BYLAWS OF THE

ST. MARY’S COUNTY

EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Revisions as of
November 1, 2005
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Name and Purpose</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Application for Membership</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Officers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Duties of Officers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Rules of Order</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Bylaws and Amendments</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Duties and Responsibilities</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section 1. Recruitment and Retention</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section 2. Training</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section 3. Adjudication</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section 4. Interface with County Commissioners</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section 5. Interface with Department of Public Safety</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section 6. Legislative and Budget</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section 7. Master Planning</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>State and County Funds</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ARTICLE I: NAME AND PURPOSE

Section 1. The organization shall be known as the St. Mary’s County Emergency Services Committee, hereafter referred to as the Committee.

Section 2. The Committee is formed not to take the place of the St. Mary’s County Fire Board or the St. Mary’s County Ambulance and Rescue Association, but rather to effect a partnership and coordinate and enhance the efforts of these services. The departments, squads, and Advanced Life Support (ALS) Unit shall remain in control of the fire and rescue services.

Section 3. The purpose of the Committee is to serve as the channel for conducting business, as defined in these by-laws, between the St. Mary’s County Emergency Services and the St. Mary’s County Government; to establish, update and monitor the Master Plan for fire and rescue services; recommend all legislative matters to County Government as offered by the departments, squads, ALS Unit, Fire Board, Ambulance and Rescue Association, or the Committee; and work always for the best interest of the residents of St. Mary’s County.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The membership of the Committee shall be representatives in good standing selected by each department, squad and the ALS Unit based on the representative serving a recommended term of three (3) years. Representatives recommended by each department, squad and the ALS Unit shall be appointed by the St. Mary’s County Commissioners. In addition, the membership of the Committee shall include a representative from the Department of Public Safety appointed by the St. Mary’s County Commissioners.

Section 2. The Committee shall have members as follows: one (1) from each rescue squad and fire department; one (1) from the combined fire/rescue department; one (1) from the Advanced Life Support Unit; and one (1) from the Department of Public Safety. Minimum qualifications to serve on the Committee are:

(1) Current active, life or honorary member; and
(2) Three (3) years of experience in executive, administrative, or line positions, or minimum of five (5) years with St. Mary’s County fire or rescue services.

The Department of Public Safety representative does not need to meet these minimum qualifications. Representatives of new organizations that do not meet these minimum qualifications may be approved under a probationary status as a non-voting member until they meet minimum qualifications.
Section 3. Representatives who will need to be absent from a Committee meeting should make their request known to a member of the Executive Committee in order to be excused. The Committee shall notify the representative’s department, squad, or unit after three (3) unexcused absences during any calendar year. This notification should prompt the consideration of the representative’s replacement on the Committee.

Section 4. Representatives may be replaced by their department, squad or unit. The department, squad or unit shall notify the Chair when a representative will be replaced, and the Secretary will forward the replacement’s name to all Committee members and to the St. Mary’s County Commissioners for official appointment by the Commissioners.

Section 5. At the expiration or termination of any Committee member’s appointment, the member shall turn over all properties entrusted to his care to the Committee Chair or his successor.

Section 6. Each member company may have a voting alternate for any meeting. The process for appointment of the alternate shall follow the same procedure as outlined in Article II. The alternative member shall comply with Article II Section 1, Section 2 (1) and (2) Minimum qualifications to serve, Section 4, and Section 5.

Any regular voting member, who cannot attend a meeting, shall notify a member of the Executive Committee if the voting alternate will be attending. If the regular member cannot advise a member of the Executive Committee, the voting alternative shall advise the Chairman of the ESC Meeting that they are the representative for that meeting. The voting alternate, for that meeting, shall be so recorded in the minutes.

ARTICLE III: APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. New departments, squads or units seeking membership to the Committee must be incorporated. Application for membership must be in writing and submitted to the Chair or the Committee. The application must be endorsed by the FireBoard and/or Ambulance and Rescue Association as a duly recognized department, squad or unit.

Section 2. The Committee shall forward applications meeting the requirements of Section 1 to the St. Mary’s County Commissioners with the recommendation that the new department, squad or unit be included in the membership of the Committee. The representative of the new department, squad or unit shall then be selected as specified in Article II.
ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS

Section 1. Meetings shall be held at least monthly (day to be determined) or as determined by 2/3 vote of the Committee membership, except for the February meeting held for elections, and in accordance with the St. Mary’s County Open Meetings Act. The Chair or, in his/her absence, the Co-Chair shall give the total membership one week’s notice if the meeting place or time is changed. A quorum of 2/3 of the membership is necessary to call a meeting to order.

Section 2. Special meetings shall be called by the Chair or at the request of three or more representatives. Special meetings will be held at times and places named by the Chair. Notice of special meetings shall be provided as specified in Section 1 of this Article.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of the Committee shall be the Chair, the Co-Chair and the Secretary. The officers shall be elected annually by the Committee for a one-year term. These officers shall comprise the Executive Committee.

Section 2. Nomination and election of all officers shall be held at the February meeting for terms beginning at New Business in February. Election to office shall be by a ballot or hand vote, the method to be designated by the Chair, or as requested by the members, members ruling. Votes shall be cast for each of the officer positions individually. A simple majority shall carry the election to any office. Vacancies occurring in any elective office shall be filled by election as the next regular meeting of the Committee and shall be for the unexpired term of that office.

ARTICLE VI: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. The Chair shall preside at all meetings, appoint subcommittees, conduct business in accordance with the by-laws, call special meetings, be an ex-officio member of all subcommittees, and perform such other duties as may be required of him/her by the Committee.

Section 2. The Co-Chair shall act as the Chair in the absence of that officer. The Co-Chair shall serve as the Parliamentarian. At meetings when the Co-Chair is serving as the Chair, the Co-Chair shall appoint another member to serve as Parliamentarian for that meeting.

Section 3. The Secretary shall keep in a binder, provided for that purpose, a complete record of all proceedings of all regular and special meetings, and shall receive and answer all communications pertaining to the Committee when approved by the
Executive Committee. The Secretary shall turn over to his/her successor all books, papers and other property of the Committee and shall perform other duties as may be required by the Committee.

Section 4. The Executive Committee shall be authorized to represent, but not take actions in lieu of, the Committee. This may include liaison with St. Mary’s County Government, Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute (MFRI), Maryland Institute of Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), and other parties as necessary when carrying out the duties and responsibilities of the Emergency Service Committee. When carrying out the duties and responsibilities of the Committee, the Executive Committee will serve as the official voice of the fire and rescue services.

ARTICLE VII: RULES OF ORDER

Section 1. Order of Business for meetings of the Committee shall be as follows:

1) Roll Call
2) Reading and Approval of Minutes
3) Reports of Executive Committee
4) Reports of Committees
5) Unfinished Business
6) New Business
7) Adjournment

Section 2. Voting shall be done by a simple majority unless otherwise specified in these bylaws. Each voting representative shall be entitled to cast one (1) vote in all matters of business, providing the appointed representative is present.

Section 3. Robert’s Rules of Order, revised, will guide the meetings of this Committee except when it conflicts with these bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII: BYLAWS AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1. These bylaws shall become effective upon adoption by two-thirds of the total number of department, squads or units, with subsequent approval by the St. Mary’s County Commissioners.

Section 2. Proposed amendments to these bylaws may be submitted by departments, squads, the ALS Unit, FireBoard Ambulance and Rescue Association, or representatives of the Committee. Proposed amendments shall be presented in writing at a regular meeting of the Committee. The submitting organization or Committee representative shall provide enough copies for the Committee plus one for County
validation. The propose amendment will be tabled for 30 days while the St. Mary’s County Commissioners validate that it meets the criteria for Public Open Meetings and that it does not violate any County resolution or ordinance. The proposed amendment, once validated by the Commissioners, shall be voted on at the next regular meeting. A two-thirds majority of the membership shall be required amend these bylaws.

Section 3. The Secretary will have a master copy of the bylaws of the Committee available at each Committee meeting. The Secretary will supply each representative, department, squad, unit, and the Chairs of the Fire Board and Ambulance and Rescue Association with an annual updated copy as well as any amendments as they are approved.

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**ARTICLE IX: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Section 1. Recruitment and Retention. The Committee will develop and implement a program to address the recruitment and retention needs for fire and rescue services.

Section 2. Training. The Committee will determine and act on training needs as follows:

(a) Establish training plans to meet County uniform training levels. Serve as liaison between departments, squads, ALS Unit, and training authorities, such as MFRI and MIEMSS.

(b) Standardize training qualifications for officers in the departments, squads and ALS Unit. Qualifications should be consistent with generally accepted standards (e.g., National Fire Protection Association, MFRI, and MIEMSS).

(c) Enlist St. Mary’s County Government’s support for training needs at the Southern Maryland Regional Training Center in La Plata.

Section 3. Adjudication. The Committee will resolve conflicts between the individual departments, squads, and units and the Fire Board and Ambulance and Rescue Association in cases where conflicts cannot be resolved by the Association(s).

Section 4. Interface with County Commissioners. The Committee will serve as the channel for conducting business, as defined in these by-laws, between the St. Mary’s County Emergency Services and the St. Mary’s County Government. This will include reporting annually to the St. Mary’s County Commissioners on the status of the emergency services in St. Mary’s County, addressing: measures of work activity (e.g., number of calls, hours of training for members, public education, drills); other significant activities of the past year; evaluation of services; problems and challenges encountered or expected; and plans for the current year.
Section 5. Interface with the Department of Public Safety. The Committee will serve as advisor to the Department of Public Safety in the following areas: 911 communications; radio procurement; and emergency response through the Emergency Operations Plan as it relates to the fire and rescue services. The Department of Public Safety will, in turn, notify the Committee of issues that impact the fire and rescue services.

Section 6. Legislative and Budget. The Committee will:

(a) Recommend all legislative matters to the St. Mary’s County Government as offered by the departments, squads, ALS Unit, FireBoard Ambulance and Rescue Association, or the Committee.

(b) Recommend approval of supplemental funding requests to the St. Mary’s County Government. In initiation of supplemental funding requests shall be the responsibility of each requesting agency. The St. Mary’s County Government has the approval authority for funding requests.

(c) Receive copies of budget submittals for informational purposes. Each department, squad and unit will be responsible for submitting, clarifying, supporting and justifying individual budget requests to the County Commissioners. The Committee shall not be authorized to reject budget submittals.

(d) Receive a presentation from the Director of the Department of Public Safety regarding the Department of Public Safety’s budget request.

(e) Establish the policy for the distribution of the 508/Senator Amos Funds for the Fire Departments and Rescue Squads in St. Mary’s County. The current policy for the distribution of the 508/Senator Amos funds is as follows: Each incorporated Fire Department and Rescue Squad in St. Mary’s County shall received an equal share of all 508 funds granted by the State of Maryland.

Section 7. Master Planning. The Committee will:

(a) Establish, update and monitor the Master Plan for fire and rescue services.

(b) Review station locations as the need for new stations develops and review restructuring of response areas. The responsibility for new station development and the restructuring of operation areas shall lie with the St. Mary’s County Ambulance and Rescue Association and FireBoard Association.
ARTICLE X: STATE AND COUNTY FUNDS

Section 1. Fire Tax.

A. Each Fire Department shall submit to the Emergency Services Committee a detailed justification for any requests for any increase or decrease in fire tax rates during the budget process. Justification shall include, among any other relevant factors, a detailed description of the department’s financial condition and failure to meet minimum standards as established by:

1. Written standards established by the St. Mary’s County Fire Board Association; or
2. State Standards:
   a. Maryland State Firemen’s Association written standards; or
   b. Southern Maryland Volunteer Firemen’s Association written Standards.

B. The Emergency Services Committee will then forward the request to the Board of County Commissioners with a recommendation for approval or denial or a statement of no position taken by the Committee.

Section 2. 508 Funds.

A. The Emergency Services Committee shall make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners during the annual budgeting process for the distribution to fire and rescue companies of funds received from the State Fire, Rescue and Ambulance Fund. The Emergency Services Committee shall consider among relevant factors, the failure to meet minimum standards established by:

1. Written standards established by the St. Mary’s County Fire Board Association; or
2. State Standards:
   a. Maryland State Firemen’s Association written standards; or
   b. Southern Maryland Volunteer Firemen’s Association written Standards.

B. The Maryland 508 Funds given to the rescue and ambulance squads/departments shall be equally divided among all departments yearly.

C. The Emergency Services Committee shall establish a uniform method for application and reporting, by fire and rescue companies, for State Fire, Rescue
Section 3. Budgets and Audits

A. Accounting: All fire departments and rescue squads which are recipients of fire tax funds, grants of County general fund appropriations, revolving loan funds, or allocations from the State Fire, Rescue and Ambulance Fund shall maintain their accounting books and records on a uniform basis according to generally accepted accounting principles as established by the Financial Accounting Standards Board’s Standards of accounting and reporting for not-for-profit organizations, and shall utilize accounting software designated by the Emergency Services Committee.

B. Audit Requirements: Fire Departments and Rescue Squads shall be audited annually by a certified public accountant.

C. Reporting: Each year, as directed by the Board of County Commissioners and County Administrator’s Budget instructions, each fire department and rescue squad shall submit a budget for the next fiscal year for review by the Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary’s County.

D. Audit Report: Each fire department and rescue squad shall submit to the Emergency Services Committee an audit report, as required above, at the January meeting. The Emergency Services Committee shall then forward all financial packages to the County within the week following the February meeting.
On November 1, 2005, these Bylaws of the St. Mary’s County Emergency Services Committee were unanimously approved and adopted by the members of the St. Mary’s County Emergency Services Committee pending approval by the Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary’s County, Maryland.

ST. MARY’S COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE

By: R. Keith Fairfax, Chairman

Approved by the Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary’s County, Maryland, this 1st day of November, 2005.

By: Thomas F. McKay, President