 11, 2023

Attn: Virginia Fire Services Board  
105 Technology Park Dr.  
Glen Allen, VA 23059

RE: Comprehensive Analysis Study of Fire/EMS System Request – Amherst County

This is to request the services of the Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB) in conducting a complete and thorough review of the fire and EMS system in Amherst County.

This study has the support of the Amherst County Board of Supervisors and County Administrator as shown by the attached Board of Supervisor’s minutes from the August 2, 2022 meeting Section VII New Business.

The requested areas of concentration of the study include:

- Organization
- Budget and Central Purchasing
- Personnel
- Training
- Fleet Design and Management (Equipment/Apparatus)
- Emergency Services Council
- Amherst Count Fire & Rescue Departments

It is the Board’s and County Administration’s proposal to have a complete and thorough review of the aforementioned areas of concentration and a comprehensive list of recommendations to enhance the delivery of services to the citizens of Amherst County.

Your consideration of this request at the next available opportunity would be greatly appreciated. Bradley Beam is the Director of Public Safety and is available to respond to any questions you may have regarding this request. He may be reached by phone at 434-661-7820 or by email at bsbeam@countyofamherst.com

Sincerely,

Jeremy Bryant  
Interim County Administrator

## APPENDIX D

Other resources available to the Director of Public Safety and Amherst County

### 1. **Community Paramedicine**

- a. <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-medical-services/community-paramedicine-mobile-integrated-healthcare/>
- b. NFPA 450: Guide for Emergency Medical Services and Systems, 2021 Edition –
  - i. Chapter 14 Operations
  - ii. Annex B Time Intervals and Components.
    1. <https://catalog.nfpa.org/NFPA-450-Guide-for-Emergency-Medical-Services-and-Systems-P1307.aspx#:~:text=The%20comprehensive%202021%20edition%20of%20NFPA%20450%2C%20Guide,well%20as%20during%20the%20evaluation%20of%20measurable%20outcomes.>

### 2. **Manuals**

- a. NVFC: Understanding & Implementing Standards: NFPA 1500,1720, and 1851
  - i. [https://www.nvfc.org/resource\\_item/understanding-implementing-nfpa-standards-1500-1720-1851-english/](https://www.nvfc.org/resource_item/understanding-implementing-nfpa-standards-1500-1720-1851-english/)
- b. NVFC: Understanding & Implementing Standards: NFPA 1407 and 1021
  - i. <https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Standards-Guide-Vol2-1407-1021.pdf>
- c. NVFC: Psychologically Healthy Fire Departments Implementation Toolkit
  - i. <https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/PHFD-Implementation-Toolkit.pdf>
- d. NVFC: What to expect: A Guide for Family Members of Volunteer Firefighters  
Volunteer Fire Services Culture: Essential Strategies for Success
  - i. <https://www.nvfc.org/guide-for-family-members-of-volunteer-responders-now-available/>

### 3. **Informational Sheets**

- a. Training Volunteer Firefighters to be Combat Ready
  - i. Section 9: Developing and Implementing Training Best Practices
  - ii. Appendix B: Sample Knowledge and Skills Based Annual Training Topics Plan
  - iii. Appendix E: How to Use NFPA Standards To your Department's Advantage
    1. <https://www.iafc.org/docs/default-source/1vcos/operational-training-guide.pdf>
- b. The 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives
  - i. <https://www.everyonegoeshome.com/16-initiatives/>
- c. VFIS: NFPA 1500 Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health and Wellness Program Worksheet (2018 Edition)
  - i. <https://education.vfis.com/Portals/0/Documents/wellness/NFPA-1500-Worksheet-2018-Edition.pdf>
- d. NVFC: Conducting a Recruitment and Retention Needs Assessment

- i. <https://www.nvfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/RR-Needs-Assessment.pdf>

**APPENDIX E**

County of Amherst Fire and EMS Study Report (2013)



VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD



A Report of Findings  
and  
Recommendations:

**County of Amherst  
Fire & EMS Study**



**November 2013**

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The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

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Policy Manager

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The Virginia Fire Services Board would like to extend thanks to the following organizations for their contributions to this study:

Amherst Department of Public Safety

Pedlar Fire and Rescue

Amherst Fire Department

Amherst Life Saving Crew

Monelison Rescue Squad

Monelison Fire Department

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report documents the findings and recommendations for the Amherst County Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Study. The information contained is not to be construed as legal advice or as binding recommendations. This report is intended to provide guidance for Amherst County Board of Supervisors and its fire and rescue stakeholders to build on what is working well, while observing opportunities for improvement. Strategic focus in these areas will enhance the overall quality and coordination of fire-rescue service delivery to residents of Amherst County.

The study was requested by the Amherst County Board of Supervisors in order to analyze several areas of responsibility within the County's fire and rescue services. The Study Committee was comprised of representatives from the Virginia Fire Services Board, the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, the Virginia Department of Forestry and the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services.

The findings and recommendations are organized into five working themes to include:

- Organizational Development
- Communication
- Training
- Budget and Administration
- Delivery of Services

These working themes provide a central focus for prioritizing the study's recommendations. They serve as a guide for the Study Committee to identify and evaluate measures that ultimately will improve the quality and coordination of fire and rescue services within Amherst County.

Below is a high-level summary of the findings and recommendations, which will be discussed further in the report.

### ***Theme 1: Organizational Development (Page 11)***

- **Centralized Authority for Fire and Rescue Services:** The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should restructure the Emergency Services Council.
- **Lack of Strategic Plan and Unified Mission:** Amherst County should develop a strategic plan for fire and rescue services to increase performance levels and service delivery. In addition, the County should develop unified vision and mission statements for the entire County Emergency Services.
- **Continuity of Leadership and Succession Planning:** Amherst County should develop a program that illustrates leadership and interpersonal relationship skills within the fire and rescue services and focuses on growing future leadership.

- Accountability Practices: The Emergency Services Council should formally practice and strictly enforce the current countywide standard operating guidelines.

**Theme 2: Communications (Page 18)**

- Levels of Interdepartmental Communications: The County should host a strategic communication session to resolve existing challenges and barriers between the Amherst County Board of Supervisors, the County Administration, the Emergency Services Council and members of the volunteer fire and rescue departments.
- Improved Dispatch System: Amherst County should continuously monitor and seek to improve its existing dispatch protocol to ensure a high level of efficiency and effectiveness.

**Theme 3: Training (Page 21)**

- Coordinated Training Program: The County should work with the Emergency Services Council to develop a structured and coordinated training program to address the comprehensive training needs of the entire County. The Council should further schedule classes accordingly and provide appropriate notification emergency services personnel. It is imperative to tailor training requirements to the needs of Amherst County.

**Theme 4: Budget and Administration (Page 23)**

- County Funding and Capital Improvements: Amherst County should develop a countywide capital improvement plan for upgrading its fire and rescue stations and equipment. The Board of Supervisors should require documentation of expenditures and annually audit funds.
- Standardization and Central Purchasing: Working with the Emergency Services Council, the County Administration should develop and implement a centralized purchasing option to establish equipment and apparatus standardization and reduce operational expenses.

**Theme 5: Delivery of Services (Page 27)**

- Operations and Staffing: The County should enforce the Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines (SOPs/SOGs). The County should keep accurate records of incident response times in order to continuously assess response capabilities.
- Recruitment and Retention: Amherst County should adopt a countywide recruitment and retention plan in addition to examining the feasibility of reinstating the Recruitment and Retention Officer Position.

## **METHODOLOGY**

For each task of the work plan, the Study Committee identified objectives, performed specific activities, and delivered project products. The following is an overview of the study process:

### **PHASE I: INITIATE PROJECT**

#### ***Objectives: Initiation of Study***

To initiate the study, the Study Committee began by gaining a comprehensive understanding of the project's background, goals, and expectations. This was carried out by identifying in detail the specific objectives for the review, and assessing how well the work plan would accomplish the objectives. In addition, the Study Committee set out to establish a mutually agreed project work plan, timeline, deliverables, and monitoring procedures that would support the accomplishment of all project objectives. The final study initiation step consisted of collecting and reviewing existing operational data, information on agreements along with relevant policies and procedures. Many of these review materials are included in the appendix of this study.

As part of Phase I, the Study Committee met with Amherst County leadership to establish working relationships, make logistical arrangements, and determine communication lines. During these meetings, the Study Committee discussed the objectives of the project and identified policy issues and concerns central to the study.

The meetings also allowed the Study Committee to obtain pertinent reports and background materials relevant to the review, such as current and historical staffing data, as well as a description of the current service delivery system and organization.

Based on this course of action, the Study Committee concluded this section of the study with a revised project work plan/timeline deliverable.

### **PHASE II: OBTAIN STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

#### ***Objectives: Conduct Leadership Interviews & Capture Input from the Departments***

The second phase of the study consisted of leadership interviews and department evaluations. The expectations were as follows:

- Identify expected service levels;
- Identify opinions of department officials concerning the operations and performance of the department;
- Identify issues and concerns of officials regarding fire and rescue services;
- Identify perceived gaps in existing service levels and new priorities in mission; and,
- Identify strengths and weaknesses as perceived by departmental personnel.

Each goal was realized with the support of Amherst County's study project manager and Director of Public Safety, Gary Roakes. Mr. Roakes assisted in finalizing the interview list and establishing a schedule that was reasonable, but more importantly convenient for the interviewees. All interviews were conducted during an allotted timeframe and a considerable amount of information was collected. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with majority of Amherst County's Fire and Rescue organizations as well as County leadership including County Administrator Clarence C. Monday.

The Study Committee received descriptions of staffing and deployment responses in meeting service demands at targeted service levels. The discussions also provided a snapshot of personnel management contentions as well as concerns regarding service delivery. It is also important to note that the Study Committee visited all fire and rescue stations throughout Amherst County in an effort to supplement their research of the County's organizational functioning.

The deliverable for this section of the study work plan consisted of a thorough evaluation of the site visit data and the development of working themes to capture the team's assessment.

### **PHASE III: PREPARE ANALYSES AND DEVELOP CORE STRATEGIES**

#### ***Objectives: Evaluate Current Trends and Prepare a Report***

The third phase of the study work plan involved further investigation and understanding of the organizational structures, operations, limitations, achievements, and opportunities for improvement within the volunteer and career system. The activities that supported this process consisted of additional requests for information not already obtained in Phase I and II of the work plan. Data requests, made in this phase of the study, attempt to address any issues that emerged from the interviews, and further evaluate implications of the operational issues cited. Data obtained during the study process also assists the Study Committee in identifying issues influencing the current levels of service.

After receiving and critically evaluating information from the interviews and all supporting materials, the Study Committee began identifying the necessary critical action steps to achieve exceptional organizational functioning and uniform service levels throughout Amherst County.

Each action step was selected to identify the changes in policies, facilities, apparatus, and equipment to ensure that the County would be capable of providing fire-rescue services at the desired level going forward.

The deliverables achieved in Phase III involved drafting a report that evaluated current trends in the services, recommended action steps for improvement, and the assignment of responsibility.

#### **PHASE IV: PREPARE FINAL REPORT**

##### ***Objectives: Prepare and Present Final Report***

The final phase of the study involved documenting the results of all previous tasks into a written report with critical components, such as an executive summary, methodology, background, and findings and recommendations. Once completed, a draft report was shared with the designated locality project manager, Gary Roakes to ensure the content is accurate. Upon receiving corrections, the Study Committee revised the draft report, as needed, to assist in the preparation and issuance of the final report.

The deliverables for the final phase of the work plan consisted of 1) a draft report, and 2) the final report.

APPROVED



## **COUNTY DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Amherst County is located near the geographic center of Virginia north of the city of Lynchburg and on the south and east of the historic James River. The county has a total of 479 square miles with about 68.3 persons per square mile.<sup>1</sup> Its neighboring localities include City of Lynchburg on the southern boundary, Roanoke about fifty miles to the southwest and Charlottesville within fifty miles north. Amherst County is part of the Lynchburg Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).<sup>2</sup> The Lynchburg MSA includes Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, and Campbell counties and the city of Lynchburg.

The County<sup>3</sup> is bisected north to south by US Route 29 running from Washington, DC to Greensboro, NC and east to west by US Route 60 running from Richmond to Lexington.<sup>4</sup> U.S. Route 29 has become the focal point for most commercial, industrial and residential development<sup>5</sup>. Amherst is serviced by both Norfolk Southern and CSX.<sup>6</sup> In addition to several trucking companies that service Amherst, the county serves as a headquarter location for Harris Trucking, one of the leading family-owned trucking companies in the east coast. Harris Trucking operates over 200 tractors and 400 trailers.<sup>7</sup>

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the population of Amherst County is 32,353 with a median age of 40 years old<sup>8</sup>. The median household income is \$44,383 which is \$18,919 below the average for Virginia<sup>9</sup>. In 2012, the top employing industries in Amherst County were government, manufacturing, health care and social assistance and retail trade<sup>10</sup>. As of 2012, the unemployment rate for Amherst County was 6.1%.<sup>11</sup>

The fire and rescue services of Amherst County are provided by a dedicated group of volunteers, with supplemental paid fire and rescue staff. Collectively, these six organizations provide firefighting and emergency medical services from stations located throughout the county. A listing of the fire and rescue services providers can be found below.

Amherst Department of Public Safety  
Pedlar Fire and Rescue  
Amherst Fire Department  
Amherst Life Saving Crew  
Monelison Rescue Squad  
Monelison Fire Department

---

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts

<sup>2</sup> Virginia Economic Development Partnership

<sup>3</sup> The "County" refers to Amherst County

<sup>4</sup> Virginia Economic Development Partnership

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Virginia Economic Development Partnership

<sup>11</sup> Virginia Employment Commission

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

The goal of the fire and rescue service is to protect life and property by delivering the highest possible level of service consistent with need at the lowest possible cost consistent with safety. First responders responsible for fire suppression provide an array of additional emergency services to the residents of Amherst County. They include light and heavy rescue, vehicle extrication, water rescue, hazardous materials, and other non-emergency activities. The rescue squads within the County provide basic life support (BLS) and advanced life support (ALS) rescue ambulance services to all areas of the County. During 2012, Amherst County responded to approximately 2,858 fire and emergency medical services (EMS).<sup>12</sup>

APPROVED

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<sup>12</sup> Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS) Appendix 2 and Virginia Pre-Hospital Information Bridge Report Appendix 3

## **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section provides a summary of the five working themes for this study report. The summary is based on areas of concern that were repeatedly cited in the face-to-face interviews and observed during the site visit. Following this section is an in-depth examination of each theme, to include findings and recommendations.

### **Theme 1: Organizational Development (Page 11)**

- Centralized Authority for Fire and Rescue Services
- Lack of Strategic Plan and Unified Mission
- Continuity of Leadership and Succession Planning
- Accountability Practices

### **Theme 2: Communications (Page 18)**

- Levels of Interdepartmental Communications
- Improved Dispatch System

### **Theme 3: Training (Page 21)**

- Coordinated Training Program

### **Theme 4: Budget and Administration (Page 23)**

- County Funding and Capital Improvements
- Standardization and Central Purchasing

### **Theme 5: Delivery of Services (Page 27)**

- Operations and Staffing
- Recruitment and Retention

Amherst County's fire and rescue service providers and administration should utilize the national consensus standards. The standards were developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) with the input and support of fire and emergency services personnel, businesses, industry and other stakeholders, as guidance documents and resources to address several of the findings identified in this report.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> For a complete listing of the national consensus standards developed by the National Fire Prevention Association, visit: [http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/list\\_of\\_codes\\_and\\_standards.asp](http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/list_of_codes_and_standards.asp)

## **THEME 1: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

One of the major concerns identified was the limitation of Amherst County's communication and coordination among its fire and rescue organizations and County leadership. Part of this issue occurs due to the lack of clarity in the organizational structure. Amherst County Department of Public Safety created under the county's ordinance oversees four divisions: fire division, EMS/rescue division, communications division, and emergency management division.<sup>14</sup> The director serves as the manager tasked with providing control over the four public safety divisions.

Moreover, the county ordinance establishes the Amherst County Emergency Services Council which has the following representatives; at a minimum, of two (2) representatives and one (1) alternate to be appointed from each of the following entities; Amherst Fire Department, Monelison Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad, Pedlar Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad, Inc., Amherst Life Saving & First Aid Crew, Inc. and Amherst County Search and Rescue. The council membership extends membership to one (1) representative and one (1) alternate from each of the following entities: Piney River Volunteer Fire Department, Inc., Gladstone Volunteer Fire Department, Inc., Big Island Volunteer Fire Department, Roseland Rescue Squad, Big Island Rescue Squad, Inc., and Gladstone Volunteer Rescue Squad, Inc.<sup>15</sup> The aforementioned fire and rescue companies are non-jurisdictional entities that are authorized to provide mutual aid for Amherst County. Lastly, there are two (2) citizens nominated by the fire and rescue community and appointed by the board of supervisors, one (1) member of the board of supervisors and Amherst County Sheriff. The Public Safety Director also serves on the council as a non-voting member. The Council<sup>16</sup> was established in an effort to include stakeholders in the decision-making process on issues of public concern related to fire, rescue and emergency services in Amherst County.

As a result of the large membership, the Emergency Services Council has not been able to produce results. Additionally, as established in the county ordinance but often neglected, the council serves as a public forum so that entities can collectively decide on matters that will be brought to the attention of the Board of Supervisors. However, such defined role is not enforced or adhered to. Based on observations, the Emergency Services Council are perceived as unproductive and generally disregarded in terms of decision-making. The lack of a clearly defined governance system could have a negative impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of Amherst's fire and rescue organizations.

Disorganization negatively affects the service delivery to residents of Amherst County and its visitors. Additionally, the confusion over the current organizational structure creates liability issues for the county. In order to improve Amherst County's level of service, it is recommended that internal organizational development strategies be considered. This recommendation

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<sup>14</sup> Public Safety Chapter of the Amherst County Code

<sup>15</sup> Public Safety Chapter of the Amherst County Code

<sup>16</sup> The Council will be used to refer to the Emergency Services Council

encourages organizational cohesion, innovation, and effectiveness while guiding the inevitable change that will occur as Amherst County strengthens its fire suppression and rescue capabilities.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should restructure the Emergency Services Council.
  - a. The county should reexamine the composition of the Emergency Services Council and reduce the membership to a manageable level which consists of Amherst County fire chiefs, rescue captains, director of public safety and one representative from the communications division and the sheriff's office, respectively.
  - b. The restructured Emergency Services Council can abide by the existing bylaws per the Public Safety Chapter of the Amherst County Code.
  - c. The Emergency Services Council should enforce and adhere to the Amherst County Code on Public Safety section 11.5-6 regarding the bylaws. The effort will ensure the council effectively achieves their specific responsibilities and expectations to improve the organizational cohesiveness and efficiency of public safety in Amherst County.
  - d. This council should collectively as one unit provide advice and feedback directly to the County Administration and Board of Supervisors.
2. If organized and the council bylaws are enforced, the Emergency Services Council will be able to ensure that all fire and rescue service providers within the County are working together.
  - a. It is imperative that the county moves forward together and not in multiple directions.
  - b. Collaboration will help to develop ownership in a unified system and create transparency.<sup>17</sup>
3. The Emergency Services Council in collaboration with the Department of Public Safety should enforce existing countywide Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines (SOPs/SOGs) with an accountability system.
  - a. If needed, informational and training sessions must be held with all Amherst County fire and rescue members to ensure all personnel are knowledgeable and adhere to the county's SOG.

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<sup>17</sup> Leading the Transition in Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments, November 2005

- b. New members should receive training on the standard operating guidelines during their orientation to ensure they abide by the county's SOG.
  - c. It is imperative that all members thoroughly understand their responsibilities and expectations.
4. This study should be used as a starting point for continuously reexamining and developing the most efficient and effective Fire Rescue System to meet the community's needs.

### ***Centralized Authority for Fire and Rescue Services***

In the current organizational structure, the Amherst Department of Public Safety serves as the centralized authority. It contains four divisions which are fire division, EMS/rescue division, communications division, and emergency management division. According to Amherst County code, the public safety department's task is to provide an effective management of the existing emergency services operations within the county.<sup>18</sup> Director of Public Safety is appointed and acts as the emergency services coordinator.

Although it may have been the intent of the Board of Supervisors to provide the Director of Public Safety the administrative and operational authority, in practice this individual serves more as the liaison between the County Administration and the fire and rescue organizations. Due to the limited personnel in Amherst, it has strained the county to increase the workload of its limited members with multiple responsibilities. Consequently, the Director and Deputy Director of Public Safety spend substantial amount of time providing rescue and fire services on a daily basis. This in effect prevents the Director of Public Safety from effectively exercising full supervisory authority over the four aforementioned divisions.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Amherst County Government<sup>19</sup> should work with the Emergency Services Council to identify needs for additional fire and rescue personnel to meet service demands and citizen expectations.
  - a. The County Government should reexamine its current system and must find methods to effectively use the human capital that are in the fire and rescue system presently.
  - b. The County Government should find methods to create additional personnel to assist the Director and Deputy Director of Public Safety. The present organizational structure has too many jobs for two people to accomplish.
  - c. Amherst County will be better able to determine fire and rescue personnel and equipment needs, and deployment.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Public safety chapter of the Amherst County Code

<sup>19</sup> County Government refers to both the County Administration and Board of Supervisors

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

## ***Lack of Strategic Plan and Unified Mission***

During the site visit, Amherst County's fire and rescue organizations acknowledged the need for improved fire and rescue coordination. The current organizational structure does not provide a clear division of labor. This is especially true for the administrative and operational responsibility aspect of the organizations involved, both for career and volunteer members. The County's Emergency Services Council has about twenty representatives which Amherst County's fire rescue personnel felt was oversized, unproductive and generally disregarded in terms of its decision-making. These factors have negatively affected the overall morale of Amherst's fire and rescue organizations.

The first steps to resolving clarity within the fire and rescue services organizational structure is to pursue the establishment of a Strategic Plan. Strategic planning must become institutionalized as an integral part of fire and rescue departments and community resource allocations.<sup>21</sup> A strategic plan will provide a basis for long-term operational planning and will serve as a framework for services.<sup>22</sup> The strategic plan will further allow the vested parties the opportunity to create effective policies while attuned to its publics' interests, demands, and expectations. It is imperative to keep in mind that decisions only have legitimacy if parties involved work together and are in agreement.<sup>23</sup> The strategic planning process will create public value for Amherst County if the fire and EMS and other stakeholders are fairly represented and there is effective use of relevant expertise along with transparency of the deliberations.<sup>24</sup>

### **Recommendations:**

1. Working with the Emergency Services Council, the Amherst County Board of Supervisors and County Administration should adopt and implement a strategic plan for its fire and rescue services to increase performance levels and achieve lower cost of service delivery.
  - a. Stakeholders such as fire and rescue personnel and county leadership must each play an integral part in the development of this strategic plan in order to meet stakeholder's expectations and foster commitment.
  - b. Parties involved in the strategic planning process should analyze the gap between where the county is and where it wants to be in the future and identify strategies to close such gap.

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<sup>20</sup> International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) - "Make Better Decisions: Put Your Data to Work," <http://www.iafc.org/MemberCenter/OnSceneArticle.cfm?ItemNumber=5840>. This article provides an example of how multiple sources of data can be incorporated into fire and rescue department planning.

<sup>21</sup> Preserving and Improving the Future of the Volunteer Fire Service, March 2004

<sup>22</sup> Leading the Transition in Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments, November 2005

<sup>23</sup> Mark Moore, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*, 1995

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

- c. The County should seek to reduce residents insurance cost by incorporating methods for improving their Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating into the strategic plan.
    - d. It is suggested that a neutral party facilitate this process.
  2. In developing its strategic plan, the Emergency Services Council should create a unified vision and mission statement for the Amherst County Fire-Rescue System.
    - a. A unified vision statement will provide the fire and rescue organizations and Amherst County an expansive, aspiring image of the future of fire and rescue services. The vision statement should emphasize purposes, performance criteria, decision rules and standards that serve the public.<sup>25</sup>
    - b. A unified mission statement will ensure the fire and rescue organizations are collectively moving forward in one direction to improve service delivery. It will further foster a habit of focusing discussions and meetings on important issues.<sup>26</sup>
  3. The Emergency Services Council should establish a system of measurable goals and objectives. The performance measurement's factors will strengthen the newly developed strategic plan.
    - a. Strategic plans should identify immediate, intermediate and long-term goals with reasonable target deadlines.
    - b. Goals and objectives should be quantifiable, consistent, realistic and achievable.<sup>27</sup>
    - c. The Board of Supervisors should routinely assess the achievement of these performance measurements and alleviate any barriers to their completion.
  4. In developing its strategic plan, Amherst County's fire and rescue organizations should continue their commitment to using incident analysis and reporting, to include the Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS) and the Virginia Pre-Hospital Information Bridge (VPHIB).
    - a. Amherst County's commitment to reporting will ensure that they have reliable data to appropriately develop a plan to address operational and capital funding needs, or equipment, apparatus and facility needs.
    - b. By analyzing fire and rescue incident data and potential community hazards, a plan can be developed to address deployment of resources, placement of sub stations, and the number of personnel needed for response and prevention efforts.

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<sup>25</sup> John Bryson, *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, 2004

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Leading the Transition in Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments, November 2005



- c. Access to the data collected should be provided to rescue squads and fire departments so they are able to get a comprehensive understanding of their performance.
- d. The use of data such as VFIRS and VPHIB can be contributing factors to performance measurement and can further enable stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of the strategic plan.

In Amherst County, performance measurements will enable the Board of Supervisors to evaluate the performance of fire and rescue entities tasked with accomplishing the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.<sup>28</sup> The performance measurement will exhibit clear association between performing, planning, spending and results.<sup>29</sup> Amherst County will have the opportunity to evaluate its mission, vision and performance objectives through three perspectives: financial accountability, constituent priorities and internal processes<sup>30</sup>.

### ***Continuity of Leadership and Succession Planning***

The Emergency Services Council should consider developing a continuity of leadership or succession planning program to focus on training and mentoring future leaders within the system. The succession planning program will ensure retention of institutional knowledge, including subsidizing advanced officer training. A succession plan will address the needs of the Amherst County fire and rescue services by providing formal program to develop and enhance the future potential of personnel.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Amherst County should develop a program that demonstrates to all fire and rescue personnel the value of leadership and interpersonal relationship skills. The following elements should be considered for inclusion in the program:
  - a. A Leadership and Career development program for the volunteer fire and rescue personnel that focuses on the following subject areas; Management, Prevention, Operations and Safety.<sup>31</sup>
  - b. Incentives for advanced training and higher education.
  - c. Leadership training should be offered as an ongoing long-term project.
  - d. With the assistance of a trained facilitator, the fire and rescue organizations should hold a focus group consisting of stakeholders to determine how to accomplish and successfully implement the program.

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<sup>28</sup> Gerald Gordon, *Strategic Planning for Local Government*, 2005

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> William Shouldis, *Officer Development Programs on a Budget*, 2008

## ***Accountability Practices***

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), a standard operating procedure is “an organizational directive that establishes a standard course of action.”<sup>32</sup> Thus, standard operating procedures (SOPs) are written guidelines that explain what is expected and required of fire service personnel in performing their jobs.<sup>33</sup> It is critical for Amherst fire and rescue personnel adhere to the established system of SOPs to better coordinate service delivery throughout the county. It is imperative that all members thoroughly understand their responsibilities and expectations. Organizations that lack SOPs are increasingly vulnerable to accidents, lawsuits, preventable costs, personnel problems, and damage to their professional image.

1. Utilizing the guidelines outlined in NFPA 1561: Standard on Fire Department Incident Management Systems, Amherst County should formally articulate, practice and strictly enforce a countywide Incident Management System policy and accountability system.
  - a. Increased structure and coordination to the management of emergency incidents will ensure the safety and health of fire-rescue personnel.
  - b. The county should emphasize the importance of incident management system in managing all emergency incidents and training exercises. Amherst County should further emphasize the importance of written plans to anticipate incidents that require standardized procedures.
  - c. National and state standards should be used as a guide for the development process, such as the Incident Command System.<sup>34</sup>
  - d. It is recommended that these management principles be practiced through full-scale exercises. This will help identify response challenges and allow them to be resolved before an incident.
2. The county should consider appointing a Safety Officer with the authority to identify health and safety hazards and ensure that they are corrected.
  - a. Every emergency scene must be properly assessed to identify any potential hazards. This information will provide guidance in strategic and tactical decisions and must be communicated to all emergency responders.
  - b. The county must strive to protect its first responders at all times and should implement a standard personnel accountability system to account for all firefighters on scene.

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<sup>32</sup> Developing Effective Standard Operating Procedures for Fire and EMS Departments, December 1999

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> Incident Command System, Overview; <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/IncidentCommandSystem.shtm>

- c. The county should utilize *NFPA 1521: Standard on Fire Department Safety Officer*<sup>35</sup> as a guide for the development process.

## **THEME 2: COMMUNICATIONS**

In order to develop a cohesive Fire-Rescue System<sup>36</sup> in Amherst County, the Board of Supervisors and the County Administration must foster positive internal and external communication among the county's fire and rescue organizations along with members of the general public. Without effective and trusting relationships, the county will have limited success with the recommendations contained in this report and any other attempts at coordinating and improving the fire and rescue services in Amherst County. Before other identified recommendations can be implemented, effective and reliable communication capabilities must be established between the volunteer departments and the county.

Public safety personnel must have access to reliable and instantaneous communications at all times to effectively coordinate response and recovery operations. Emergency communications is not solely a product of technology, but rather a condition of a locality's governance, standard operating procedures and training. To achieve an effective and efficient emergency response framework, all areas of emergency communications must collectively work effectively.<sup>37</sup> Without reliable communications, the safety and security of Amherst County's fire and rescue service providers are jeopardized.

### ***Levels of Interdepartmental Communications***

During the site visit, the study committee observed and documented a breakdown of communication among the fire departments, rescue squads, Emergency Services Council and the County Government. The first issue that came to light was the high level of bypass that occurs among the Emergency Services Council members in regards to communicating with the Board of Supervisors. Members often would seek to get an issue brought into their respective Board of Supervisor's attention without bringing the matter to council meetings. As a result of such method, the council is not able to effectively make policy recommendations to the Board of Supervisors collectively.

There are continuous mistrust and frustration between career fire and rescue personnel in the county. The lack of personal and professional communications between the volunteers and career staff is negatively affecting the application of fire and rescue activities in Amherst County. The study team detected a high level of anticipation on the part of volunteers as it relates to transitioning the county fire and rescue into career based system. Consequently, such rumors have negatively affected the relationship between the volunteers and career personnel. Without committed efforts to improve the existing communication challenges,

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<sup>35</sup> NFPA 1521, <http://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/document-information-pages?mode=code&code=1521>

<sup>36</sup> The Amherst County Fire-Rescue System (Fire-Rescue System or System) means all those fire and rescue organizations that are recognized by the County as providers of fire, rescue services, and primarily respond to incidents within the County.

<sup>37</sup> Ten Years After 9/11: Improving Emergency Communications: Hearing before the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (July 2011).

there will be no improvement of Amherst County's overall fire and rescue operations. Such obstacle will create resistance towards service delivery enhancement and will continue to alienate each fire department and rescue squad throughout the county.

The burden lies with the County Administration and the Board of Supervisors to resolve this perception and ensure an open and honest dialogue is established. The county must identify and resolve the breakdowns in communications and work tirelessly to educate all members.<sup>38</sup> The current unresolved conflicts have the potential to divert fire and rescue personnel from their core mission of assisting the residents of Amherst County. All relevant parties must work together to provide the highest quality level of service.

**Recommendations:**

1. The county should host a strategic communication session with a professional mediator to resolve existing challenges and barriers amongst the following entities; fire and rescue departments, Emergency Services Council along with Amherst County Administration and its Board of Supervisors.
  - a. The objective of this work session should be to develop strategies to overcome identified barriers. It should further create and implement an effective communication system involving fire and rescue departments, County Government and with the general public.
  - b. The county must develop an efficient and effective communication model to ensure all stakeholders within the public safety community have input into long-term plans and decisions.
  - c. This communication model must ensure reliable documentation related to public safety strategic planning and development. It must be disseminated and received by all public safety stakeholders.
  - d. The communication session should further serve as an opportunity to clarify and establish countywide division of labor.
2. The county should strengthen its fire and life-safety communication activities with the residents of Amherst County.
  - a. Increased efforts to promote the positives attributes of the fire and rescue services in Amherst County can raise morale and attract more volunteers. Some options include producing an annual report, developing a quarterly newsletter and utilizing social networking avenues.

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<sup>38</sup> Leading the Transition in Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments, November 2005

3. The county should take advantage of pre-existing fire and life-safety information available through state and federal organizations. Public fire and life-safety education resources are available at the following locations:

- i. Virginia Department of Fire Programs:  
[http://vafire.com/fire\\_safety\\_education](http://vafire.com/fire_safety_education)
- ii. Virginia Fire and Life Safety Coalition: <http://www.vflsc.org>
- iii. The Home Safety Council: <http://www.homesafetycouncil.org>
- iv. National Fire Protection Association: <http://www.nfpa.org>
- v. Virginia Department of Forestry: <http://www.fireAmherstvirginia.org>
- vi. Virginia Department of Emergency Management:  
<http://www.vaemergency.gov/social-media/alert-localities>

### ***Improved Dispatch System***

The current dispatch system utilizes four stations with up-to-date technology. It is able to answer all calls-for-service for law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services throughout the county. Amherst County presently has a written dispatch procedure in place. However, it is recommended for the county to continuously monitor and seek to improve its existing dispatch protocol to ensure it is efficient and effective. Lastly, some of the radios held by previous fire and rescue volunteers have not been returned. Thus, it has caused a shortage on portable radios.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Amherst County should monitor and improve its existing dispatch protocol.
  - a. Identify specific criteria regarding what qualifies a BLS or ALS call through the County's Operational Medical Director.
  - b. Leadership at rescue and fire departments must ensure the radios given to volunteers are returned immediately following their departure from the agency.
2. Accounting for call volume and complexity, the Amherst County Board of Supervisors should examine the feasibility of increasing dispatch personnel.
  - a. Additional staff will likely improve the overall quality of dispatch operations by affording each dispatcher sufficient time to document all pertinent information and efficiently relay it to first responders.
  - b. The county should consider improving the use of emergency medical dispatch program.
  - c. The following resources are provided as a means of analyzing staffing to ensure adequate dispatch coverage:

- i. The Association of Public Safety Communication Officials (APCO) – Project RETAINS Toolkit 2.0;
  - ii. The National Fire Protection Association’s (NFPA) Standard 1221 – Standard for the Installation, Maintenance and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems; and,
  - iii. The National Emergency Numbers Association’s (NENA) Standard 56-002: 9-1-1 Call Answering Standard/Model Recommendation.
3. The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should appoint a Communications Advisory Committee from the Emergency Services Council or outside to thoroughly analyze the county’s overall dispatch system.
  - a. The Committee should meet at least quarterly, more often if needed.
  - b. Membership shall include representatives from fire, rescue and law enforcement.
  - c. The Committee should review dispatch protocols, procedures, staffing and equipment upgrades and provide recommendations to the Director of Public Safety.
  - d. The county representative should be the Director of Public Safety who will serve as an ex-officio member of the Advisory Committee. The Director will be responsible for communicating recommendations to the County Administration.
4. Based on the guidance from the Communications Advisory Committee, the Emergency Services Council should enhance the current dispatch protocols and procedures.
  - a. The level of response should be consistent across each department and throughout the day.
  - b. Standardization of dispatch protocols will improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of Amherst County’s fire and rescue response.
  - c. Response times should be continuously evaluated for effectiveness.

### **THEME 3: TRAINING**

One of the secrets of a successful countywide Fire-Rescue System is the full integration of volunteer personnel, regardless of their affiliation at the tactical level. Tactical equality recognizes all positions, from firefighter through senior fire officer and requires minimum training standards to ensure performance level.<sup>39</sup> Tactical equality is achievable in Amherst County if the Department of Public Safety provides performance-based, certifiable training and the opportunity for all volunteer personnel to train together. The approach will facilitate the development of personal and professional relationships. Training and continuity of leadership

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<sup>39</sup> Leading the Transition in Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments, November 2005

are closely joined because solid basic training will foster strong and consistent cooperation among the county's emergency response agencies.

### ***Coordinated Training Program***

Development of important skills is the basis for safety and improving services received by the citizens. The fire and rescue organizations in Amherst County work hard to ensure the sufficient offerings of mandated and relevant training. During the site visit, the study committee heard the hours for minimum training standards required by fire personnel was in fact more than needed for a small county and therefore required a comprehensive review.

1. Aligning with the strategic planning efforts, it is recommended that a structured and coordinated training program be developed to address the comprehensive training needs of the entire County and schedule classes accordingly.
  - a. The county should develop a comprehensive training program to be assessed annually. Such assessment will enable the adoption of warranted changes.
2. The Emergency Services Council in collaboration with the Board of Supervisors and County Administration should explore the feasibility of creating a Training Committee from the Emergency Services Council to develop and coordinate the application of a countywide training program.
  - a. The committee should work to increase the number of training courses and enhance efforts of collaborative multi-company training opportunities.
  - b. It is important for the Training Committee to ensure that the necessary training is being offered and with appropriate notice to ensure maximum turnout and return on investment.
  - c. Better coordination and increased local training opportunities will also assist with recruitment and retention efforts for Amherst County's fire and rescue organizations.
  - d. The county should explore utilizing both traditional classroom platforms as well as distance learning models. Online training allows greater flexibility in the application of courses to accommodate the schedule of volunteers.
  - e. The Board of Supervisors should appropriate all the necessary resources to fulfill the county's identified training challenges and fully train existing firefighters and rescue personnel.
  - f. The county should enforce the training requirements and ensure all fire and rescue service providers are competent and capable to perform assigned duties.

3. The Emergency Services Council should encourage all new firefighters be cross-trained as Emergency Medical First Responders, at minimum, to enhance rescue capacity within Amherst County.
  - a. The Emergency Medical Responder/First Responder (EMR/FR) program offered by the Virginia Department of Health (Office of Emergency Medical Services) provides training in emergency care for those who are likely to be the first personnel responding to the scene of an accident, fire, or medical emergency.<sup>40</sup>
  - b. The course prepares the responder to address the immediate life threats and injuries until more highly-trained personnel are available.
  - c. Having all firefighters obtain a first responder certification will ensure a rapid response in the event of a major medical emergency or trauma.
  - d. The Emergency Medical First Responder classes should be offered in conjunction with each Firefighter I program.

#### **THEME 4: BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION**

The fire and rescue departments in Amherst County receive funding from state, local and federal avenues to cover expenses. In FY2013, Amherst County received a total of \$93,910 from the Commonwealth of Virginia's Fire Programs Fund. Amherst County also receives approximately \$25,000 from the Office of Emergency Medical Services in Four-for-Life funds, which are utilized to fund training, personnel and equipment expenses.<sup>41</sup> To supplement operational cost, some fire departments and rescue squads have a fundraising. With respect to utility bills, the county pays for most expenses including fuel.

#### ***County Funding and Capital Improvements***

Amherst County provides funding to the fire and rescue organizations without a consistent funding formula and utilizes incremental adjustments. Additionally, there is a blanket funding to outside county agencies for providing services. Amherst County should restructure the funding model to better achieve equitable and performance based budgeting. Budget transparency should not be perceived negatively or as a method for the county to micromanage its fire and rescue departments. The Board of Supervisors has been trusted by the citizens of Amherst County to exercise fiscal responsibility and must therefore ensure taxpayers' dollars are spent efficiently. The burden rests with the Amherst County Board of Supervisors to ensure its limited monies are utilized responsibly and fairly.

Strong accounting practices and accountability measures provide fire and rescue leadership the opportunity to demonstrate its financial needs may be greater than the allocated monies. The

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<sup>40</sup> Virginia Department of Health (Office of Emergency Medical Services)

<sup>41</sup> Office of Emergency Medical Services



Board of Supervisors should require each fire department and rescue squad to annually provide yearly financial compilations. Greater transparency over the budget will provide another venue to eliminate the apparent distrust between the Board of Supervisors and the Fire-Rescue System's leadership.

**Recommendations:**

1. Amherst County should stop using blanket funding. It is imperative for the County Government to restructure the current funding model so it is able to achieve an equitable and performance based model.
  - a. Amherst County currently uses inconsistent funding method that shows allocation of monies to fire and rescue organization regardless of their performance or call volume.
2. Amherst County should complete a yearly countywide needs assessment for the delivery of fire and rescue services and develop a base funding allocation system upon the priorities set through the needs assessment and quantitative data.
  - a. Monies should be allocated based on the most critical needs and the highest call volume data.
  - b. It is recommended that the county continuously evaluate whether it is getting the appropriate return on its investments.
  - c. The strategic plan adopted by the Emergency Services Council should serve as a guide for the funding decisions to account for services rendered and equipment deficiencies.
3. An accountability plan should be developed for county funds and revenue recovery funds. The plan should be communicated to citizens and members of the fire and rescue organizations.
  - a. This accountability plan should be developed with fire and rescue organizations' participation.
  - b. By creating an accountability plan and communicating funding usage, confusion should be reduced among fire and rescue organizations on the usage of limited county funds.
  - c. The county should require documentation of expenditures and annually audit funds.
4. With input from the fire and rescue community, the Board of Supervisors should develop a capital improvement plan for upgrading its fire and rescue stations and equipment.
  - a. Some facilities do not provide adequate space to house equipment or facilitate overnight personnel.

- b. Board of Supervisors should establish a countywide equipment replacement policy with an emphasis on rotational equipment replacement based on prioritized needs.
5. The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should consider the feasibility of hiring a Grants Coordinator to assist the fire and rescue organizations with the acquisition and management of grants. This individual should research and consider the availability of all federal, state and private grant programs, including:
  - a. The Department of Forestry's Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grants:  
<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/fire/index-vfa.htm>
  - b. The Department of Forestry's Firewise Virginia Community Hazard Mitigation grants:  
<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/fire/index-mitigation.shtml>
  - c. The Department of Forestry's Dry Hydrant grants:  
<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/fire/dryhydrant/dry-hydrant.htm>
  - d. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG):  
<http://www.firegrantsupport.com/content/html/afg/>
  - e. The Virginia Department of Health-Office of Emergency Medical Services' Rescue Squad Assistance Fund (RSAF) Grants:  
<http://www.vdh.state.va.us/OEMS/Grants/index.htm>
  - f. The grant programs offered by the Virginia Fire Services Board (VFSB) through the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP).<sup>42</sup>
  - g. Various private grant programs.<sup>43</sup>

### ***Standardization and Central Purchasing***

Amherst County has a widely diverse fleet of apparatus among the fire and rescue organizations. Amherst County's fire and rescue organizations appear to have sufficient pieces of equipment in each station to support their call volume throughout the county. However, an area of cost-savings would be experienced through the standardization of future equipment and apparatus within the county. Presently, Amherst County should be applauded for their effort to make collective purchasing of medicine and tools used on Ambulances. Standardization and Central Purchasing will not be without difficulty, but is necessary for delivering cost-effective and efficient fire and rescue services.

#### **Recommendation:**

1. The County Administration should develop and implement a centralized purchasing option to leverage County purchasing power and reduce operational expenses.

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<sup>42</sup> A listing of available VFSB is available online, [http://www.vafire.com/grants\\_local\\_aid/index.htm](http://www.vafire.com/grants_local_aid/index.htm)

<sup>43</sup> A wide variety of Fire and EMS grants can be found on <http://www.grants.gov/> <http://www.firegrantshelp.com/nvfc/> and <http://www.emsgrantshelp.com/>

2. The County Administration should consult with the Emergency Services Council to develop specifications for central purchase activity areas. Below are suggested areas/activities for central purchasing:
  - a. Personal Protective Equipment<sup>44</sup> and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus<sup>45</sup>  
Ensure all departments are purchasing compatible equipment that meets National Fire Protection Association standards and are reaping the same cost savings. Amherst County is doing well with the contracts already in place for Pump, SCBA along with Fit and ladder testing. However, the county should continue to look for other areas of improvement to achieve efficient central purchasing.
  - b. Equipment/Apparatus – The Emergency Services Council should survey each department to determine if equipment commonalities exist. As previously mentioned, common apparatus specifications should be created and contracted, allowing volunteer organizations to make customizations without overly altering the specs, and reap the benefits of group purchasing for routine maintenance and replacement of aging ambulance and fire apparatus.
3. The Emergency Services Council should survey each department to determine if equipment commonalities exist. The equipment commonalities list should be used, along with strategic planning for Amherst County’s routine maintenance and replacement of equipment, aging ambulance and fire apparatus.
  - a. An Apparatus Repair and Replacement Subcommittee should be established within the Emergency Services Council in order to identify and prioritize needs of apparatus replacement and/or repair.
  - b. This critical priority list of apparatus should utilize the NFPA 1911 – Standard for Inspection, Maintenance, Testing and Retirement of In-Service Automotive Fire Apparatus.<sup>46</sup>
  - c. An inventory and capabilities of all vehicles should be provided to the Dispatch Center to improve dispatch development.
  - d. Fire and rescue departments must be strongly encouraged against making significant equipment purchases outside those approved by the Board of Supervisors. It is not fiscally responsible to make equipment purchases that place the County and individual departments in a financially unstable standing.
4. The Emergency Services Council should develop specifications for future apparatus purchases (considering the cost-effectiveness of regional contracts), refurbishment and replacement using the following national consensus standards:

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<sup>44</sup> NFPA 1971, <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=1971>

<sup>45</sup> NFPA 1981, <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=1981>

<sup>46</sup> NFPA 1911, <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=1911>

- a. NFPA 1901 - Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus<sup>47</sup>
- b. NFPA 1911 – Standard for Inspection, Maintenance, Testing and Retirement of In-Service Automotive Fire Apparatus<sup>48</sup>
- c. NFPA 1912 – Standard for Fire Apparatus Refurbishing<sup>49</sup>

### **THEME 5: DELIVERY OF SERVICES**

Several outside factors are affecting the fire and rescue personnel in Amherst County. Similar to many other jurisdictions, the county lacks adequate personnel to address call volume and growing administrative requirements. According to the 2012 Virginia Fire Service Needs Assessment, Amherst County reported that the present call volume warranted 26 additional personnel to sufficiently staff their stations.<sup>50</sup>

The limited and aging populations along with the lack of incentives make it difficult to recruit volunteers. This shortfall has decreased morale and has forced the county to increase the workload on its limited members with multiple responsibilities. Moreover, the lack of volunteers has made it a necessity to hire career staff to supplement volunteers while also having the Director and Deputy Director of Public Safety respond to service calls. This in effect prevents the Director conducting day-to-day management of operations. The availability of personnel plays a large role in the quality of service provided to the citizens of Amherst County. Currently, there is no assistance from the county to help the fire and rescue organizations recruit quality personnel. Included in this study are additional resources for recruitment and retention activities.

#### ***Recruitment and Retention***

Recruiting and retaining quality personnel is an essential component to the overall success of a volunteer fire and rescue departments. Like many areas throughout the nation and the Commonwealth of Virginia, Amherst County has felt the impact of declining numbers of men and women volunteering for fire and rescue departments. Currently, there is no assistance from the county to help the fire and rescue organizations recruit personnel. In order to relieve this burden, the county must provide increased leadership and participation towards the recruitment of volunteers. County leadership relies heavily on its volunteers and must become more actively involved in assisting each volunteer department with their recruitment and retention efforts. The Emergency Services Council should encourage leaders to contribute to other aspects of the community thus enabling them to become ambassadors of the department.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> NFPA 1901, <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=1901>

<sup>48</sup> NFPA 1911, <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=1911>

<sup>49</sup> NFPA 1912, <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=1912>

<sup>50</sup> See Appendix 5: 2012 Virginia Fire Service Needs Assessment.

<sup>51</sup> *Fire Service Image Task Force Report: Taking Responsibility for a Positive Public Perception* 15  
International Association of Fire Chiefs

## Recommendations:

1. As previously mentioned, the Amherst County Board of Supervisors should restructure the Emergency Services Council to better provide leadership for all fire and rescue issues throughout the county, including recruitment and retention activities.
2. Working alongside the Emergency Services Council, the County Government should identify the needs for additional fire and rescue personnel to meet the service demands and citizen expectations.
  - a. Through improvement of fire and rescue incident data analysis and strategic planning, Amherst County will be able to determine fire and rescue personnel needs, equipment needs and deployment.<sup>52</sup>
3. The Amherst County Board of Supervisors should examine the feasibility of reinstating the Recruitment and Retention Officer position which can support with recruiting prospective new members.
  - a. Volunteers provide a tremendous service to the County and save taxpayers significant amounts of money.
  - b. Participation in recruitment and retention activities not only provides welcomed assistance to each department, but it also demonstrates to fire and rescue personnel that the County is a dependable partner in overcoming this obstacle.
  - c. The Recruitment and Retention Officer should develop a single countywide volunteer orientation process leveraging the best practices of existing orientations in order to provide a consistent foundation for all new volunteers.
4. The Emergency Services Council should adopt a countywide recruitment and retention program.
  - a. This recruitment and retention program should take into consideration the needs of current volunteers and identify motivational factors to keep this population engaged and committed to the fire and rescue service.
  - b. The council should set annual recruitment and retention goals and concentrate its efforts and resources to achieving these benchmarks. The plan should be included in the strategic plan.
  - c. The Board of Supervisors should consider the current incentive package presented to them as a starting point.
5. The County Government and Emergency Services Council should collaboratively find low-cost methods to enhance public-education efforts such as open houses and creating PSAs.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) - "Make Better Decisions: Put Your Data to Work," <http://www.iafc.org/MemberCenter/OnSceneArticle.cfm?ItemNumber=5840>. This article provides an example of how multiple sources of data can be incorporated into fire and rescue department planning.

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

- a. Improve the visibility of the Amherst County fire and rescue services in the community.
  - b. Word-of-mouth recruiting is effective; therefore, each volunteer should be encouraged to inform their respective community network about Amherst fire and rescue services' training and educational opportunities.
6. The Emergency Services Council should encourage career staff to collaboratively work alongside volunteers to enhance current relationship.
7. In addition, Amherst County's fire and rescue organizations should take advantage of pre-existing recruitment and retention information. Resources may be downloaded at the following locations:
- a. Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
    - i. <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/OEMS/Agency/Recruitment/index.htm>
    - ii. [http://www.vdh.state.va.us/OEMS/Files\\_page/Locality\\_Resources/EMSWorkbook\\_0405.pdf](http://www.vdh.state.va.us/OEMS/Files_page/Locality_Resources/EMSWorkbook_0405.pdf)
    - iii. [http://www.vdh.state.va.us/OEMS/Files\\_page/Locality\\_Resources/EMSWorkbook3.pdf](http://www.vdh.state.va.us/OEMS/Files_page/Locality_Resources/EMSWorkbook3.pdf)
  - b. BecomeEMS.org - <http://www.becomeems.org/>
  - c. Fire/Volunteer (Guide) - <http://www.nvfc.org/resources/rr/retention-recruitment-guide/>
  - d. Fire/Volunteer (Video) - <http://www.nvfc.org/files/documents/Retention-and-Recruitment-Volunteer-Fire-Emergency-Services.wmv>.
  - e. 2004 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission Report. "Review of EMS in Virginia" Part III of the report; *Recruitment, Retention and Training of EMS Providers* (Page 55) – <http://leg2.state.va.us/dls/h&sdocs.nsf/4d54200d7e28716385256ec1004f3130/87c75ac37063994d85256ec500553c41?OpenDocument>

### ***Operations and Staffing***

Though efforts have been made towards achieving 24/7 coverage at all fire and rescue stations, staffing challenges still exist. It was noted during the site visits that routinely departments struggle to secure enough volunteers to adequately respond to their present call volume, especially during the day.

Additionally, special attention should be made to ensure fire and rescue capabilities are adequate for the potential hazards presented by the economic developments in Amherst County and its interstate highway system. Lastly, Amherst County should be commended for their efforts to establish 18 dry hydrants throughout the county.

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<sup>53</sup> *Fire Service Image Task Force Report: Taking Responsibility for a Positive Public Perception* 15

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

## Recommendations:

1. The County should seek to reduce residents insurance cost by improving Insurance Service Office (ISO) ratings.
  - a. This can be accomplished through improved training records and installing additional Dry Hydrants.
  - b. The county should continue working with the Department of Forestry (DOF) to obtain additional Dry Hydrants.
    - i. Grants can be obtained through DOF's Dry Hydrant Grant Program: <http://www.dof.virginia.gov/fire/dry-hydrants.shtml>.
2. Amherst County fire and rescue services should keep accurate records of incident response times in order to continuously assess response capabilities.
3. The county should continue to enhance its effort to provide 24-hour paid fire and rescue crew to address staffing challenges and ensure adequate resources are deployed for calls during the day.
  - a) It is recommended that the county utilize the NFPA guidance documents as resource documents.
  - b) The 2010 edition of *NFPA 1720: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments* addresses the organization and deployment of fire suppression operations, emergency medical operations, and special operations to the public by all volunteer fire departments.
2. Amherst County should work with the fire and rescue organizations to identify needs for additional fire and rescue personnel to meet service demands and citizen expectations.
  - a. Rescue squads expressed the need to add a paid EMS crew for daytime response, as there is limited volunteer availability during the daytime.
  - b. It is recommended for the county to consider hiring paid EMS crew from the community to act as the daytime service providers throughout Amherst.
  - c. The County Government in collaboration with the Emergency Services Council should pursue creating a tank task force for certain areas without dry hydrants.

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## **APPENDIXES**

**Appendix 1:** Amherst County Letter of Request – March 2013

**Appendix 2:** Amherst County - Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System Report Summary

**APPENDIX 3:** Amherst County – Virginia Pre-Hospital Information Bridge Report Summary

**Appendix 4:** Amherst County Training Summary for FY2009 to FY2013

**Appendix 5:** Amherst County 2012 Needs Assessment Summary Statistics

**Appendix 6:** Amherst County FY2013 Aid-to-Localities Allocation Report

APPROVED

## APPENDIX 1: AMHERST COUNTY LETTER OF REQUEST



Office of the  
County Administrator

March 12, 2013

Chief Richard E. Burch, Jr., Chairman  
Virginia Fire Services Board  
Virginia Department of Fire Programs  
1005 Technology Park Drive  
Glenn Allen, Virginia 23059

Dear Chief Burch:

At the meeting of the Amherst County Board of Supervisors held on March 11, 2013, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to request a study of the Amherst County Fire and Rescue System by the Virginia Fire Services Board. Amherst County is prepared to conduct this study and is ready to complete any documentation that will expedite the process. We appreciate your consideration at the next fire services board meeting.

Amherst County wishes to have a comprehensive study that will help enhance and guide the overall quality as well as coordination of our fire and emergency medical services delivery for our citizens. In addition to examining levels of service, staffing, governance, accountability, training, safety, operation, etc., the County would like to examine the quantity of vehicles in the Amherst County system and determine if they are adequate for our current and future needs.

Amherst County has a population of 34,000 served by three volunteer fire departments and three rescue squads covering a population spread over 475 square miles. Amherst County is also served by eighteen career EMS/Fire personnel assigned to the three rescue squads on a 24/7 basis with each station staffed with an ALS and BLS provider.

In addition, we are in the process of hiring one driver / pump operator for Amherst Fire Department.

Mr. Gary Roakes, Director of Public Safety, will serve as the principle contact between Amherst County and the study team and will coordinate input that will be provided by all relevant stakeholders. He can be contacted at (434) 946-9307.

**APPENDIX 1: AMHERST COUNTY LETTER OF REQUEST CONT:**

Thank you for your assistance in this matter and should you have any questions or require additional information please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Clarence Monday  
County Administrator

cc: Board of Supervisors  
Gary Roakes  
Chief Tom Shrader, Amherst Fire Department  
Chief Ernie Cash, Monelison Volunteer Fire Department  
Chief Danny Tucker, Pedlar Volunteer Fire Department  
Captain Charlie Goodin, Amherst Life Saving Crew  
Captain Vickie Padgett, Monelison Volunteer Rescue Squad  
Captain Lisa Tomlin, Pedlar Rescue Squad

**APPENDIX 2: AMHERST COUNTY – VIRGINIA FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM REPORT**

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs manages the Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS). VFIRS is the statewide system for tracking all emergency responses with fire departments in Virginia. By reporting their incidents to VFIRS, fire departments document the details of their incidents for legal purposes and documenting the overall activities of their fire department.

**Incident Type Summary, Amherst County, Virginia 2008-2012\***

<b>Incident Type</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Total</b>
Fires	152	115	133	131	110	641
EMS/Rescue	101	93	117	147	146	604
Hazardous Condition	141	94	118	94	63	510
Service Calls	26	24	20	13	9	92
Good Intent	141	167	152	174	184	818
False Alarm	39	36	39	39	27	180
Other	2	0	3	5	3	13
<b>Total Incidents</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>2,858</b>
Aid Given	138	129	139	139	121	666
Exposures	7	4	1	2	0	14
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>3,538</b>

**Fire Dollar Loss Summary, Amherst County, Virginia 2008-2012\***

<b>Year</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Total</b>
Dollar Loss	\$713,477	\$837,920	\$871,320	\$1,973,270	\$963,850	\$5,359,837

**Casualty Loss Summary, Amherst County, Virginia 2008-2012\***

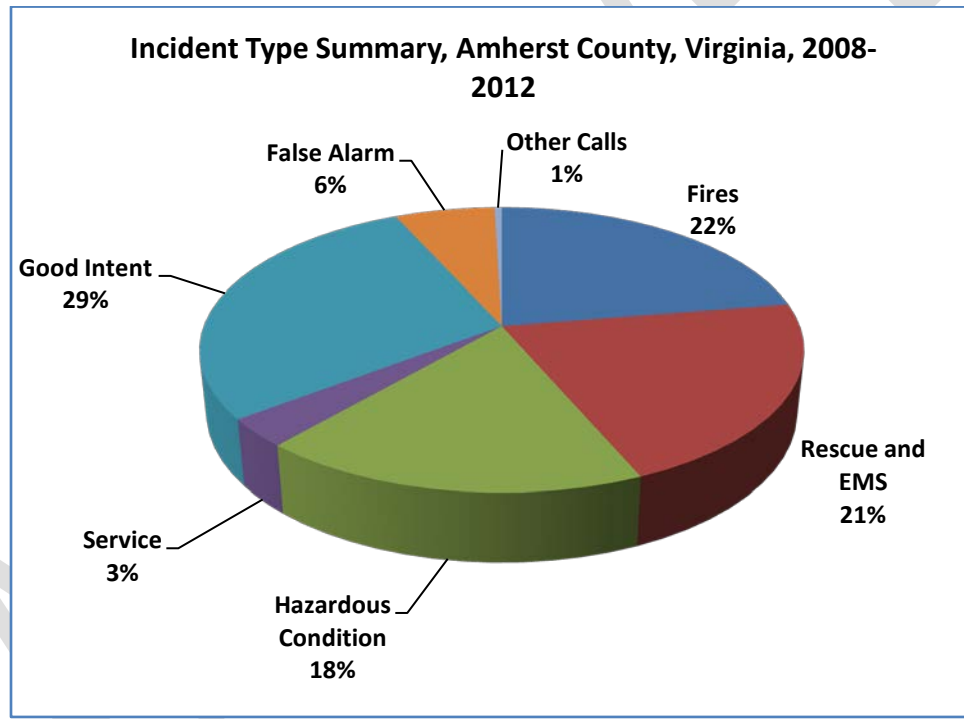
<b>Incident Type</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Total</b>
Civilian Fire Injuries	3	1	1	4	1	10
Civilian Fire Deaths	0	1	2	1	0	4
Fire Service Injuries	1	0	7	1	2	11
Fire Service Deaths	0	0	0	0	0	0

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

**APPENDIX 2: AMHERST COUNTY – VIRGINIA FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM REPORT**

**VFIRS Participation By Fire Department, Amherst County, Virginia 2008-2012\***

Fire Department	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Amherst Fire Dept.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Monelison Vol. Fire Dept. & Rescue Squad	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pedlar Volunteer Fire Dept.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Total Fire Departments Participating</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Percent Reporting</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>



The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

**APPENDIX 3: AMHERST COUNTY – VIRGINIA PRE-HOSPITAL INFORMATION BRIDGE REPORT SUMMARY**

The Virginia Department of Health’s Office of Emergency Medical Service manages the Virginia Pre-Hospital Information Bridge (VPHIB). VPHIB is the statewide system for tracking all emergency medical services (EMS) responses with EMS organizations in Virginia. In accordance with the *Code of Virginia*, “Maintaining a comprehensive emergency medical services patient care data collection and performance improvement system (32.1-111.3).”

Amherst Co.	Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Grand Total
Dept. of	2013	240	214	249	213	243	236	260						1655	
Public Safety	2012	NR	18	118	126	266	225	318	266	245	217	227	304	2330	
	2011	189	184	222	203	212	197	222	263	3	NR	NR	21	1716	
	2010	232	188	206	228	201	224	258	231	168	203	172	179	2490	
	2009	115	76	148	145	172	163	149	221	230	281	141	218	2059	
	2008	5	6	1	3	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	4	19	
	<b>Total</b>	781	686	944	918	1094	1045	1207	981	646	701	540	726	<b>10,269</b>	<b>10,269</b>

Amherst	Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Grand Total
Life Saving &	2013	47	42	44	48	44	25	22						272	
First Aid Crew	2012	NR	NR	NR	6	30	14	23	18	29	20	20	41	201	
	2011	45	42	46	42	44	49	40	13	21	16	13	2	373	
	2010	56	56	57	67	58	73	64	73	60	37	38	53	692	
	2009	70	45	56	62	57	54	36	60	57	41	62	57	657	
	2008	100	89	108	89	107	55	85	104	101	77	92	95	1102	
	<b>Total</b>	318	274	311	314	340	270	270	268	268	191	225	248	<b>3,297</b>	<b>3,297</b>

Monelison Volunteer	Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Grand Total
Rescue Squad	2013	31	20	24	24	15	17	10						141	
	2012	21	10	8	19	36	30	29	9	19	23	21	29	254	
	2011	41	42	31	30	28	28	12	25	29	11	17	13	307	
	2010	33	46	33	34	40	44	50	22	14	36	17	24	393	
	2009	43	45	46	55	57	55	38	64	48	21	33	37	542	
	2008	161	170	166	147	157	179	177	122	157	101	186	199	1922	
	<b>Total</b>	330	333	308	309	333	353	316	242	267	192	274	302	<b>3,559</b>	<b>3,559</b>

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.



**APPENDIX 3: AMHERST COUNTY – VIRGINIA PRE-HOSPITAL INFORMATION BRIDGE REPORT SUMMARY,**

**CONT:**

<b>Pedlar Volunteer</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
<b>Fire &amp; Rescue</b>	<b>2013</b>														
	<b>2012</b>														
<b>NO LONGER OPERATING</b>	<b>2011</b>														
	<b>2010</b>	2	1	NR	1	NR	NR	1	NR	2	NR	NR	1	8	
	<b>2009</b>	3	4	1	2	2	NR	1	2	1	5	NR	NR	21	
	<b>2008</b>	24	19	24	35	29	37	25	21	27	11	20	18	290	
	<b>Total</b>	29	24	25	38	31	37	27	23	30	16	20	19	<b>319</b>	<b>319</b>

APPROVED

The foregoing is a recommendation authorized pursuant to Va. Code 9.1-203.A.4 and is not to be construed as legal advice or as a binding recommendation.

#### **APPENDIX 4: AMHERST COUNTY TRAINING SUMMARY FOR FY2009 - FY2013**

This information is a compilation of training data, for Fiscal Years 2009 through 2013, from the Fire Service Training Record System (FSTRS) maintained by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. For more information on FSTRS visit, [http://www.vafire.com/fire\\_service\\_training\\_record\\_system/index.htm](http://www.vafire.com/fire_service_training_record_system/index.htm)

<b>Course</b>	<b>Students</b>
ADJUNCT INSTRUCTOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING	3
ARFF - GENERAL AVIATION 16 HOUR (STRUCTURAL)	2
BASIC PUMP OPERATIONS - 16-HOUR TRAINING PROGRAM	16
COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF FUNCTIONS - PRACTICAL EVOLUTIONS	0
COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN	1
CONFINED SPACE RESCUE	3
CONFINED SPACE RESCUE (16-HOURS)	3
DRIVER/OPERATOR PUMPER CERTIFICATION COURSE NFPA 1002-08	0
DRIVER/OPERATOR-AERIAL CERTIFICATION COURSE NFPA 1002-98	7
EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATION - CLASS 1	33
EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATION - CLASS 2	33
EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATION - CLASS 3	34
ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES AWARENESS	0
EVOC TRAIN-THE-TRAINER	2
EVOC - TRAIN-THE-TRAINER UPDATE	0
FARM MACHINERY EXTRICATION	24
FIRE ATTACK - ESSENTIALS	1
FIRE ATTACK II - BASIC NFPA 1403-92	1
FIRE INSPECTOR I & II - (NFPA 1031-03)	2
FIRE INSPECTOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING	2
FIRE INSPECTOR LEGAL IN-SERVICE	2
FIRE INSTRUCTOR I - NFPA 1041-07	2
FIRE INSTRUCTOR I - UPGRADE NFPA 1041-02	6
FIRE INSTRUCTOR II CERTIFICATION COURSE NFPA 1041-07	2
FIRE INSTRUCTOR III NFPA 1041-87	2
FIRE INVESTIGATOR - (NFPA 1033-03)	3
FIRE INVESTIGATOR "IN-SERVICE" TRAINING	3
FIRE OFFICER I CERTIFICATION COURSE (NFPA 1021-97)	0
FIRE OFFICER II - (NFPA 1021-03)	1
FIRE OFFICER III - (NFPA-1021-09)	0
FIRE SERVICE TRAINING - AIRCRAFT LIVE FIRE TRNG	20
FIRE SERVICE TRAINING - GENERAL	2

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**APPENDIX 4: AMHERST COUNTY TRAINING SUMMARY FOR FY2009 - FY2013, CONT.**

<b>Course</b>	<b>Students</b>
FIRE SERVICE TRAINING -INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM	0
FIREFIGHTER I - NFPA 1001 -08	0
FIREFIGHTER I AND II - T-T-T	0
FIREFIGHTER I COMPLETE COURSE	33
FIREFIGHTER II - NFPA 1001-02	0
FIREFIGHTER II COMPLETE COURSE	13
H-465 - INTERMEDIATE ICS FOR EXPANDING INCIDENTS - T-T-T	0
H-465/ICS 300 - INTERMEDIATE ICS FOR EXPANDING INCIDENTS	0
H-467 - ADV ICS FOR CGS & MACS FOR OPS 1ST RESPONDERS - T-T-T	0
H-467/ICS 400 - ADVANCED ICS FOR CGS & MACS OPS 1ST RESPONDERS	1
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AWARENESS NFPA 472-02	24
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AWARENESS NFPA 472-97	0
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AWARENESS & OPERATIONS NFPA 472-08	3
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS OPERATIONS - NFPA 472-98	0
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS OPERATIONS - T-T-T UPDATE	1
I-200 - ICS FOR SINGLE RESOURCES & INITIAL ACTION INCIDENTS	1
ICS-300: INTRM ICS FOR EXPANDING INCIDENTS - ST AGENCIES	0
ICS-400: ADVANCED ICS FOR CGS, COMPLEX INCIDENTS AND MACS	0
INTRO TO NAT'L FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING (V.5)	1
INTRO. TO NAT'L FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING (V.5) TRAIN-THE-TRAINER	0
INTRODUCTION TO COMMAND	24
IS-100 -- ON-LINE INTRODUCTION TO INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEMS (ICS)	1
IS-700 - NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM INTRODUCTION	20
IS-800 - NATIONAL RESPONSE PLAN TRAINING COURSE	1
L. P GAS EMERGENCIES (16-HOURS)	13
MAYDAY AWARENESS ONLINE TRAIN-THE-TRAINER	4
MAYDAY, FIREFIGHTER DOWN - AWARENESS (C/R & P/R)	0
MAYDAY, FIREFIGHTER DOWN 16-HOUR PROGRAM	23
MERT AWARENESS - NFPA 610-10	0
N.F.A. - PREPARATION FOR INITIAL COMPANY OPERATION (PICO)	0
N.F.A. ARSON DETECTION FOR THE FIRST RESPONDER (ADFR)	15
N.F.A. EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO TERRORISM: BASIC CONCEPTS	4
N.F.A. FIREFIGHTER SAFETY & SURVIVAL: CO. OFFICER	0
N.F.A. INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM	3
N.F.A. INCIDENT SAFETY OFFICER (ISO)	17
N.F.A. LEADERSHIP I: STRATEGIES FOR COMPANY SUCCESS	0

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**APPENDIX 4: AMHERST COUNTY TRAINING SUMMARY FOR FY2009 - FY2013, CONT.**

<b>Course</b>	<b>Students</b>
NFA - COURTROOM PREPARATION FOR FIRST RESPONDERS	0
NFA - JUVENILE FIRESETTER I	0
NFPA 1403 AWARENESS	7
NIMS - ICS PLANNING AND FORMS	0
OFFICER DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR	1
PROTECTIVE BREATHING APPARATUS - SPECIAL OFFERING	6
PUBLIC FIRE & LIFE SAFETY EDUCATOR I (NFPA 1035)	1
ROPE RESCUE AWARENESS AND OPERATIONS - PHASE 1	3
ROPE RESCUE OPERATIONS - PHASE 2	3
RURAL WATER SUPPLY - 16 HOUR TRAINING PROGRAM	0
TRAFFIC IMS FOR THE FIRST RESPONDER T-T-T	0
TRAFFIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT FOR EMERGENCY RESPONDERS	0
TRENCH RESCUE OPERATIONS	6
VEHICLE RESCUE AWARENESS AND OPERATIONS	30
VEHICLE RESCUE TECHNICIAN - NFPA 1006-03	0
VFIRS/NFIRS DATA ANALYSIS & PROBLEM SOLVING TECHNIQUES	0
VIRGINIA FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM - VER. 5 BASIC TRAINING	0
VIRGINIA FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM - VER. 5 OVERVIEW	0
WRITTEN TEST & SKILLS TEST EVALUATOR	4

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## APPENDIX 5: AMHERST – 2012 NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY STATISTICS

The Fire Service Needs Assessment is an annual survey conducted by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. Fire departments complete a survey questionnaire designed to identify their critical needs. Results are compiled and published in a comprehensive report available each January. The Department of Fire Programs received responses from all seven fire departments located in Amherst County.

<b>Fire Department Personnel</b>	<b>Current*</b>	<b>Need Reported**</b>
<b>Career Firefighters</b>	20	1
<b>Volunteer Firefighters</b>	52	25
<b>Paid-Per-Call</b>	0	0
<b>Total Firefighters</b>	72	26
<b>Civilian-Paid</b>	1	0
<b>Civilian-Volunteer</b>	0	10
<b>Total Civilian Personnel</b>	1	10

\*Taken from Supplemental Table 1 of the 2012 Virginia Fire Service Needs Assessment.

\*\*Number from Supplemental Table 7, means needed on top of the total column.

<b>Apparatus Owned</b>	<b>Current*</b>	<b>Need Reported **</b>
<b>Aerial Apparatus</b>	1	1
<b>Ambulance/Other Patient Transport</b>	9	1
<b>Command Support Unit</b>	1	0
<b>Command Vehicle (SUV)</b>	5	0
<b>Engine/Pumper</b>	9	0
<b>Fire/Rescue Boat</b>	0	0
<b>Hazardous Materials Vehicle</b>	0	0
<b>Heavy Technical Rescue Vehicle</b>	0	0
<b>Logistical Support Apparatus</b>	0	0
<b>Quint Combination Vehicle</b>	0	0
<b>Tanker</b>	2	0
<b>Wildland Brush Truck</b>	3	0
<b>Other Apparatus</b>	0	0

\*Taken from Supplemental Table 2

\*\*Taken from Supplemental Table 5

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**APPENDIX 5: AMHERST COUNTY – 2012 NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY STATISTICS CONT.**

<b>Equipment Owned</b>	<b>Current*</b>	<b>Need Reported **</b>
<b>4-Gas Monitors</b>	6	4
<b>Map Coordinate System – GPS</b>	0	0
<b>Mobile Data Terminals</b>	0	0
<b>Personal Alert Safety Systems</b>	0	0
<b>Personal Protective Equipment</b>	0	15
<b>Radios with Emergency Alert Button</b>	60	0
<b>Radios without Emergency Alert Button</b>	0	0
<b>Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (without integrated PASS)</b>	15	0
<b>Self-Contained Breathing (with integrated PASS)</b>	60	0
<b>Thermal Imaging Cameras</b>	7	0
<b>Other Equipment</b>	0	0

\*Taken from Supplemental Table 3

\*\*Taken from Supplemental Table 6

APPROVED

**APPENDIX 6: AMHERST COUNTY FY2013 AID-TO-LOCALITIES ALLOCATION REPORT**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Population (2010 Census)</b>	<b>FY2013 Allocation</b>
Town of Amherst	2,231	\$8,000
Amherst County	30,122	\$85,910
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,353</b>	<b>\$93,910</b>

APPROVED

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Attachment 2

# Amherst County Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Board of Supervisors Introductory Meeting – October 3, 2023







*AMHERST*

Perfect Slice of Virginia

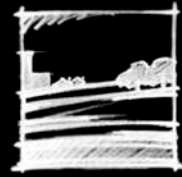


# What is a Parks and Recreation Plan?



- Provides an assessment of current conditions
- Inspired by Public Engagement, which details how Amherst Citizens want their parks and programs
- Provides insight and direction for future public expenditure decisions – park infrastructure, sports, lifetime activities, programs, public services
- Timeframe is 10-20 years with priorities for immediate, mid-range and long-range programs and development
- Used as a guide by public officials, citizens, clubs, and public entities

# Planning Team



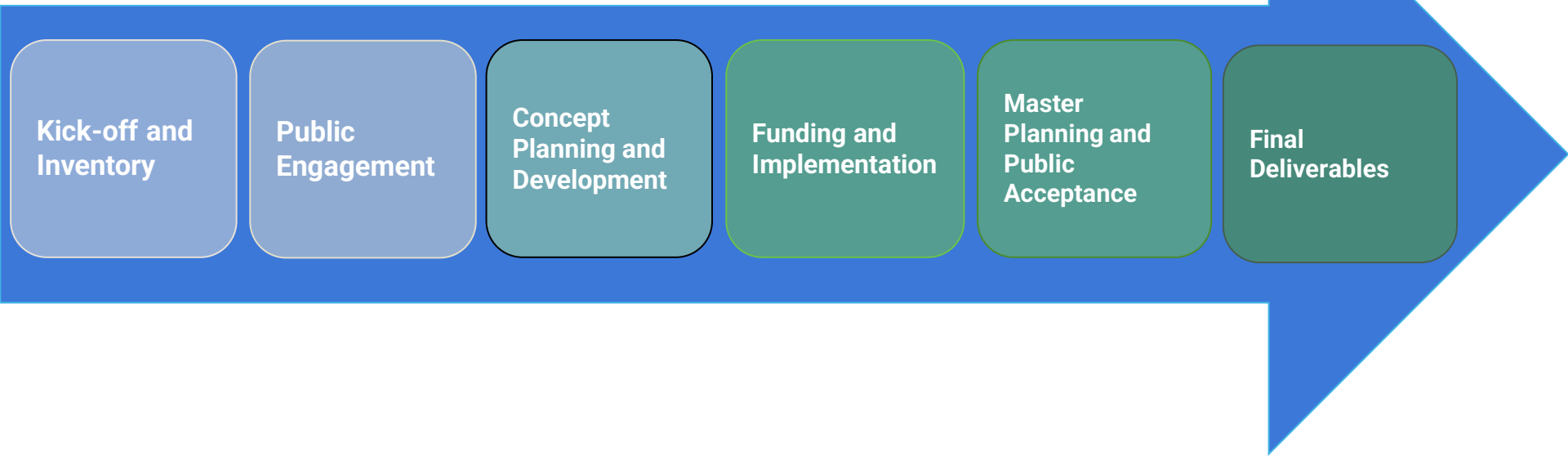
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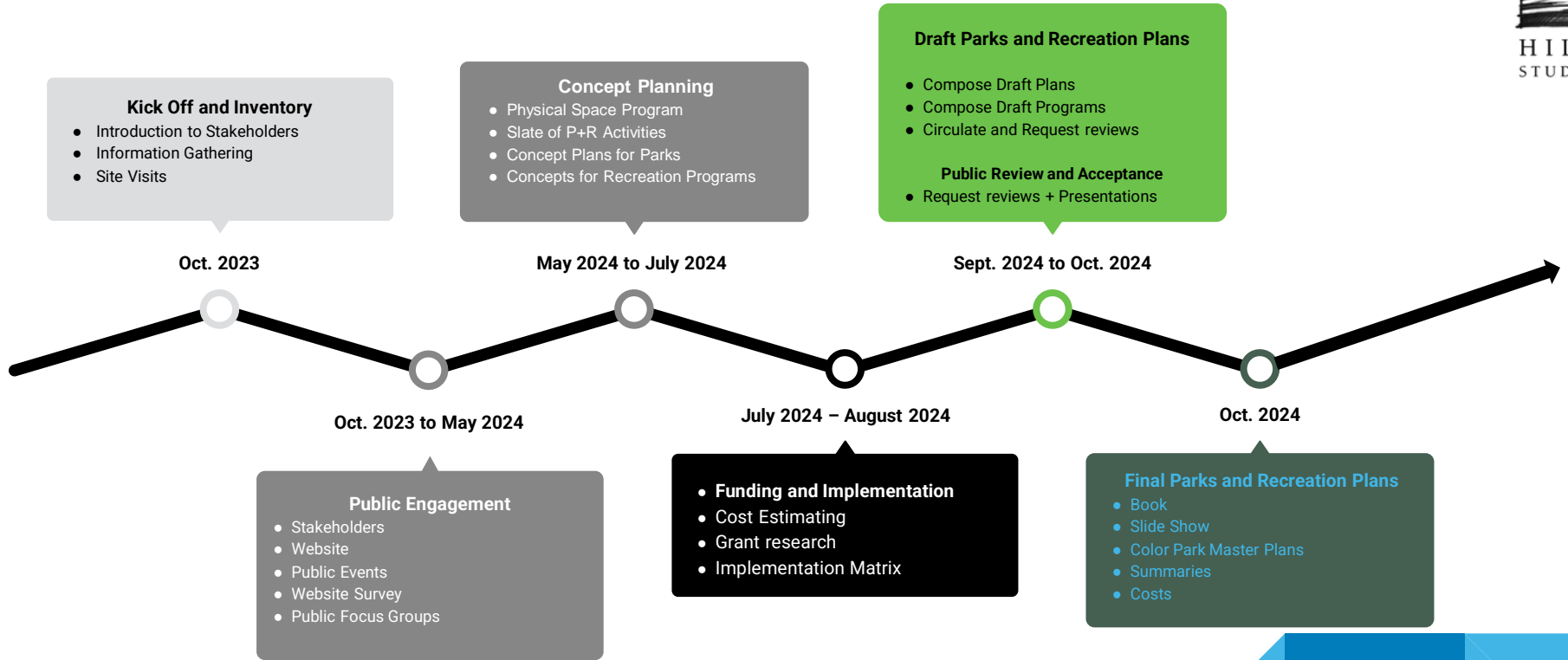


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# Project Tasks and Flow

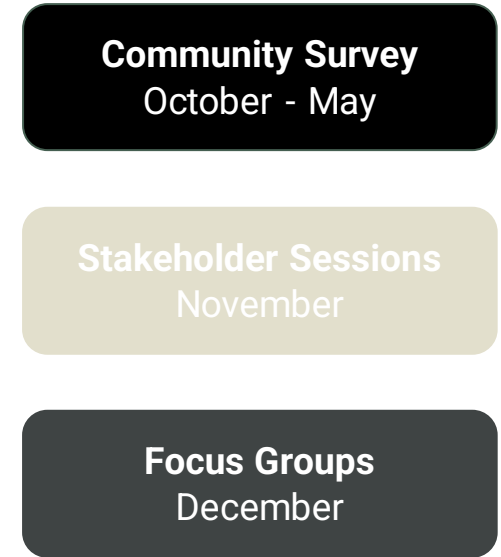




# Project Tasks Timeline

# Public Engagement Tools – P+R Plan

- a) Continuous web-based presence, during the 12-month process period, through the County website, and through the Parks and Recreation Facebook page.
- b) A public survey, available online, where citizens can document their wants and needs, including locations.
- c) Focus Group interviews with stakeholders.
- d) Public engagement at community events.
- e) Board Presentations with comments.



- What are the Amherst County's Board of Supervisors Goals & Critical Success Factors for the Parks and Recreation Plan ?
- Are there any potential stumbling blocks you foresee?
- What are assets you'd like to see us build upon?





*Thank You*





[Click here for Dashboard Instruction Manual](#)

[Click here for Dashboard Codes](#)

### At-A-Glance

**Finance**

**Demographics/Utilization**

**Outcome Measures**

Location

Amherst County

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Distinct Child Count	94	94	89	93	33
Net Expenditures	\$2.2M	\$2.3M	\$2.3M	\$2.5M	\$0.1M
Local Net Match	\$0.5M	\$0.6M	\$0.6M	\$0.6M	\$0.0M
Average Expenditure	\$23,916	\$24,132	\$25,681	\$26,572	\$3,833
Base Match Rate	0.2722	0.2722	0.2722	0.2722	0.2722
Effective Match Rate	0.2413	0.2510	0.2525	0.2549	0.2514

Statewide data updated through **09/29**  
of current Program Year

*CQI dashboard data consist of information submitted by individual Virginia localities for youth receiving CSA-funded services in the reporting period.*

Data is updated through 9/28/23

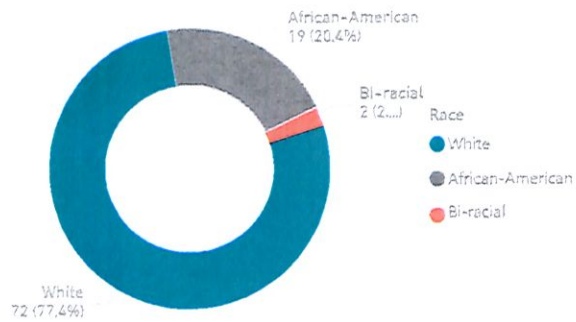
### Amherst County

- Mandate Type
- Service Placement Type
- Service Name
- Expenditure Code

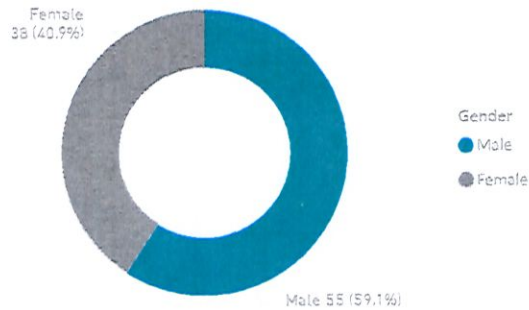
Fiscal Year

2023

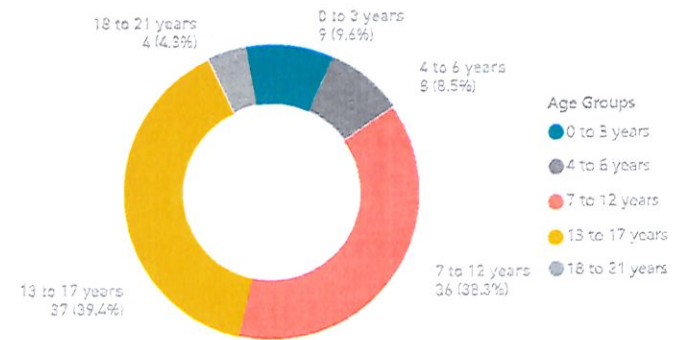
#### Race



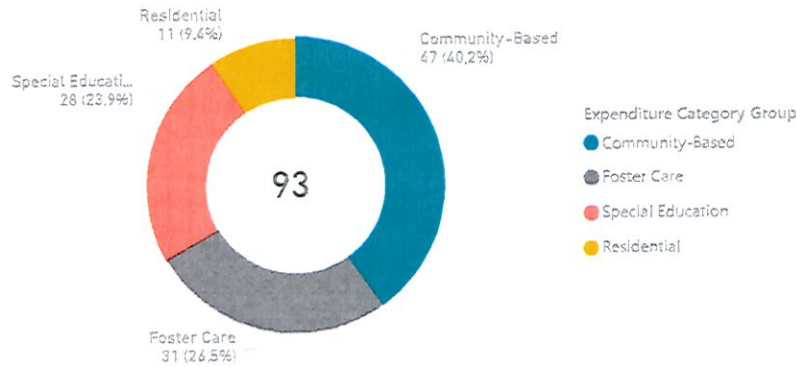
#### Gender



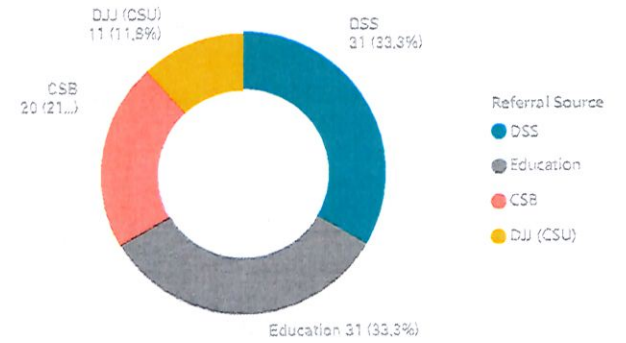
#### Age



#### Distinct Child Count By Expenditure Code

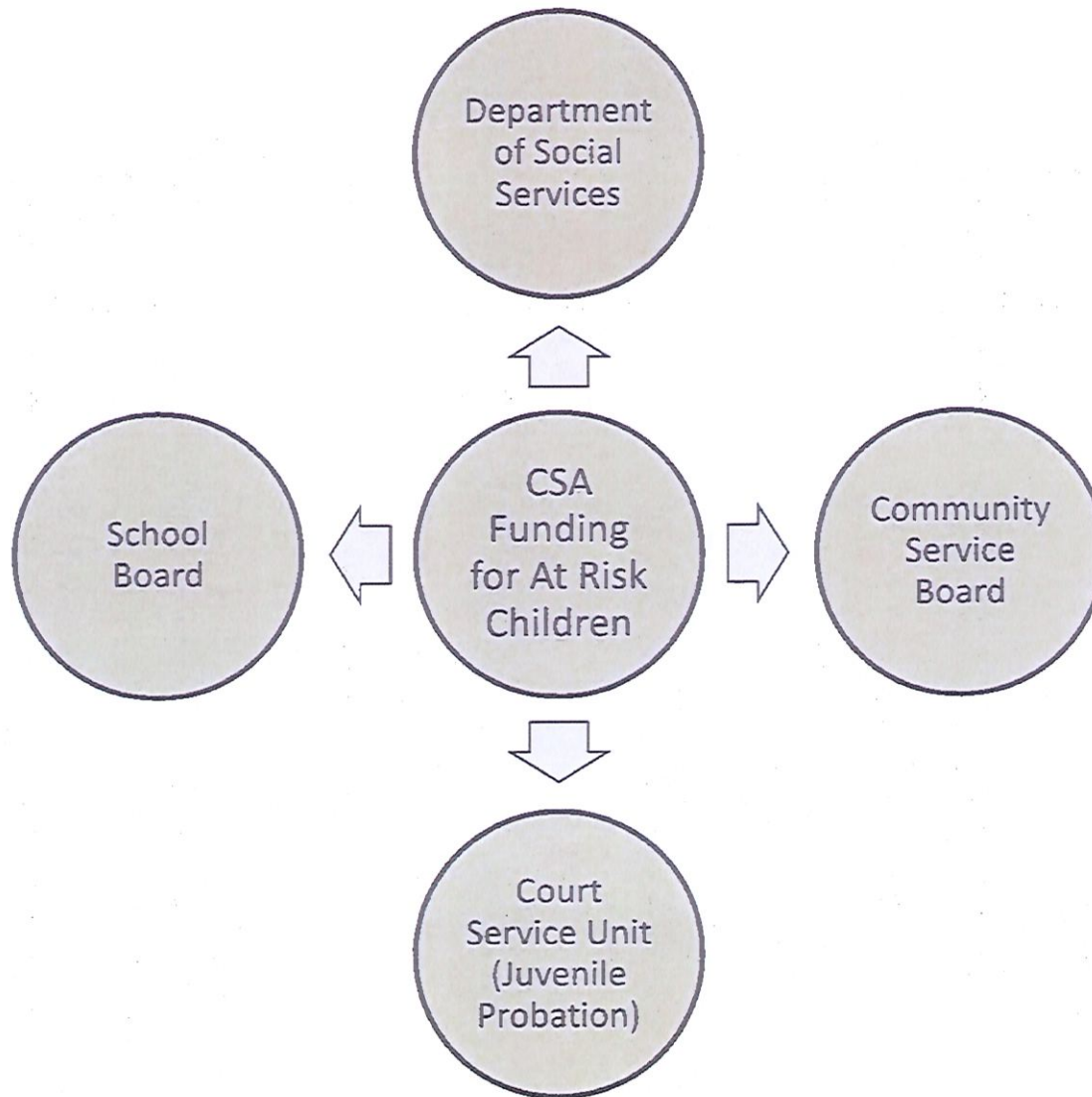


#### Referral Source





## Funding After 1992 For Children and Family Services



# Virginia Children's Services Act

- Law enacted in 1993 to improve services to at-risk youth.
- The purpose of CSA is to create a collaborative system of services and funding that is:
  - child-centered
  - family-focused
  - community-based



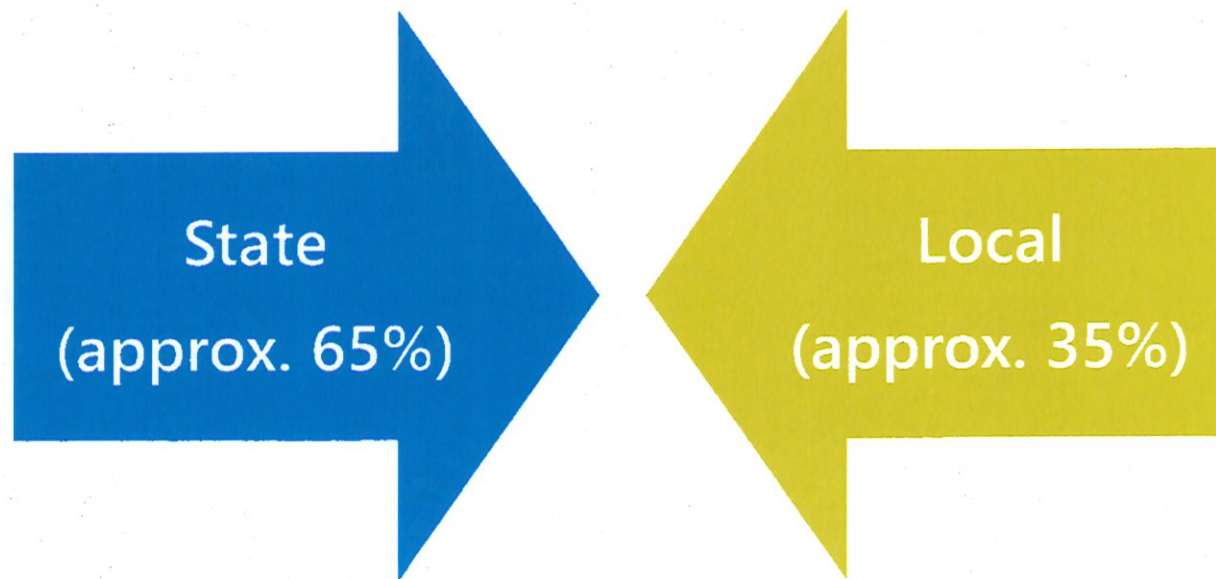
# Purpose of the Act

- Preserve families, least restrictive environment, protect child welfare and public safety
- Early identification and intervention
- Services responsive to unique and diverse strengths and needs
- Increase interagency collaboration and family involvement
- Public / private partnerships
- Community flexibility in use of funds and decision-making

# Structure of the CSA

- A state supervised, locally administered system.
- The CSA was designed to allow significant local flexibility within parameters established by the statute and the policies adopted by the State Executive Council.

# CSA Funding





## What is the difference between CPMT and FAPT?

### CPMT

- Meets Monthly
- Serves as a Liaison to OCS
- Writes and Approves local CSA policy
- Responsible for Oversight and Fiscal Management of CSA in the locality
- Approves Vendors and Contractual Agreements
- Reviews /approves funding requests from

### FAPT

- Collects and reviews CSA data

### FAPT

- Meets Weekly
- The Family Assessment and Planning Team, in accordance with [§ 2.2-2648](#), shall assess the strengths and needs of troubled youths and families who are approved for referral to the team and identify and determine the complement of services required to meet these unique needs." [COV § 2.2-5208](#)
- Responsible to Develop an individual family services plan for youths and families reviewed by the Team that provides for appropriate and cost-effective services

# Who Is Eligible for CSA Funding? (§2.2-5211 and §2.2-5212)

- **Children receiving foster care services**
  - **Foster Care Prevention**
  - **Those in custody of the LDSS**
- Students with educational disabilities in private schools per their IEP
- **Children in Need of Services (CHINS)**
- Children with significant behavioral/emotional needs involved in more than one agency