

Open Work Session
Evaluation of Fire Service System-Draft Report
November 21, 2016

Mr. Wayne Strausburg, Director of Administration, and Dr. Harold C. Cohen with TriData LLC came before Council. Mr. Strausburg said they put together a work-study group some months back when they hired TriData. The work-study group was comprised of the President of the Fire Chiefs Association, Marty Skarson, Chief Hoppes and his deputy, Tom Stevenson, Julia Glanz, David Shipley and himself. He said that group has met various times depending on the subject matter and has interfaced with Dr. Cohen. Most of the interface has been with the technical experts, the fire chiefs, and EMS director. He said with the data and the discourse over those months, Dr. Cohen has put together a draft report. The work group met about an hour ago to review the draft report and asked the questions they had. The recommendations that Council will see at the end of the report are the recommendations the work-study group support, but they know there are a lot of questions. Mr. Strausburg said there is a lot of work that needs to be done for the elected leaders from both the City and County to agree upon the next steps and what changes they may or may not make with regard to the financial arrangements. He said he is sure Council will have a lot of questions. Mr. Strausburg said Dr. Cohen would be meeting later today in the same format with the City Council. Mr. Cannon recognized Mayor Jake Day, President Jack Health, and Vice-President Muir Boda in the audience as well as Chief Hoppes.

Dr. Cohen thanked the Council for allowing him to make a presentation. He said it was a challenge for everyone because it exploits some things that had not been explored before, but also uncovered some underlying things that had been around for a while. He said as he mentioned at the workgroup meeting, which he will repeat at the City meeting, he wants everybody on the Council to know that he understands how emotional this is. He commends everyone who participated. He said he knows there are people that agree or disagree with what they are trying to do, but everyone, regardless of their opinions, remained professional and were helpful along the way. He thought that should be noted on the record. He said, basically, the scope of service was coming up with an answer for the additional services that are provided by the City that are not within the City but closest to the City services. They also looked inward with that to see what is the history behind this. He said the history is greater than the technical problem that they were charged with solving. Dr. Cohen said regardless of what you do with the report, he thinks it would be universally told by any consultant that is hired to do this study, that the most critical issue is the access to data and having a centralized data source within public safety throughout the County that can be recognized by the Fire Chiefs, the City, the City Chief, and having a centralized data source that you call your authentic official data, because there are all kinds of databases popping around, all kinds of information, but the bottom line is going to be is it authentic. It is telling you what you need to know and that one place is at the County seat, whether it is information about calls, number of calls, types of calls, response times, but also anything involving the ability to do predictive analysis. Dr. Cohen said all of the data needs to reside in one place. It needs to be accessible by those who are authorized to do so from outside of the organization but it needs to be in one place where everyone can say, this is our official data. He said centralized data is what they call an Alpha to Omega Data Resource and it also allows the County to use whatever standards it wants to determine ethically within the response organizations. He said all of the NFPA standards are very nice standards but with the full understanding that if you look at whether it is NFPA 1710, which is more toward career services, or NFPA 1720 volunteer, we can probably count on our hands the number of fire department and EMS services that actually meet that standard, but it is one of the things that is out there now. One of the biggest problems is that it is difficult to determine dispatch intervals to a really good measurement and, eventually, because the technology is here, when it is deemed appropriate, the CAD

system, the 911 communication center, should be able to automatically populate the reports so that everyone is looking at the same data without having to go back a year or two later and have to hire someone like him to have to try to find it. He said it should be real time. It will take a while to get there, but it is a direction in which we can go. Dr. Cohen said for the designation of areas, he will mention the terms urban, suburban and rural. He said they might not be the terms that Council has assigned to those areas, but when he talks about urban response, it is the City of Salisbury. Suburban responses are the companies that are surrounding the City of Salisbury and rural being everybody else. He said when they analyzed things, not all the times they needed were available and they know that nationwide any time you resort to manual entry of times on reports, the error rate is much higher because sometimes dispatchers have other emergency needs that they have to take care of. Dr. Cohen continued he said response times are the times from when the time the call is entered until the time the first unit is on the scene. He said the times on the chart look a little high, which they are high, but they do not use averages, they use 90th percentiles. He said if it is his job on the line or perhaps an election on the line, he is more comfortable talking about 90th percentiles because he will be able to tell more of the people what the expectations are, where averages are just that. Dr. Cohen said the other thing they cannot tell is exactly which times of day are better than others because of the dating issues. For example, with the City of Salisbury, they know after a certain time period, a couple of stations switch from career to primary volunteer. They cannot tell the efficiency of that because the data is not yet available. He said if he breaks things down further, he can provide the 90th percentile by zone for each of the stations, at least in the urban and suburban areas. Dr. Cohen continued he said automatic aid is when the City automatically is dispatched to what Mr. Strausburg refers to as the donut hole, across district boundaries. When a unit is specifically requested for far away responses, it is called mutual aid. He said automatic aid calls are increasing from City to County and mutual aid calls, the specific calls for distant responses, are increasing from County to City, but they are also a wash; there is no real difference that TriData can tell. He said it really is mutual; it is not one sided. Dr. Cohen said what they tried to do is come up with some projection models to look at for the future. He said there are a couple of problems, one of the years showed a decrease in calls, which he does not think happened. He said all the data came from the 911 Center, so they took the first step in saying this is the authentic data that should be used and provided some projection models, high and low. They used two different mathematical models, one being a curved model and the other being more a vertical model to come up with highs and lows for the next few years. He said, generally, with the City of Salisbury, they see a slight up-tic in the EMS responses, and they also note that they will probably need an additional EMS unit in the future. He said the highs and lows for the urban and suburban areas are basically a wash. They do have one question, specifically about Hebron. He said they are not comfortable with the Hebron numbers, but that may be a mathematical issue that will have to be looked at. He said in the rural areas, there is a wider swing in their predictions, which is very logical because a one or two call difference is much bigger on the Westside or in Allen than it is in Salisbury. They have a wider model, but, generally, what they are looking at is somewhat of a steady situation in what they are predicting. He said fire calls are much easier. He said with fire calls it may not necessarily always be fire. Many of the fire calls are fire apparatus assisting such as an ambulance, when they are first response because they are closer or they are needed because of the rescue patient terrain or the degree of acuity of the patient illness. When they talk about an increase in calls, he does not think the increase in Salisbury is because there are more fires in the City. He said there is no evidence to believe that is the situation, but more hazard responses are occurring. Dr. Cohen continued he said the big financial question, which is why he is here today, is if all the calls that the City is providing into the County if there a fair method for reimbursement and, if so, what is that and how do you administer those types of things. He said they did the best they could with being provided the information. They recommend that the cost allocation be per call, at least to start. He said some people may suggest looking at the taxes and things like that, but that is more long-term

and a heavier political process. The best way for the citizens and the government officials to understand this is to come up with a model that actual success can be put on the road. He said not being careless, combining stewardship with the combination of good patient care and good fire and rescue services to the citizens. The other thing is how much does each call cost. Dr. Cohen said, obviously, with career services providing services, it is going to cost more money because 85 or 90 percent of the career services budget is human resource cost. He said that is why fire services has been so fortunate to have volunteers for so many years, but challenges are increasing and things are changing, which he thinks Council is well aware of. Dr. Cohen said the other issue is, in some of the more rural fire departments, the cost per call is higher because you have less calls. Some of the fixed costs are the same, such as gasoline and the fire engine, the rural areas pay the same price even though they run to less calls. Dr. Cohen said they have to be very careful in how the information is interpreted. The cost per call for EMS and Fire, if you take into consideration the areas that have high volume career representation will be higher than the suburban areas, which is using a combination of career volunteers, more part-timers than before, also the rural areas will cost more per call because they run fewer calls, the cost per call for fire is the same. He said for rural areas, if you take all the costs and money being reimbursed, they show a slight deficit. He said before drastic action is taken to please consider that the data accuracy may not be where the officials want it to be. Dr. Cohen continued he said the next step they had to do is figure out what is the true deficit of what the City is providing that they are not being reimbursed through some mechanism. He said by looking at all of this information and putting it together, they came up with \$193 per call. He said that is a very general estimate as they had very general numbers. He said, eventually, if the City and County and the fire service want to adopt this type of model, a more precise calculation will need to be done because the billing agencies can then get involved and give a more precise figure, but he thinks he is pretty close. He said, basically, for anything to work, any reimbursement model, even one that is not shown, it is going to need consensus between the County and City. He said when both governments find a consensus model, it will signal to the fire and EMS leadership that is what is expected from them. He said he was very straightforward with everyone on this. He said the leadership from both governments is looking to the elected officials for not just a solution but to reach a consensus and make decisions for the future of the County and City. Dr. Cohen continued he said they figured what the City is spending depends on whether or not the person is transported. He said one of the things that is not in the preliminary report, but will be in the final report, is whatever model is chosen, the legal departments need to talk with the Center for Medicare Services to make sure they do not violate any anti-kickback provisions. He said he did some of the investigations, so, unfortunately, he cannot ask, as he does not have standing to ask. If the County wants an advisory opinion, it has to come from the government, the agencies or their legal representatives. He said the legal people may say they are comfortable, but he had to include that in the report. He said they suggested three basic models. If you look at the models from a business perspective, they are basically risk models. How much risk does anyone want to take. The simplest is the \$193 payment per call. He said it gets complicated in that most of the non-transport or no patient calls do not get anything. The City does expand resources when they have to go find a patient or treat the patient and then they are not transported. He said in the first model, the County would pay the stipend and the City would retain control of the finances, meaning the City may choose whatever they want to go after for collection the best way they can. He said on the opposite end is what they call the deep discount model. That is a model in where the County and the City would come to an agreement. He said he used the number of \$220 per call in the report, but it could be any number. The County pays the City. The City says, thank you, they are not worried about it anymore and the County would get control of the billing. The County would try to get as much as they can; there is a yield. This model reduces the risk for the City. The third model is where the County pays a minimal fee to the City, but the City is basically taking all of the risk again and pursuing collections. He said the \$302,650 shown on the power point slide is in addition to

what the City would normally collect. There are many offshoots of many models. He said even if you buy into the concept, he is sure leadership will make a recommendation based on the theme, which is fine.

Dr. Cohen said for fire service there is an unreimbursed gap of \$288.95 and that is what is to be given. The City would be running the assignment that is needed to do the job. He said it is a much easier way. Dr. Cohen continued he said fire is not as complicated. He then went over the 10 recommendations TriData is suggesting. He said the first recommendation and the most important one is accurate record keeping, data storage, data manipulation, and predictive analysis type of things. He said it needs to be a priority of the County to do this at the 911 Center. He said he understands it is expensive, however, the returns that it will provide when it comes to having the data will really help with some of the relational issues. He said a lot of them are because of not being sure and having to trust and verify; the verify part is hard right now.

The third recommendation has to do with the amount of money that is provided to the volunteer companies by the County and, at this point, there should be a fixed amount provided. The County units, even if they run fewer calls, are paying the same amount for fire engines, truck companies, medical units and for maintenance agreements. He said to do it on a per chance basis is probably not the best way to go at this point; they cannot recommend it. He said accuracy of information is paramount also financially. Dr. Cohen said they did the best they could, which he thinks they are in range, but the County Fire Chiefs needs to work with the Director of Finance. He did have discussions in looking for more accurate and meaningful financial information. It is not a question of whether people are being honest or not, he cannot even get that far. He said he thinks people are being honest but there is really not enough information to tell him everything to really get precise.

The next recommendation is looking at some of the other options. They do not think new volunteer stations near Salisbury will help solve the problem. Opening up more stations probably is not within goodness especially when the City has units that are close and in looking at what is best for the patient. He said it is a long hall, it has a lot of history, but the lines need to blur. Dr. Cohen said one of the things they believe that will help out is whoever is picked to come up with finalizing the agreements, should use a third party that everybody is comfortable with, which he would be happy to do, as that is part of what he does for a living, but it needs to be someone who everyone is comfortable with to serve as intermediary, not to make decisions, and will help both the County and City achieve censuses, which is another issue. The ability for the public safety professionals and volunteers to reach a consensus is eventually what this is all going to come back to and it cannot be ignored anymore.

The other recommendation is a comprehensive study of fire and EMS service in both the City and County to see exactly where things are going. The bottom line is basically some type of reimbursement to the City for those calls provided. He said it will be economically the best thing to do and it will continue to enhance the ability to have good patient care. It will be fair and it will start to foster working relationships, which are becoming important in the collaborative processes.

Dr. Cohen thanked Council for allowing them to prepare the report. He said it is important for people to exercise leadership and for the elected officials to have the expectations of the public safety officials. He said that is the first real thing needed to get the message across. He has been very clear with everyone he has talked to in that aggressive action in the modernization of the 911 Center and achieving consensus on standards is extremely important. The more the consensus on all the standards, the more accurate the reimbursement models can be in that you are getting exactly what you pay for. He said he also mentioned the closest unit response issues. He asked Council to use the report as a guide for the future. Dr. Cohn provided his contact information. He said the final report will be completed and transmitted to those they are contractually advised to transmit the report to for distribution.

Mr. Joe Holloway said he had a couple of questions. He said Dr. Cohn mentioned the importance of data and, on page 38 of the August 16, 2016, draft report it says the City of Salisbury provided a copy of its 2015 budget report, but it does not have the needed detail. They were advised that needed detail was not available. Mr. Joe Holloway said, at some point in time, when you are doing a study like this, you would think that you would need all of the information. He then asked Dr. Cohen if he was instructed to do the report without the full details, to which Dr. Cohen responded, we should more correctly say that none of the companies had the level of detail that was necessary to do the study, not just one or the other, and that is why they think it is so important that the Fire Chiefs get together with the County Finance Director and the City Finance Manager, so they can assist with what financial data is necessary to be accurate. He said the more accurate the data, the more accurate the reimbursement models and predictive analysis can be. He said this area is by far not the worst he has seen over the years. Mr. Joe Holloway then asked if at some point in time if Dr. Cohen questioned can they do a proper analysis without the needed data, to which Dr. Cohen responded, yes, and the decision, which was agreed to by many, is that they have to go with the information they have. Mr. Joe Holloway said Dr. Cohen emphasized a lot about the data and how expensive it is, and it needs to be done through the County's 911 System. He said in the whole report there is no value on the 911 System that the County funds and pays. He said everything has a value but there was not a value on the 911 System. Mr. Joe Holloway asked why was that not done, to which Dr. Cohen responded, if this was a comprehensive study they would have absolutely put a value on it, but in reviewing the scope of work, they were not asked to do that at this point. Mr. Joe Holloway clarified that if he was asked to do a comprehensive study and the value of the 911 System was provided, if the numbers in the report would drastically change, to which Dr. Cohen responded, no, he does not think so. He said he does not want to give anybody misleading examples, so this is only given by example, not a recommendation. There are some counties that run a 911 System, and they charge various entities for their service, even private, especially private ambulance service. They do the dispatch and they have to have the data because they charge for that service. Dr. Cohen said no one mentioned that, or started talking about that with this project, so having the value of the 911 System would just be knowing what that value is. He said what he is comfortable with saying is that it is a piece that is valuable because without step one, regardless how much it cost or how expensive it is, if step one is not there, he can guarantee you that the next steps down the road will not be accurate. Mr. Joe Holloway said he is still not comprehending why Dr. Cohen did not include the value of the 911 center in the report, to which Dr. Cohen responded, it was not included in the scope of work. Mr. Joe Holloway clarified that without the value of the 911 System in the report, it does not give a clear picture of what they are trying to decide. Dr. Cohen said it gives you a true picture when it comes to provision of care. It could be said that knowing the value of the 911 System and what you are spending could change some of the figures. Dr. Cohen said if the County wants to charge for services or tries to judge how much they should charge, then yes, that could be figured out. Mr. Joe Holloway said that is not what he is implying. He said if you are evening out the values of the services that are being provided, the County is providing services to the City and that was not mentioned in the study. Mr. Joe Holloway said the only thing that is mentioned in the report is that the City is providing services to the County. He said, of course, the County goes into the City but there is no value on what the County is doing for the City as far as 911 services. Mr. John Hall said he wants to follow-up on what Mr. Joe Holloway said. He said it is interesting that almost all the recommendations that are in the report mention, margin of error, decrease calls, EMS high/low, financial challenge, data accuracy, inaccurate data, he said this is on almost every page, which makes it very hard and it says numerous times in the

report that there is a 10 percent margin of error. Mr. Hall said Dr. Cohen does not have all the information he needs to make an accurate report. It is very unfortunate but he thinks in the long run, they will see the areas that will get the most attention is the City and the rural and suburban areas will get the least attention because they tend to be more in the margin of error. Dr. Cohen said what Council sees is the generation of business. The generation of volume is in that area. At this point, the City does not serve the rural areas at all. The rural areas because of where they are there is a lower number of calls that are self-contained. He said the first recommendation they made is so important in that the 911 System be upgraded is the crux of anything they do. He said the second part is a recommendation that the County continue the fixed reimbursement because of exactly what was said in that if you just do it by call, the rural areas tend to get ignored. He said one of the problems is that years ago when you did not have as many calls, as many training requirements, people could fight the fires and do all the fundraising, but it is getting harder to do that. If you want people to be ready for the calls, you cannot make them sell tickets and run weekend events. Mr. Hall asked Dr. Cohen what other things he would add to the final report to make it more equitable other than the value of the 911 System. Dr. Cohen said he does not think it is that far off in what is in the report. He said a comprehensive study would obviously be more accurate because it would look at some other things, such as emergency management input into the fire and EMS service. Dr. Cohen said there are some other issues, such as how much should the City volunteer companies get, should that be treated differently or not, and all the other social and political issues that this report is going to stir up and has already stirred up. Mr. Kilmer asked Dr. Cohen to walk Council through how the reimbursement for services would go in terms of billing. He said say you live in the City limits and you are in the County and pay for service, you have a fire call or emergency call. Mr. Kilmer asked Dr. Cohen if the City can bill the insurance providers, to which Dr. Cohen responded, it is a little more complicated than that. Whatever unit handles the call is the billing agent. It may be the City or, if Fruitland on a busy day comes far into Hebron's area, Fruitland would do the billing because it is their unit. He said unless that changes, they would continue to be able to do that. His models are just talking about those times the City runs into the first due area that is in the County, or as Mr. Strausburg calls it, the donut hole. Dr. Cohen said that is all they have been asked to study when it comes to this report. Mr. Kilmer then asked what would the patient be charged, to which Dr. Cohen responded, one of the things to consider is that you could charge anything you want. It is being able to get reimbursed for the services. Dr. Cohen said for example, a \$900 charge for a complicated patient call, advance life support call, may be very worthy, but Medicare may say this is worth \$498. If you are going to accept Medicare money, you can the bill 20% copay but you cannot go after anything else. If the person had absolutely no insurance, is a cash customer, then you can go after the rack rate. He provided the example as when you go to a hotel and behind the door are rack rates for the hotel room. He said the rack rate is what is charged but, if the insurance companies only give a percentage, it is a right off. Dr. Cohen said most of the insurance companies are moving toward accepting the Medicare rates and that is why they advocate to never do your own billing; let a billing professional do it as there is too much risk involved. Dr. Cohen said sorry it is that complicated, but it is that complicated. Mr. Cannon said Dr. Cohen mentioned his scope of work. He then asked Dr. Cohen to define his scope of work, to which Dr. Cohen responded, the contract was the consensus between County and City officials. They also offered stages of the project, which if Council thinks it would be a worthwhile investment and they think TriData is the group to do the work, they would be honored to do that. He did give the City and County the option to say that maybe they need to look in another direction. Mr. Cannon said the report mentions twice that this is a starting point. He said on all the

discussions that Council had, especially the work session Council had when they were considering budgeting for the study, he thought the study was to bring full circle all the issues that were on the table, but this has left Council with just as many questions as there was before. Dr. Cohen said if you remember back to the first time he was allowed to appear before Council, the first statement he made was this study will ask more questions than give you answers. Dr. Cohen said this study will setup a pattern for the future. It will lay down expectations for the chief officers by the elected and appointed officials to say we expect you to get this done. Dr. Cohen said that is the great advantage of this study. He said they have been quite candid with everyone as this is not a panacea. He did not expect the County or City to make a massive investment in TriData until they could prove something to the jurisdictions. Mr. Cannon said the County thought they did. He said Chief Hoppes came up with a very in depth report in trying to evaluate the costs that the City incurred and what compensations he felt were necessary. He thought it was a very thorough report. He said they were trying to come up with something that was more broad based and 90% in defining that area of a broad based evaluation is the County's input. Mr. Cannon said this report does not reflect anything as far as what the County's efforts are in addressing the costs. He said that was the great issue that was left unanswered. Dr. Cohen said, if the data were made available to them, he would be happy to look at it to see if it does make a difference. He said what is being reviewed now is the draft report. Mr. Cannon said he thinks the County should have a good majority of the data that they would need, at least as a starting point. Dr. Cohen said he was told that in the beginning of the project but found out different. He said he does not mean that to be accusatory. He does not get upset over it as more places than not, do not have the data. Mr. Cannon said because he is the expert you would have to provide some guidance and say before I get started with this project here is exactly what I need, and before I get started I need to make sure I have these calculations from all the different departments. Dr. Cohen said TriData did ask for the information and it is in their proposal. He does not want to go through blaming anyone, because he is used to what he saw. For someone who does not do this all the time, he would have the same questions, and he would think they are legitimate questions, however, the lack of data from everyone, it does not matter if you are career or volunteer, municipal or rural, it is universal because in the past it was never expected of anybody as it is today. We now devolve in the practice of medicine outside of the hospital in going from the basic defender of fire and rescue service to getting more involved in prevention and community risk reduction. It is now being demanded in the fire service. Mr. Joe Holloway thanked all the folks that worked on the study from the fire service, the Mayor, and Executive Culver's Office. He said this needs to get resolved, as this is something that has been brewing for a long time. Mr. Joe Holloway said the County pays a firm to do an audit every year, and his disappointment in the study and his first thought when reading the study was if the auditors came back to the County saying they did an audit, and they did the best they could with what they had, the County would be really disappointed. He said maybe the County did not pay enough for what it got, but this does not look like a thorough study to him. Mr. Cannon said if you are talking about 20% of the calls are made regarding fire as opposed to EMS, he was really anxious to see what the percentage of volunteers are going out on the calls, what is the percentage of paid, and those types of expenses. He was looking for that type of profile as to what the true costs might be. Also what the equipment compensation might be whether it is gas or overhead, whether it is the vehicles and the ancillary services that go with it. Mr. Cannon asked Dr. Cohen if he was suggesting with the EMS expenses if what was not compensation or reimbursed that the debt that was left out there if he was suggesting that is something the County would also be responsible for as well. Dr. Cohen said that was one of the main points of the study and

that is to come up with and determine what the gap between what the City was getting for the services they were providing in the County and coming up those numbers to make up that gap. He said that was the crux of what the study was, and he thinks to the best of their ability they were able to provide that information for the jurisdictions in the limited area of what they were assigned to do. He said he thinks this study will help the jurisdictions get started and get moving in a direction from a level playing field. Mr. Cannon said he is not sure where the County goes from here. Mr. Kilmer said there are the recommendations. He then asked what are the next steps. Is the Council and Executive going to meet and go over the recommendations and agree on how to go forward? Executive Culver said this is the first time he has heard the report also. He is sure everyone will sit down and go over the study and decide what the next steps are going to be. Mayor Jake Day said he has two thoughts. He said in looking all the way back when the City and County first started to have a conversation about the soon to expire but not expired Fire Service Agreement, there were a couple of variables. One of the variables was the basic data and what they were going on at the time was something that was assembled by the City of Salisbury. The hope was to get a third party, jointly funded, and they could say here are our numbers and it may be different than what the City of Salisbury produced, but it would be something everyone could trust. Mayor Day said he trusts what the Chief produced, but they wanted to make sure of the accuracy. Mayor Day said he thinks the question of trust is still on the table given some of the questions that came today. He said the other thing he wants to address is the 911 Center and other services provided. He said Maryland is not setup like Virginia. Our municipalities are not independent entities within the County, so the question of whether or not that is a service provided to the business of the City Government of Salisbury, he thinks is answered as there is no service provided by the 911 Center unless a call goes out from the Mayor's Office saying they called 911 from the office. He said Wicomico County citizens that live inside the City limits of Salisbury or the businesses located in the Salisbury limits pay for that service as they pay County taxes, and they pay exactly the same amount of County taxes as someone outside of the City limits. He said to include that muddies the water because that is a level playing field no matter if you live in a municipality or not. He said outside of that there is an additional service that the members of the corporation of the City of Salisbury have agreed to pay for and that is a paid fire service. Mayor Day said, however, the issue we have is that it is going to people who are not paying those membership dues, city taxes. He said that is the inequity that has to be addressed. He said whatever is provided inside and out of as a blanket service by the County through County taxes is one thing, but the things that are on top of that is where there is an inequity. Mr. Cannon said that may be, but there are two challenges between the City and the County and that is the Fire Service Agreement and tax differential. He said both of them need to be addressed. He then asked where do you apply the 911 Call Center. Do you apply the 911 Call Center to the Fire Service Agreement or apply it to whatever facts and figures get into the tax differential? He said it should all dovetail at one point in time. Mayor Day said he thinks as long as the County operates the 911 Center, and no municipalities manage their own, he assumes County taxes are paying for it and that would be something that is provided across the board. He said in response to an evaluation of a tax differential, they would say that everyone gets that service so there is not a differential for it. Mr. Joe Holloway said he understands what Mayor Day is saying but there are 70,000 people that live outside the City and 30,000 that live inside, so there is a differential in the amount of taxes that are paid and would have to be a figure that someone would need to come up with, if you are going to look at the 911 Center as being of a value in the formula. Mayor Day said every single individual is paying the same rate and that is what it comes down to whether they are inside or outside to get that protection of their property by

dialing 911 and getting someone to answer the telephone. Executive Culer said there is a long way to go on this yet. He said he thinks we are confusing fire service and tax differential, which he would like to keep those things separate. Executive Culver said he does not understand the data part not being there, but he will find out more about that situation. He said he read the report and what troubles him is that Dr. Cohen took the costs and just divided the cost by the number of calls, and he could have had an accountant do that in the Finance Department. He is looking for something aimed at fire service rather than a division of the total costs. Dr. Cohen said if that is what they did, then yes, he would agree that he should be disappointed, but when you look at the number of calls, they had to differentiate the levels of calls, they had to differentiate the mileage for transportation, and they had to differentiate the extent of the service provided, if there was transport or no transport. He said if you look into the report, they even mention once or twice it is not as easy to divide the number of calls, to do simple mathematical accounting. He said the same thing with the issues with all the response times. Executive Culver said he is just going by what is in the report as he highlighted that section where it says just that. Dr. Cohen said the issue with response times and interval data and things like that, is that you cannot just add the pieces together as it just does not give you the accurate results. He said it is very complicated. Executive Culver said he is talking about dollars, not response times, as it is two different things. Dr. Cohen said he would like to assure everyone that they did more than division. Executive Culver said there is a lot of work to do, and he knows the Mayor and Council will be willing to sit down and go from there. Mayor Day said he has two closing thoughts. One is in moving forward, the City certainly wants to meet in whatever forum or setting is appropriate. They are open to whatever process the County wants to move forward with. Secondly, he also wants to add, in regards to the lack of data issue, there was a point in time during the process the City was asked the question about providing more financial information, and he remembers having a conversation with Mr. Keith Cordrey, the Finance Director, and he said let's make sure we give TriData everything, and the response he got was they have given them everything. Their auditors have given them everything, all that there is, receipts, etc., you name it. He does not know what more there is to give. He does not know what each fire station may have to give. He does not know what they keep on hand, but he would expect they would have detailed records and would be able to produce them. Mr. Cannon said, on the other side, as far as TriData's group is concerned, they would have made a statement such as on October 13th TriData made a request for this information and none came in. He said some chronological order of efforts that were made and refuted that they could not finish the project. Dr. Cohen said perhaps one of the things they saw was, as true as what Mr. Cannon is saying, for them to continue to introduce conflict accusations, etc., he would rather for people be upset with him and TriData but move this process forward. Dr. Cohen said this was never a forensic audit, as they were never asked to do that. He said the wagons need to be pointed in one direction and everybody moving, no matter how fast or slow. Dr. Cohen said for him to accuse people or look like they are accusing people, he thinks they would have done more harm than good. Mr. Cannon said he would disagree with him because they are all professionals, and he thinks if he went to the Executive and said he was having trouble getting the data, he would assume the Executive would get the data or at least have a really good reason as to why not. Dr. Cohen said if the data existed but some of it does not. He said the other part of it and he consulted with Mr. Strausburg, who has been very good to him, but they had to make a decision on what do they do and move forward was the answer. Dr. Cohen said whether it is good news or bad news that is where they are. This was not a forensic audit, they are all professionals, but the volunteer corporations did not want to have anything to do with him, and they try not to start newspaper battles. He said in moving forward they wanted to come out of this with a

report with solutions on how to move forward. He thinks the jurisdictions can move forward if they can get past those first couple of recommendations. Mr. Joe Holloway asked how far off was Chief Hoppes's reimbursement recommendations compared to this report. Executive Culver said if you add the \$1,029,000 and something, when it was started the Chief came to them with \$2.2 million. Dr. Cohen said Chief Hoppes's work was good, no question about it, but if you look at things like a payment for fire stations, payment for other types of services that may or may not be used versus the exact services that you are getting. Their opinion was to go in this direction, which he thinks the Mayor would be fine with. Mayor Day said he thinks that is fair because the members of that municipal corporation have said they want this level of service, and they are going to pay City taxes for it. He thinks that is a reasonable thing to say. Mayor Day thanked the County Council and Executive. He said this matter is further along in the discussion process since 2014 when the agreement expired. Mr. Cannon said he wants to get this resolved. If the County is going to be responsible for making payments, he would not shy away from that, as you pay for what you owe. The compensation method that is being used now is years old, and he is right in that it has not been reevaluated and it has to be. Mr. Cannon said if there are services that the County owes for, then he thinks the Executive and members of the Council feel that this should be paid and he just wants to know what the real science is and how they can get to that exact number. Dr. Cohen said he cannot agree more and what they have suggested in vesting the responsibility in the Chief's people who are running the organization, not just operationally, but being the stewards, the more they can get together and come up with standards and guidelines, not only helps in response and taking care of people, but it is a better target on how much should be reimbursed. He said, as the Mayor said, right now this is just a general start. If six months down the road, the Chiefs say for this type of emergency, this is the unit we need and, if the City wants to send more, then that is an operation decision. The stewardship decision is what you are going to get reimbursed because the jurisdictions have agreed to it. Mr. Joe Holloway said in the end the Council has to look out for the citizens.

Open Work Session
Evaluation of Fire Service System-Draft Report
November 21, 2016



John T. Cannon, President

Absent



Matt Holloway, Vice President

Absent



Ernest F. Davis, District 1



Marc Kilmer, District 2

Absent


Larry W. Dodd, District 3



John B. Hall, District 4



Joe Holloway, District 5



Matthew E. Creamer, Council Administrator