


FROM	NAME & TITLE	Robert Cename, Budget Director <i>RC</i>	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Bureau of the Budget and Management Research Room 432, City Hall		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 22-0199 – Firefighter Safety Act		

DATE:

TO

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

May 9, 2022

Position: Defer to Fire

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 22-0199, Firefighter Safety Act, the purpose of which is to require that the Baltimore City Fire Department establish basic operational approaches to risk assessments, require emergency response rules of engagement, supply all fire suppression personnel with digital audio and visual recording devices, and provide an annual report on the agency’s risk management plan.

Background

The Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD) provides 24/7 land and marine fire protection, emergency medical service, emergency rescue, and hazardous material mitigation, responding to more than 320,000 individual fire and medical emergencies annually. The status of these units is monitored and they are repositioned as needed to assure maximum coverage and efficiency, in order to increase resident safety. Innovative measures such as the Medical Duty Officer, Peak-Time Staffing, two-tiered Advanced Life Saving/Basic Life Saving dispatch, and the Mobile Integrated Health Program are utilized to decrease unit response times and increase productivity.

This legislation establishes specific policies and procedures, in addition to requiring all fire suppression personnel be equipped with digital audio and video recording devices.

Fiscal Impact

The Department of Finance anticipates an annual cost of \$1.9 million for the City, based on the ongoing costs of body cameras for the personnel outlined in Section 2 of the legislation.

Currently, two City agencies, the State’s Attorney’s Office (SAO) and the Baltimore City Police Department (BPD) use body cameras. BPD’s annual costs for 2,500 cameras and licenses, which includes the cameras, cloud storage, and other products, is \$3.8 million. Based on this legislation, 1,153 personnel in fire suppression who would be required to be equipped with a body camera. Using the BPD costs as a basis, Finance estimates an annual cost of \$1.9 million for body cameras.

The legislation requires that BCFD appoint a Safety and Risk Management Officer. Based on conversations with BCFD, a position like this is already established within the agency, so there would not be additional costs.

Other Considerations

Finance understands the intent of this legislation, especially considering the tragic deaths of three firefighters in January 2022. However, Finance believes that some of the policies established in this

legislation, such as when personnel may or may not enter a structure, should be determined by the agency and not codified. BCFD is best able to assess the specific policies and adjust them according to best practices and specific needs, which may change over time.

In preparation for this hearing, Finance's Office of Risk Management and Division of Safety was asked to provide details about workers' compensation cases from BCFD and the average pays outs per year from injuries sustained on the scene of fires. That information was not available in time to include in this report, but staff will be present at the hearing to share details.

Conclusion

This legislation requires that the that Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD) establish basic operational approaches to risk assessments, supply all fire suppression personnel to be equipped with body cameras, and provide an annual report to the Mayor and Council. The Department of Finance will attend the hearing for this bill and respond to any fiscal inquiries.

For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance defers to the Fire Department on City Council Bill 21-0199.

cc: Henry Raymond
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