

Maryland

Proposal to restructure county EMS is approved

From staff reports
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A plan that would restructure the county's emergency medical services and add 12 full-time advanced life-support paramedics to augment the current system was approved Thursday night by the Washington County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association, according to an association press release.

The association approved the plan with a vote of 22 companies in favor, two against and one abstention, according to the release.

The two-part, phased plan would allow for more government support and standardized procedures for all of the county's ambulance companies.

Jay Grimes, president of the Williamsport Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association, said he supported the plan.

"The service needs help," Grimes said. "The issue is getting more and more difficult, and they are getting more and more calls."

Grimes said Williamsport, which has one full-time paid ambulance crew, received back-to-back calls Thursday. That's especially taxing for companies, he said.

"It's just getting the medics, the quality of training (and) the amount of training they have to have," Grimes said. "There's just not enough to help you."

Grimes said he thought the plan would beef up staffs.

"I think this master plan will help give the citizens what they deserve," he said.

Phase I of the plan calls for a workday length limit of 48 straight hours, reimbursement from the county for EMS [vehicle](#) fuel and maintenance costs, and 12 advanced life-support paramedics and their equipment divided into four regional battalions where needed in the county. The projected cost of Phase I is almost \$1.4 million.

Phase II calls for a county salary structure for paid EMS staff, county reimbursement of \$8 to \$10 per hour to companies for each volunteer hour donated and operating cost reimbursements. The projected cost of Phase II is almost \$4.6 million, not including revenue.

Washington County currently has about 1,000 EMS responders, including both volunteers and employees, John Latimer IV, the county's emergency services director, has said.