



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item Meeting of April 16, 2016

DATE: April 16, 2016

SUBJECT: Increase in the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) ambulance transport fees.

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Fire Department fees for ambulance transports for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 as set forth in Attachment I.

ISSUES: As part of the regular budget process, authorization from the County Board is requested to advertise a public hearing to adopt the proposed FY 2017 Fire Department fees for ambulance transports.

SUMMARY: It is proposed that the Fire Department ambulance transport fees be increased from \$400 to \$500 for Basic Life Support, \$500 to \$650 for Advanced Life Support, and \$675 to \$800 for Advanced Life Support II as defined by the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services. Additionally, the transport fee per mile is proposed to be increased from \$10 to \$12. The increases are proposed to improve current recovery rates of performing emergency medical services while remaining consistent with fees charged by neighboring jurisdictions. The additional revenues will be used to add staff to meet national standards for safe staffing.

A comparison of the proposed fee changes to those charges by neighboring jurisdictions is shown in Attachment I, which also reflects the proposed fee resolution increasing the Fire Department ambulance transport fees effective beginning July 1, 2016.

BACKGROUND: Fire staff compared the current record fee rates to the actual cost for staff to provide fire and emergency services in Arlington County as well as to rates charged by neighboring jurisdictions. Fees charged by the Fire Department were last increased in 2011.

DISCUSSION: EMS transport fees are charges for transportation of an individual to a local hospital by a Fire Department medic unit, ambulance or other licensed conveyance. The current fees charged by the Fire Department for ambulance transports have been in place since 2011. The current fee charges are Basic Life Support \$400, Advanced Life Support \$500, and Advanced

County Manager:

County Attorney:

Staff:

Life Support II \$675 and transport fee per mile \$10. The Fire Department is proposing to increase the fees to Basic Life Support \$500, Advanced Life Support \$650, and Advanced Life Support II \$800 and transport fee per mile \$12.

A substantial portion of fees for transport are paid by private insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid. Individuals are also billed directly. However, the imposition of fees in no way affects access to the services provided by the Fire Department. No one is ever denied County ambulance services based on the ability to pay or the lack of insurance. For County citizens who are uninsured, the Department will work with residents to ensure no one suffers financial hardship as a result of an ambulance transport. The Fire Department has specific criteria for granting waivers for transport fees for those without medical insurance and/or the ability to pay for an ambulance transport.

The proceeds of the increase will be used to strengthen and improve fire and emergency medical services in the County, including funding 8.0 FTEs to serve as fire fighter / paramedics on the two remaining understaffed suppression units. Per National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, a minimum of four personnel are needed for safe staffing levels for firefighting operations. The Fire Department operates 14 suppression units, 12 of which meet NFPA standards.

The fee increase will put Arlington County more in line with fees charged for services listed. The impact on the community would be minimal. Attachment I shows a list of ambulance transport fees currently charged by surrounding jurisdictions.

FISCAL IMPACT: The proposed fee increases are projected to yield an additional \$750,000 in ambulance transport revenue. These fee increases are included in the County Manager's Proposed FY 2017 Budget.

ATTACHMENT I

The table below compares ambulance fees between Arlington County and surrounding jurisdictions:

Jurisdiction	BLS Fees	ALS Fees	ALS II Fees	Transport Fee per Mile
Arlington County	\$400	\$500	\$675	\$10.00
City of Alexandria	\$400	\$500	\$675	\$10.00
Fairfax County	\$500	\$650	\$800	\$12.00
Washington D.C	\$428	\$508	\$735	\$6.55
Loudon County	\$467	\$660	\$770	N/A
Montgomery County	Non-Emergency \$300/ Emergency \$400	Non-Emergency \$350/ Emergency \$500	\$700	\$8.50
Prince George's County	\$500	\$650	\$750	\$5.00

THE COUNTY BOARD HERBY RESOLVES that effective July 1, 2016, the following Fire fees will be charged.

<u>FEE</u>	<u>FEE UNIT</u>	<u>FY 2016 FEE</u>	<u>FY 2017 FEE</u>
Basic Life Support	per Transport	\$400	\$500
Advanced Life Support	per Transport	\$500	\$650
Advanced Life Support 2	per Transport	\$675	\$850
Transport Fee per Mile	per Transport	\$10.00	\$12.00