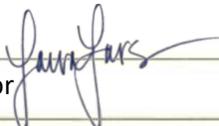


FROM	NAME & TITLE	Laura Larsen, Budget Director 	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Bureau of the Budget and Management Research Room 469, City Hall		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 21-0074 – Office of Emergency Management – Independent Agency		

DATE:

TO

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400

March 21, 2023

Position: Defer to the Office of Emergency Management

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 21-0074, Office of Emergency Management – Independent Agency, the purpose of which is to establish the Office of Emergency Management as an independent agency.

Background

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) prepares the City for major emergencies such as hurricanes, power outages, hazardous materials incidents, and acts of terrorism. Located in the Baltimore City Fire Department, Service 608, OEM manages interagency and public-private sector programs to prevent, mitigate against, and plan for all hazards. OEM also includes 24/7 field response and Citywide coordination for incidents and events that are high risk, prolonged, widespread, or complex. Since 2020, OEM has provided emergency management support for the City’s COVID-19 response. OEM’s Fiscal 2023 budget is \$8.9 million, with \$7.8 million in Federal funds and \$1.1 million in General Fund support, the budget includes funding for 15 full-time positions.

This legislation would make OEM its own agency, with the director nominated by the Mayor and appointed by the Governor of Maryland. OEM has operated in other entities in the City, most recently in Fiscal 2012, OEM was a stand-alone office under the Mayor’s Office. However, in 2014, it was moved back to the Fire Department to address gaps in administrative support for financial and human resources actions.

Jurisdictions across the country operate their equivalent offices in a variety of ways. Some operate under their Fire Department, some operate under a different agency, and some operate under the City Manager or an equivalent position.

Fiscal Impact

The Department of Finance anticipates an annual cost of \$278,037 to establish an independent Office of Emergency Management. Finance anticipates that current operational staff and costs, such as rent and equipment, would be transferred from the Fire budget, which would be budget neutral.

Finance has identified three positions needed for an independent Office, requiring additional funding. These positions are currently supported by Fire’s agency-wide staffing and will cost at least \$278,037, as outlined in the table below.

Position	Total Cost
Fiscal Officer	\$ 92,679
Human Resources	\$ 92,679

Accountant	\$ 92,679
Total	\$ 278,037

Additional costs from this reorganization may be realized based on services and support OEM currently receives from the administrative structure in the Fire Department. Beyond administrative functions, those costs may include equipment and supplies and shared contractual agreements.

Other Considerations

Establishing OEM as a separate agency from the Fire Department may have unintended impacts on personnel and response. OEM is able to respond to emergencies, major incidents, and special events 24/7/365 as a result the Duty Officer program, which has a staff member always on-call. As a result of the current agency structure, Fire Department staff are able to respond on behalf of OEM, which may be impacted if OEM is an independent office. In addition, moving OEM from Fire may impact the current staffing structure, such as shifting personnel from sworn positions to civilian positions, which may impact personnel cost estimates for both agencies, or new residency requirements for certain positions. The Department of Finance defers to the Department of Human Resources, the Fire Department, and OEM on the staffing impacts and can provided an updated fiscal estimate as needed.

Conclusion

The Department of Finance defers to the technical expertise of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the Baltimore City Fire Department in their findings of best practices to establish the Office of Emergency Management as an independent agency. Finance anticipates a fiscal impact of \$278,037 for personnel that would need to be created to support OEM.

For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance defers to the Office of Emergency Management on City Council Bill 21-0074.

cc: Michael Moiseyev
Nina Themelis