

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled

Senate Bill 591

(Senator Edwards)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environment and Transportation

Garrett County - Payment to Rescue Squads

This bill enables the Garrett County Commissioners to provide the statutorily required local funding for volunteer rescue squads through either a direct payment or through an in-kind payment. The in-kind payment includes the assignment of personnel, equipment, or services to the rescue squad. In addition, the bill repeals certain provisions of the Public Local Laws of Garrett County concerning the use and withholding of county funding for volunteer rescue squads.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Garrett County finances are not directly affected. The bill updates statutory provisions to reflect current funding practices for emergency management services.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Garrett County Commissioners are required to appropriate and pay to rescue squads in the county a total amount per year of up to \$0.008 per \$100 on the assessable real property in the county other than operating real property of a public utility and \$0.02 per \$100 on the assessable personal property and operating real property of a public utility. Payments are made twice a year in December and in June. Funds may only be used for (1) the purchase, maintenance, and repair of rescue apparatus and equipment; (2) the construction, maintenance, or repair of facilities and grounds necessary for emergency medical service purposes; hosting community events; providing emergency

shelter; or enhancing fundraising or operations capability; (3) the promotion, retention, or recruitment of membership; or (4) other special expenditures.

The county commissioners may reserve the right to withhold any or all of the funds from a rescue squad that fails to meet all standards and policies recommended by the Garrett County Emergency Services Board. Rescue squads that receive funding must file a specified annual report with the county commissioners.

Local Fiscal Effect: Garrett County has two volunteer rescue squads that receive funding from the county. The fiscal 2016 county budget included a total of \$415,458 in funding for the volunteer rescue squads. However, Garrett County has recently initiated a county-funded emergency management services (EMS) program that uses paid EMS staff at the volunteer rescue squads. Due to this initiative, the fiscal 2017 county budget includes only \$69,904 in funding for the volunteer rescue squads. The decrease in county funding to the volunteer rescue squads is offset by a significant increase in funding for the county paid EMS program, in which county funding has increased from \$701,026 in fiscal 2016 to \$1.5 million in fiscal 2017.

As a result of the county government providing additional EMS services, the Garrett County Commissioners intend to provide a portion of the statutorily required local funding for volunteer rescue squads through an in-kind payment. This bill updates statutory provisions in the Public Local Laws of Garrett County to reflect current funding practices for emergency management services.

Additional Comments: Garrett County indicates that, in addition to the EMS service provided by the two volunteer rescue squads, one fire station has begun providing EMS services, and there is one county-run EMS station.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 758 (Delegate Beitzel) - Environment and Transportation.

Information Source(s): Garrett County; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 19, 2017
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