



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item  
Meeting of February 23, 2008**

**DATE:** January 31, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Request to advertise an increase in the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) ambulance transport fees that were adopted in fiscal year 2006.

**C. M. RECOMMENDATION:**

Authorize advertisement of an increase in the EMS ambulance transport fees.

**ISSUE:** As part of the regular budget process, authorization from the County Board is being requested to advertise a public hearing on whether to increase the current ambulance transport fees.

**SUMMARY:** The following increases are proposed: The ambulance transport fee for Basic Life Support Emergency (BLS Emergency) will be increased from \$300 to \$400. The ambulance transport fee for Advanced Life Support-1 Emergency (ALS-1 Emergency) will be increased from \$400 to \$500. The ambulance transport fee for Advanced Life Support-2 Emergency (ALS-2 Emergency) will be increased from \$550 to \$675. The transport mileage charge will be increased from \$7.50 to \$10.00 per mile. The new rates are the same being proposed by Fairfax County and the City of Alexandria.

**BACKGROUND:** In light of the increased cost of providing EMS a review of the current ambulance transport fees was conducted to evaluate the feasibility of an increase to help offset the Fire Department's increased operating costs. The review revealed that the current fees were below the allowable charges by Medicare and that the County was losing a significant amount of revenue each year under the current fees.

**DISCUSSION:** Each level of EMS requires a greater degree of knowledge and skill. For example, a BLS Emergency transport provides basic services such as bleeding control, splinting fractures, and treatment for shock. An ALS-1 Emergency transport provides at least one ALS intervention such as cardiac EKG or the delivery of intravenous fluids. An ALS-2 Emergency transport provides such services as manual defibrillation, endotracheal intubation, and surgical airway.

County Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

County Attorney: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff: James Schwartz, Fire Department

When the current rates were adopted in fiscal year 2006, they reflected the allowable Medicare reimbursement amount at the time which most private insurance companies supported. Since then Medicare has increased the allowable reimbursement amount. In fiscal year 2007 Medicare and private insurance accounted for 94% of the ambulance transport fees based on 9,596 transports billed. The new fee schedule reflects the County's goal of increasing revenue to help offset increased EMS costs while maintaining reasonable EMS charges and minimizing the financial impact on residents.

**Attachment I** is the proposed resolution to change the existing rate structure.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The increased fees are projected to generate \$380,457 in additional revenue to the general fund and are included in the County Manager's proposed budget.

## **Attachment I**

**THE COUNTY BOARD HEREBY RESOLVES** that effective July 1, 2008, the service charge for ambulance transportation by the Arlington County Fire Department shall be \$400 for Basic Life Support Emergency, \$500 for Advanced Life Support-1 Emergency, \$675 for Advanced Life Support-2 Emergency, and \$10.00 per transport mile. The Fire Chief is authorized to establish regulations and procedures for the collection of these fees and associated direct costs for ambulance service, including payment standards for citizens with lower incomes.

The charge shall be waived in the following cases:

- a. When service is rendered in connection with any natural disaster or man-made disaster as defined in §44-146.16 of the Code of Virginia;
- b. When service is rendered to a person who is in the custody of the Sheriff's Department; and
- c. When service is rendered to any child under 18 years of age who is attending school or school-related activities when the need for service arises.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the local Board of Public Welfare shall pay all ambulance service charges not covered by insurance incurred by residents who at the time of service are enrolled in the Housing Grants or Real Estate Tax Relief Programs administered by the County pursuant to Chapters 43 and 44 of the Arlington County Code.