

Maryland Department of Emergency Management
Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget
Response to the Department of Legislative Services Analysis

Appropriations Committee
Public Safety and Administration Subcommittee
Delegate Tony Bridges
Monday, February 13, 2023

Introduction

The Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) appreciates this opportunity to update the Committee on the activities of the Department and to respond to the recommendations and requested updates contained in the Operating Budget analysis prepared by the Department of Legislative Services (DLS).

Department Response to DLS Analysis

Operating Budget Summary

Federal and State Cybersecurity Funding

MDEM should comment on how they plan to coordinate with DoIT in the use of funds and sharing of operational responsibilities and if there is any consideration of requesting funds be drawn from the DPA for use by MDEM (DLS Analysis, p. 7).

MDEM and DoIT have worked closely together to establish the Cybersecurity Planning Committee, a chartered entity required by the federal State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program award. The committee is responsible for the completion of a strategic spend plan for the award. MDEM's roles and responsibilities in cybersecurity, as with all hazards facing the State, include supporting planning, training, and exercises for State and local government agencies and coordinating response and recovery efforts. These efforts will be undertaken by the Cybersecurity Preparedness Unit funded in the Governor's Allowance.

MDEM has not been allocated any funding from the Dedicated Purpose Account. Questions related to the Dedicated Purpose Account can be directed to the Department of Information Technology and Department of Budget and Management.

Mesonet

DLS recommends adopting committee narrative to request information on the status of and future budgetary and operational plans for the Mesonet project (DLS Analysis, p. 7).

MDEM acknowledges DLS's recommendation and would like to share some additional information on Maryland Mesonet.

The goal of the Maryland Mesonet is to develop and operate a world-class atmospheric monitoring system to deliver reliable, timely information to residents and enhance critical public safety decision-making. The Maryland Mesonet, by providing reliable, timely, and accurate weather information, will not only enhance life safety through earlier notifications of potential weather impacts, but also will help reduce costs and drive down financial hardships for Maryland residents and businesses during disasters. Benefits of the Maryland Mesonet include:

- Supports decision-making for officials (public health, schools, etc.) and reduces delay in National Weather Service watch/warning/advisory/briefing products through near real-time community-level monitoring
- Quantifying impacts to infrastructure from natural hazards.
- Enhancing public safety planning and identifying long term community risk.
- Data can be leveraged when requesting Presidential Disaster Declarations.
- Enhanced drought, air quality, fire weather monitoring, and climate tracking.
- Sensors provide ground truth, especially in coastal and rural environments.
- The system will reach and impact all corners of the state's diverse geographic and topographic characteristics, particularly critical in underserved communities which exist in areas sensitive to climate change and sea rise.
- The Maryland Mesonet will also provide more data to our emergency management team to continually improve planning and processes.

During last year's budget testimony, MDEM outlined the estimated timeline for Maryland Mesonet. MDEM has provided updates to the timeline in the table below.

Timeframe	Estimated in FY23 Budget	Status Update as of Feb 2023
FY23 Q1	Research and Development for weather station positioning	Initial locations identified, ongoing refinements will continue
FY23 Q2-Q3	Begin station installation process	Developing land use agreement and outlining permitting requirements
FY24 Q2	Mesonet deployed and functioning	Estimated completed deployment of the first 12 sites

Key Observations

1. Federal Disaster Grants

MDEM should comment on if this funding represents reimbursements for applications already submitted or anticipated reimbursement requests that have yet to be submitted to FEMA.

The number referenced in the DLS analysis, 500 projects, is the number of projects submitted at time of the request in December 2022. The end of the event period is determined by the federal government and has not yet been set, and as such subrecipients may continue to submit projects. At the time of this testimony, 752 Public Assistance projects have been submitted for the COVID-19 Disaster and MDEM expects projects will continue to be submitted until the end of the event period.

2. 9-1-1 Board

- *MDEM should comment on whether the issue related to availability of data from phone service companies has been resolved and the timing for the availability of this data (DLS Analysis, p. 12).*
- *MDEM should discuss how it determined the estimated 9-1-1 amounts by jurisdiction, including how the county level surcharge rate was decided (DLS Analysis, p. 12).*

While the 9-1-1 Board has not yet been successful in obtaining the number of phone lines in each county from service providers, MDEM has used historical data to provide

the relevant projections in order to provide the information requested in the 2022 Joint Chairmen's Report.

The DLS analysis reports that MDEM indicated it was difficult to get county by county projections for 9-1-1 fee revenues (p. 11-12). For clarification, projections of county-level fee revenue based on current fee structures are not challenging to provide; rather, it is the impact of a change in county fee that is difficult to project without the number of lines within a given county.

Public Safety Article §1-311 defines the process for how counties and Baltimore City may establish their county 9-1-1 fee. 9-1-1 fees collected by the county under this article may only be used to supplement 9-1-1 maintenance and operation, which is verified through an annual audit requirement. The current maximum fee counties may impose is \$0.75, unless the county can demonstrate the fee for the fiscal year does not provide the necessary revenues to meet the county's 9-1-1 operating costs, in which case they may raise the fee to meet operational needs.

3. Emergency Management Courses and Large-Scale Exercises

MDEM should comment on whether they plan to return to pre-pandemic levels of emergency management courses or whether this reflects a longer term shift in focus (DLS Analysis, p. 14).

As the DLS analysis acknowledges, the pandemic response and subsequent recovery efforts have required an all-hands-on-deck effort from MDEM staff. In addition to response and recovery needs, many providers with whom MDEM works to facilitate training opportunities were not offering courses during 2020 and 2021, or were offering them in very limited capacity.

Training and exercises are a core capability for the Department and one of our most significant support elements to local emergency managers and first response agencies. MDEM is excited to return to pre-pandemic levels of training courses and exercises in CY2023 and beyond; MDEM has plans to facilitate or participate in a minimum of 30 exercises this year across all hazard areas.

Maryland Department of Emergency Management
Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget
Response to the Department of Legislative Services Analysis

Budget and Tax Committee
Public Safety, Transportation, and Environment Subcommittee
Senator Sarah Elfreth
Friday, February 10, 2023

Introduction

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Budget Hearing Follow Up

Budget and Tax Committee
Public Safety, Transportation, and Environment Subcommittee
Senator Sarah Elfreth

During the Public Safety, Transportation, and Environment Subcommittee hearing on February 10, 2023, Chair Elfreth requested additional information related to the chart in the D52 analysis and an explanation for the fluctuations in anticipated revenue.

MDEM believes there is confusion in the analysis between the State 9-1-1 Trust Fund and the county 9-1-1 fee, and MDEM's responses during the hearing were related to the county fee based on the question posed, but the chart provided in MDEM's MFRs and included in the analysis is reflective of the State 9-1-1 Trust Fund. We have endeavored to provide additional clarity to the Subcommittee in this document, and we would be happy to meet with the subcommittee again to answer any additional questions members might have related to this item from the analysis.

State 9-1-1 Trust Fund

The State 9-1-1 Trust Fund ("the Trust Fund") statute has been updated recently through the work of the Next Generation 9-1-1 Commission. In 2019, SB339 (Carl Henn's Law) increased the State portion of the 9-1-1 fee from \$0.25 per bill to \$0.50 per line. Along with this increase, the law greatly expanded the eligible uses of the Trust Fund, giving counties more flexibility to use the Trust Fund to offset significant ongoing equipment costs for Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). The full list of eligible uses of the Trust Fund can be found in [Public Safety Article §1-308](#).

The State 9-1-1 Trust Fund is not disbursed to counties based on a formula. The Trust Fund is available for counties to apply to the Maryland 9-1-1 Board for reimbursement or direct payment of eligible items outlined by statute. The Board reviews and approves projects based on their eligibility within the guidelines of statute.



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Russell J. Strickland | Secretary

Exhibit 7 in the D52 DLS Analysis shows the amount of the state portion of the Trust Fund which has been awarded to the counties. These are based solely on the requests for funding put in by each county PSAP. In order to ensure the Trust Fund is capable of supporting the ongoing needs of PSAPs each year, the 9-1-1 Board requires PSAPs to submit three year plans identifying approximate Trust Fund needs. PSAPs are not limited to projects in these plans, but it aids the 9-1-1 Board in projecting approximate funding needs year over year.

While some costs remain relatively static year over year for PSAPs (e.g. ongoing maintenance for software systems which have been negotiated for five or ten year contract cycles), PSAPs are also eligible to request equipment and other one-time large-cost needs like console replacement, chair replacement, or even full scale 9-1-1 center renovations. That is the reason for the county disbursement fluctuations seen in Exhibit 7.

County Portion of the 9-1-1 Fee

The county portion of the State 9-1-1 fee is collected by the Comptroller's Office and disbursed to the counties. [Public Safety Article §1-311](#) defines the process for how counties and Baltimore City may establish their county 9-1-1 fee. 9-1-1 fees collected by the county under this article may only be used to supplement 9-1-1 maintenance and operation, which is verified through an annual audit requirement. The current maximum fee counties may impose is \$0.75, unless the county can demonstrate the fee for the fiscal year does not provide the necessary revenues to meet the county's 9-1-1 operating costs, in which case they may raise the fee to meet operational needs.