

**Open Work Session
May 2, 2017
Station One Volunteer Firefighters**

Mr. Wayne Strausburg, Director of Administration, Chief Joe Morris, Wicomico County Fire Chiefs President, and Chief David Beach, Fire Station Number 5, Chairman of Wicomico County Fire Chiefs Radio Committee came before Council. Mr. Cannon said Chief Morris prefaced a lot of what he had to say during the public comments. Mr. Cannon said the purpose of being here tonight is to try to get a good idea on what the reasoning was in decision making, making the decision to recognize Station One, and where they are as far as the perspective of the County as a whole. Mr. Strausburg said, the County and the City executed, on April 7, 2017, a new Fire Service Agreement. He said they have been operating for almost ten years without a Fire Service Agreement. He said the Fire Service Agreement, in Paragraph B1, it stipulates that any change in the City's fire district existing as of the date of execution, have to be approved by the City, by the County, and by the Chiefs Association. He said the Chiefs Association approved the change in Fire District One. He said that change, of course, is now subject to appropriation, and it will require an appropriation by the County, and a recognition of that change, and it will require an acceptance by the City. Mr. Strausburg continued, he said the Fire Service Agreement calls for an annual appropriation to the City based on the most recent calendar years. He said, for first call dispatches, the appropriations for City Stations One, Two and Sixteen is \$950,000 for Fiscal Year 2018. He said that is set, so that appropriation cannot be changed without voiding the contract, or without voiding the agreement. He said any appropriation for the proposed new district would be incremental to the post 2018 budget, and Executive Culver offered that he will put forward that amendment. Mr. Strausburg said the amendment would basically increase the budget by about \$408,000. He said they increased the appropriation to the 11 volunteer stations by \$45,000 each for enhanced ambulance service, if they take all the appropriations that they make to the 11 companies and divide it by 11 companies, it comes out to about \$408,000. He said they are looking at an incremental \$408,000 if they are not including the \$300,000 that they set aside for the airport. He said the manner in which they arrived at \$300,000 for the airport was they have a fairly good understanding of what a turnkey operation would cost at the airport. He said their Airport Director, Dawn Veatch, has a lot of experience in that area, and has a fairly good estimate of what it would cost on a monthly basis. He said the Piedmont Agreement expires in November, so the County essentially pro-rated what they thought it would cost the County for November through the end of the fiscal year, assuming that they do not negotiate a landing fee structure with Piedmont Airlines. He said the original agreement years ago by which Piedmont agreed to have their mechanics serve as the airport fire and rescue team, was that the County would waive landing fees. He said they have not had that negotiation

and that discussion with Piedmont yet. He said they would anticipate doing that rather soon. Mr. Strausburg said that is about as much as he can tell Council right now. He said he provided them with quite a bit of background, they have the Fire Service District One map, they had David Church with GIS map out the fire service calls, the EMS calls, and the first call dispatches. He said they mapped those out so Council can graphically see where the dispersion of the calls are.

Mr. Cannon said now that it has been stated that there will be an amended budget to whatever extent that is going to occur, he said that brings up the question as to exactly what are the specifics for this volunteer station. He asked if this volunteer station is going to be positioned at the airport? He said these are the issues that they are going to have to discuss. If the funding is being committed, that is an integral part of that. He asked if it was going to be at the airport, if not, where is it going to be, and how will any agreement be made between what they have now in the Fire Service Agreement with the City of Salisbury, as to the territory being covered, and how much of that is going to be mutual aid. He asked how much of that is going to be per call basis, and in what areas. He said it was mentioned earlier about if Parkside High School were to catch on fire. Is that a mutual aid? Is that a per call basis? He said that is the budget. Mr. Strausburg said none of the fire chief's involved in this discussion over the past several months indicated that they would not engage in mutual aid with the other fire stations. He said he will let these professionals address that. He said mutual aid is not something that is funded directly through the budget. Mutual aid is something that these stations provide to one another, and they cover those costs within their operating budgets. He said mutual aid is a separate and distinct discussion. Mr. Strausburg continued, he said the real discussion will be who responds to first call in District One, and the boundary that was established by the Fire Chiefs Association last week. The new proposed district would include out of Station One, the Bypass eastward. He said inside the Bypass would continue to be first call for City Station One. He said that is the reason he had the GIS Department map those first calls for Council so they can get an idea of what the first call dispersion is. He said there is one map for fires and the other map is for EMS. Mr. Kilmer asked if that territory is correct, to which Chief Morris responded, no, that is what the City and Mr. Bob Culver came to an agreement on. He said that is what they were having issues with at this time. He said what they voted to do, and this is the motion verbatim, if facts and specifics are not mutually agreed upon by July 1st, was to turn Station One's existing Company Number One's existing County territory over to them. That is what they agreed to do. Chief Morris said some of the issues, when this started, are the airport was not even involved. It was brought up, but it was not involved. The airport was given up by the City of Salisbury. Parsonsburg Fire Department graciously, and a lot of people thought they bit off more than they could chew, took over the responsibility for the airport. Mr. Joe Holloway asked who thought they bit off more than they could chew, was that the opinion of the Chiefs Association? Chief Morris said, it

was the opinion of a lot of people at the time, it was not the Chiefs Association. Mr. Joe Holloway then asked if it was members of the fire department, to which Chief Morris responded, yes. Mr. Strausburg said they need to be sure they are not confusing ARF with the first response at the airport, as ARF is completely different. Chief Morris said, exactly, that was their understanding. He said it was the understanding that they need to hire their people at the airport, and Parsonsburg Fire Department takes care of that district. He said if Parsonsburg Fire Company and the County Executive come to some kind of agreement through the Chiefs Association, then that is fine. He said as far as the Chiefs Association is concerned, that is Parsonsburg's Fire District. He said the other things that came up during the discussion, is that they were told it was the Bypass and out from the Bypass, and Mr. Bob Culver was corrected because he was at this meeting, by Salisbury's representative, he said no it is not the Bypass. He said within that, outside the Bypass, there was an incident with a contract at the Shorebird Stadium two days after this supposed agreement was reached. He said the Shorebird Stadium is outside the Bypass. He said then they asked for the specifics. He said nobody expects City Station One to sit there and not respond if somebody is hurt over at Parkside High School. He said, or the Civic Center, it is huge, it has taken every fire station in the County and then some to take care of that. He said for that to come up, it is a point, but it is ridiculous to think that the Radio Committee would even go that route. He said a lot of people ask what the Radio Committee is. The Radio Committee consists of a representative of each talk group. He said the members are the City of Salisbury, Deputy Chief Lee Smith; it was Assistant Chief Cory Polidore, but when he resigned from the City of Salisbury, he gave up that position and Chief Morris had to appoint somebody else because he was no longer in that district. He said Chief Beach is the Chairman and Fire Chief of Hebron Fire Department; Robin Townsend is on it for the center. He has 25-30 years as a Fire Chief of Fruitland; Billy White is on there from Sharptown; Eric Tyler is on there from Parsonsburg and he has been on for a while. Chief Morris said there is a lot of experience on this Radio Committee, and he sits on it just to advise and talk about Bylaws, get perspective, but he does not vote. They do the voting. Mr. Cannon said what Council is trying to differentiate, to simplify, is the decision that was made in recognizing the volunteers. The County appreciates the County Volunteers and what they do. Council just has to make some very definite decisions. He said the City of Salisbury services Salisbury for the most part. Fruitland and Delmar have their districts as well. For the most part a lot of the other towns have their specific fire departments that address that particular town or municipality. That is the basic beginning structure of a fire station, for the most part. He said the question on the Station One Volunteers is they do not have a specific town or municipality they represent. He said what Council is trying to figure out before the County makes a \$400,000 and some investment, they need to very clearly know where this is going, what is this money going towards, and what areas it is servicing. Mr. Cannon said it does not have that fundamental item of a town it represents. He asked where exactly does this

fit in, whereas it is not a redundancy of services that are already being supplied by the other fire stations. Chief Morris said they would like to know too because every map they have seen there has been an argument over what was agreed to, and what was not agreed to. He said out of frustration, at the second meeting, they asked for that and nobody had it, and nobody clarified where this motion came from. Chief Morris said sometimes you have to get people motivated. He said some of the maps that they looked at, not just County Station One and City Station One, the City being inside the Bypass and everything else; some of those maps had territory that is not even being talked about, or has anything to do with what is going on here. Chief Morris said going to the auspices of the City of Salisbury, one map had Avalon Park being taken from Delmar, which is not Delmar's fire district. He said then Chief Beach was handed seven more stipulations from the Mayor as recently as last Tuesday. He said regarding the agreement between the City and the County, the message they are getting is even if they have agreed to something, if this is what they agreed to that is fine, but it does not have the City of Salisbury's Fire Chief's signature on it, and it does not have Cory Polidore's signature on it as the Chief of Company Number One, nor does it have Eric Tyler's signature on it as the Chief responding out to the airport, which is their point. He said they want this over with. They have other things to take care of but this was pushed to them to handle, and they are going to handle it the best way they can get it done. Mr. Joe Holloway asked if he was saying that there is not a map that is agreed on, to which Chief Morris responded, there is a map that the City, the Mayor and he guesses the City Council or just the Mayor, he is not sure, and Mr. Bob Culver agreed on. Mr. Joe Holloway asked if the Chief's Association is in agreement with that map, to which Chief Morris responded, no. Mr. Joe Holloway said his question then to Mr. Strausburg is are they prepared to submit an amendment to a budget before they come to an agreement of the map about where this service area is even going to be. Mr. Joe Holloway said they are talking \$400,000, but they do not have an agreement on where the service is even going to be or is the County Executive's Office proposing that? Mr. Strausburg responded that the Executive just offered that he would submit an amendment. He said what he is trying to do here is to explain the process that still has to be worked through. Mr. Strausburg said the City has to agree to a change in the fire service area. He said to his knowledge, any time there has been a change or dispute with fire districts, the two Chiefs have agreed. He said the two Chiefs have not agreed. Mr. Joe Holloway clarified there are more than two involved in this, to which Chief Morris responded, now there is because somebody obviously messed up on the map bigtime. He said this was between two Chiefs. This issue they are having is, the Mayor and the County Executive have been in this negotiation for the City-County agreement. It is their feeling that they should be two separate things, Company Number One and the City-County Agreement. He said their issue is the City Council and the Mayor have been steering this. He said when they say they have agreed to something, and then Chief Beach gets seven more stipulations through Bob

Culver's office, on things that the two Chiefs should have sat down and talked about. He said that is the whole point here. They are trying to get the Mayor, the County Executive, Cory Polidore, the Chief of Company Number One, and Chief Hoppes to sit down and hash something out. He said they have a map, the map is not great, but once you agree to that map and it is not right, do you think the people that ended up benefiting from it are going to come back and say maybe that was not right, once it is in a district it is there. He said you can change it, it can be negotiated, but then this process has to start all over. Chief Beach said the seven stipulations they are trying to get this service agreement between the City and County, supposedly agreed upon. They are trying to get documentation on what was agreed upon. Mr. Matt Holloway said they signed it. Chief Beach said they signed it but is it binding. Have they all agreed to it, the City Council, and the County Council? The agreement was signed only by the County Executive and the Mayor. Chief Beach asked if it was binding. Mr. Cannon said it has to come for resolution first and then the Council has to approve it. Chief Beach said when he comes in to get these documents to try to resolve what they were trying to understand at the first meeting, because people wanted to have signatures to say that these territories were going to be agreed upon, this one is going to be given away, Station Six, Station One were agreed upon, then all of the sudden, he gets this paper from the Assistant Director, Weston Young. He said the first thing he reads is about the territory reference map, followed by a municipal boundary when such areas exist outside of the described area that Bob, Wayne, Julie and he met the day of the press conference. He said he called the 911 Service trying to determine what this map is, what are the boundaries, and what has been done. He said they had no idea on what these guys agreed upon. Mr. Strausburg said the map attached to the Fire Service Agreement was the existing map. Chief Beach said there is change because it has been presented to them that the City of Salisbury has said that the County 911 Center does not have an extension of magic marker that has been X'd out that takes territory. Mr. Strausburg said that is not the map that is attached to the agreement. Chief Beach said it is not the one the City has and that is part of what he is saying here. He said that is one of his requests to be done before he would sign it.

Mr. Marc Kilmer said obviously there is an issue with the territory. He said the current territory has not changed right now. The territory is what it is. There have not been any changes that the City and the County have agreed on. He then asked Mr. Strausburg, if that is correct, to which Mr. Strausburg responded, yes. Mr. Kilmer clarified on July 1st there is a question of what will be covered by the City and what will be potentially covered by the Volunteer Station One, that is what we are talking about here. He clarified what Chief Beach is saying, is to determine what that district is that the Volunteers in Station One would potentially cover after July 1st, is something that the County and the City should mutually agree upon, but have not done so, to which Mr. Strausburg responded, that is

correct. Mr. Strausburg said if he could simply read what is in the Fire Service Agreement dated April 7th, paragraph B1, says, The City shall provide fire rescue and advanced operations services to the area known and referred to as the Salisbury Fire District. The Salisbury Fire District shall include all the service areas for each of the department's fire stations, One, Two, and Sixteen, including all incorporated areas of the City, and all areas in the County outside of the corporate City limits, but within the boundaries as established through the Wicomico County Chiefs Association as defined in Appendix "A", and Appendix A is the existing Fire Service and EMS map at the time. He said the Salisbury Fire District may only be amended by the agreement of the County, the City, the Wicomico County Chiefs Association. He said that agreement has not yet taken place. He said that is the issue here today. Mr. Cannon said the Wicomico County Chiefs Association did not sign the Fire Service Agreement. Mr. Strausburg said the Wicomico County Chiefs Association is not the funding agent for the Fire Service Agreement between the County and the City, the County is. Mr. Cannon said, right, but you are saying the boundaries are established by the Wicomico County Chiefs Association. He said if they were going to authorize whatever that boundary might be, which is the most important element of this, that they would sign off on that formally in some fashion. He said he thinks that is what they are saying. Mr. Strausburg said the Fire Service Agreement has never been signed off by anyone other than the County Executive and/or County Council at the time, and the Mayor and City Council. Mr. Cannon said the County Council has not signed off on this. Mr. Strausburg said, not yet. Mr. Cannon said what he is saying is that this agreement specifically states that the boundary has to be established by three agencies. Mr. Strausburg said it has to be agreed upon by the three agencies. Mr. Cannon said, right, he does not see where that is in writing. Mr. Strausburg said it is the Fire Service Agreement. It has been signed by the Mayor and the County Executive, those are the parties to the Fire Service Agreement. Mr. Strausburg said the Fire Service Agreement is separate from the issue of the Station One Volunteers leaving. Mr. Cannon said he understands that 100%. Mr. Strausburg said that is a funding issue, and that is a decision as to what is going to be funded, and what the territory is going to be agreed upon, and heretofore those changes in Fire District territories have been always agreed upon amongst the Chiefs involved, and that has yet to occur. Mr. Kilmer said that is kind of the issue, there is this two-month interim between July 1st, so if new territory gets established, that is binding upon the County. He asked if that is Mr. Strausburg's view that if the Chiefs say that is what it is. Mr. Strausburg said if everyone agrees to it, yes. Mr. Kilmer said if the City does not agree, and the County does not agree, it is not just the Chiefs Association's decision, as the City and the County also have to figure out this territory of where the Volunteer Station One serves and the City serves. He asked if they thought that could be done in two months, before July 1st. Mr. Strausburg said he could not answer that question. Mr. Kilmer said Council is being asked to approve \$400,000 that was not in the budget. He then asked what is the money going for? Council is trying to figure out the details

here. Mr. Kilmer said it seems the Fire Chiefs Association made a decision, he felt like they were backed into a corner and someone needed to act in the hopes that the higher-ups, the City and the County, would maybe work on this. He asked if that is what they are saying, they would rather the City and the County figure out this boundary, to which Chief Morris responded what they would like to have, which it is the whole underlying issue of this whole thing, is for the Mayor, the County Executive, Chief Hoppes and Chief Polidore to sit down and work this out, and it can be done in two months. It can be brought back to the Fire Chiefs Association and the details could be worked out in two months. He said the problem is they have to come together on this. He said what has already happened, has already happened. He said there are some people that think Company Number One was recognized Wednesday night. Chief Morris said that is not the case. He said when it went through the County Association that night, that is when it was done. He said the State of Maryland Association already recognized them. He said all they need now is funding and a base for operation. He said they already have a firetruck and an ambulance. He said there are some things that need to be worked out, as there is a lot of intricate details. He said they are in for an experience, but this is where they are at. He said the issue right now is, these people need to come together because their standard operating procedure says, if the two Chiefs sign off on that district and they come back to them and they are both in agreement and they are happy with it, then everything is done. He said they work with Dave Shipley and Chris Hoppes. Chief Morris said there is a lot of stuff that has to happen here. He said, unfortunately, they feel that they have been put under the gun, and they are doing what they can do with them, and they are trying to do it in a very professional and efficient way. He said they are getting a lot of opposition on something that has already happened. Mr. Matt Holloway said they are concentrating a lot on the "how" and the process of how this can happen, but he has not heard "why" this is happening. He said he understands that they left Station One, but according to Mr. Polidore, the first time he was before Council, this all began because of an internal dispute within that station. He said this was never about a lack of service or increasing the safety of the public. He said now the Council is being asked to pay an extra \$400,000 to create the territory when there was never a lack of service in the first place. He asked why are they even contemplating this, was it to appease a group of people who want their own territory now, to which Chief Morris said, no. He said he keeps hearing that it was ten people, it was not ten people. He said they had a corporate meeting, and they made a decision that they thought was in the best interest of their corporation. Chief Morris said, and the best interest of the public, and in the best interest of them being able to respond and take care of their fire district. He said now if this had been taken care of a year ago when all of this was going on, you and I would not be sitting here looking at each other, nor engaging in a debate, so he is not going to put blame or bash anybody because that is not the way he operates. He said they are here to try to resolve this and get this company funding. He said it is up to

Council to decide whether they are going to do that. He said there are internal problems, the Administration is right there, they can answer for that. Chief Polidore and Company Number One can answer that. He said if they had taken care of it, we would not be here. Mr. Matt Holloway said but everyone is acting like there is now this group that we have to find a place for, and why is that? Chief Morris responded, according to the State Bylaws of the Maryland Firemen's Association, they are a fire company, they have been a fire company. He said all they did was pull out from under the auspices of the City of Salisbury. He said the City of Salisbury, on paper, has three fire departments and a career staff, Sixteen, Two, and One Volunteer Corporation and the Career Association. He said this is what was explained to the Maryland Firemen's Association President. He said he talked to him twice for funding reasons, which it is their fire company, he said he is not here for that. Chief Morris continued, he said Company Number One, which was chartered in 1986 and established as an incorporated fire company, decided they wanted to pull out from the auspices of the City of Salisbury. He said their County territory is the County Executive's County territory, not the Mayor's. He said that is who makes the decisions for that County area. Mr. Hall said he tends to agree with Mr. Matt Holloway. He said he did not think they are making a whole lot of headway, and he did not think Chief Morris is making a whole lot of headway. He said he would suggest they commission an independent Commission to go ahead and help them resolve this rather than trying to figure it out and say they do not want to make anybody angry. He said why don't you go ahead and find an independent commission, or let the County and the City help you find an independent commission. He then asked if they were afraid that they are going to come up with something that is going to be contrary to what the Chief's Charter says. Chief Morris said, no, that is not what they are afraid of. They are not afraid of anything, they are just here trying to resolve this issue and the thing that upset the Chiefs Association the most was there was a comment made to that effect before the vote Wednesday night. He said some of them said okay we are tired of dealing with this because it is the City of Salisbury's problem, not theirs, and they had a vote in an effort to make somebody mad to make something happen. Mr. Hall said he thought Chief Morris has been backed into a corner, and now they are trying to put the County in a corner also where they are being attempted to be forced to make a decision before July 1st. He said he did not think it was in the County's best interest to do that. Chief Morris said he did not want to put them in a corner. He despises the fact that they are sitting here talking about this, when it should have been handled a year ago. Mr. Hall said it should have been handled internally. Chief Morris said now it was given to them to try and resolve. He said he knows a gentleman that is well respected, who was the International Director for the International Association of Fire Chiefs. He said he knows a lot of people that could mediate this. He said, however, mediation was refused in the beginning and that is why they are here. He said what they are trying to do is get these people to sit down and straighten this out and come together so they can move

on and handle other things. Mr. Kilmer said it ultimately comes to Council because they have to decide about funding and that sort of thing so the mechanics of a budget amendment, they will have to talk about an offset hopefully in funding they can find somewhere in the budget. He said he is a little uncomfortable with the level of the budget as it is. He said it seems that the issue of territory is tied to this issue of funding in terms that July 1st is their fiscal year deadline. It seems those two issues are really tied together here.

Mr. Strausburg said with the Airport Fire and Rescue (ARF), you have to have a crew on station anytime passenger flight operations are taking place. He said it has nothing to do with first response. It has to do with airfield response to any incident that occurs on the airfield with an incoming or departing flight. He said that is a separate issue that they have to deal with. He said they put \$300,000 in the budget because they know that they have to deal with that issue, and they believe that is their best estimate as to how they can deal with that issue. Mr. Strausburg said if they are creating an additional territory, and an additional station, and if you want to know their semantics there, but that is an additional appropriation over and above the \$300,000. He said based on the map, based on the proposal that they put forward for funding, the volunteer fire and ambulance service, it comes out to about \$408,000 per station. He said if they were not going to take that from other stations, which he does not think they would ever propose, then it is an incremental \$408,000. He said if you are creating another Fire District, that would be funded at the same level as the other 11 stations. Mr. Cannon said he had heard at one time that maybe the perfect way to dovetail all of this was to assign the Station One Volunteers to the airport. He said that would, in a sense, be their station, and that would then create the genesis for their territory. Mr. Strausburg said that has been discussed. Mr. Cannon said that is why he thought the \$300,000 was being set aside. Mr. Strausburg said they would have a door out to the airfield and a door out to the County. Mr. Joe Holloway said they have to hire the ARF people out there 24/7 like the EMS people. Mr. Strausburg said if you had a substantial complement of volunteer firefighters and you could schedule them to cover the airfield passenger flight operations, that would work. Mr. Joe Holloway said they are volunteers, and they are not going to want to be there 24/7. Mr. Strausburg clarified, yes, they have to stay on post, you cannot leave, you have to stay at that station. He said they literally have to stay like on the truck, it is a FAA regulation. Mr. Joe Holloway said he has been asked by a constituent that is a firefighter to ask a question. He asked is there any volunteer firefighters now working out of Station One, to which Mr. Strausburg said he could not answer that question. Fire Chief Hoppes responded, yes. Mr. Joe Holloway clarified there are still volunteer firefighters working out of that station. Chief Hoppes responded, yes. Mr. Joe Holloway said they are going through this motion and this was done because there were people unhappy by the way they were being treated. He said he was not there so he does not know, but the question he was asked to put

forth is, what happens next year if somebody from Station 16, or somebody from the Brown Street Station, a group, decides they are going to dismiss their self from that Station and want to form their own district. How are they going to handle that, are they going to go through the same thing they are going through now? Chief Morris said that is a very good question. He said that is internal issues, that to him was their concern, and the other thing that irritated everybody was that it had come to them that the Mayor had said he did not want Company Number One inside of the Bypass, as he wanted them out of the area. He said he does not mean any disrespect to the Mayor, as he has never met him. He said he does not work for him, and he does not work for anybody, he is here for free. He said he does this because he likes doing it, and he has done it for a while. He said he was not at the meeting for the volunteers or the career, he is at the meeting for the betterment of the Eastern Shore fire services. He said getting there, he cannot tell them whether that is going to happen or not, which is why if you put this company out to the airport and the Mayor decides to hit the nuclear option and dumps all the County territory and decides they are not going to respond to it, which I do not think is going to happen because they preliminarily signed this agreement, then what happens with everybody else? He said nobody else is looking for anything, as far as the outlying Wicomico County fire stations. He said, if this happens, which would be within the City, they are out at the airport. He then asked who is going to take care of the rest of them. Mr. Joe Holloway said he thinks that is something that the Executive's Office and this Council needs to be concerned with. He then asked, will we be fighting this battle for the next year or two years from now with another situation where a group splits off, and it could also happen with a volunteer company outside the City limits. Mr. Joe Holloway said that question was posed to him by a longtime firefighter that he is very concerned about what is going on with this.

Mr. Matt Holloway said he wanted to reiterate that this is an internal dispute that is going to potentially cost taxpayers \$408,000 with additional recurring annual revenue. Chief Morris asked how many fire stations were funded last year, 14, and we are funding 11, to which Mr. Strausburg clarified, no, they are still funding 14, because they are funding the City on a different basis. Chief Morris said you are funding 13. Mr. Joe Holloway said they are spending more money than last year. Mr. Cannon said similar to what Councilman Joe Holloway said, he has had discussions with homeowners' associations in that particular district who called him and asked what is going on. He said it is very hard to explain this to people as far as what is going on, similar to what Matt Holloway said, to logistically say here is why we are doing this. He said there is a lot of concerns with the homeowners' associations in that district who are saying why is this changing, and how is it going to benefit them to now have Station One paid volunteer company from the City of Salisbury on Beaglin Park Drive, and then have a volunteer station not far away. He said, then he finds out that the first station that is most likely going to be assigned to a fire at his house, is the volunteer station, and he is also

going to be paying more in taxes to support that set of circumstances. He said they do not see that as a win-win. Chief Morris said what they originally asked for in their letter was their County territory and the same amount of appropriations that they got last year, nothing more, nothing less. He said he does not know what is going on anywhere else, but that is what they asked. Mr. Cannon said that is not a matter of money, but what he is saying, the first part of that equation is a matter of logistics. He then asked why is that being done logistically. He said he has been told on more than one occasion that the good fit is going to be at the airport because they are serving a purpose there and it also helps them establish a district. He said this is not him saying what he wants to see, that is what he has been told. Chief Morris said if the Council and Chief Tyler from Parsonsburg, and Chief Polidore, if they all agree, then that is fine. He said they thought when this was signed, this is a done deal, this is great, everybody is happy, but everybody was not happy. Chief Beach said it is a moot point, the Station has not been approved yet. We are discussing it and that is what he was trying to bring up before that they seceded because they were dictated to about what there were going to do. He said there is a lot of underlying things that were done under the control of the Fire Chief of the City of Salisbury Volunteer Station One, that Council probably does not even know about. He said he was not involved with the City of Salisbury Fire Department. He said when you get dictations like this, the City wants to dictate to the County what they want, and the County seems to agree. He said when you come to get mutual aid agreements and things of that nature, this is what you run into. He said this is the point of trying to get resolved, the County is spread out by farms you can throw a map around them, but it is cut up so bad, ends up extended out so far. He said the County needs to look at a fire service itself. He said EMS service is \$45,000, he could show what it costs to run the ambulance service in Hebron and it sure is not what the appropriations are. They cannot get service cheap, if you do not agree, hit the road. He said to Councilman Hall, if you believe these guys can get together and resolve it after what has transpired, there is no way in this world that will ever happen, they have been kicked off of the property, they are forbidden from the property from what he understands. Chief Beach said they were asking why they are spending \$408,000, as they are not coming inside east of the Bypass. He said they are dictating what they want. Mr. Matt Holloway said he has not heard from the Chief or the Mayor that the City is not going to go east of the Bypass. He then asked if it is written somewhere, to which Chief Beach said it is written right here, they want them to stay east of the Bypass. Mr. Matt Holloway said, if they have their own territory, but they do not have the territory right now and they do not have a station. He said as it stands right now, Station One is still covering the exact same territory they were covering before, to which Chief Beach said, that is correct. Chief Beach said there are other underlying things that are going on, otherwise, we are all going to be slapped in the face and we are not going to be ready for it. We are going to take care of the public safety which should be the priority.

Chief Morris said even the Chiefs, and he is here speaking for all of them, are tired of every five or six years that there is an issue that gets dropped in their lap out of the City of Salisbury. He said he is not saying the Salisbury Fire Company, he is saying the City of Salisbury. He said this sprawl annexation, you cannot just take this territory and give it to somebody else. He said you let the City annex something and in 30 days later you get a letter in the mail, we have annexed this, and we will be running fire and EMS service here from now on and it is gone. He said for them to stand up and say is this the City Council or the Mayor that you just cannot take this and do whatever, it is your County district; it is yours. He said we are the ones that take care of it, they do it all of the time. He said this sprawl annexation is why everything is so cut up so bad. He said until that stops, we are going to be dealing with this. Mr. Joe Holloway said, when all of this started, the first thing they heard was the station split up and they were going on Snow Hill Road to build a station, run a building, and build a building. He said if you look at all of your other fire departments in the County, the majority of them, if you take a map of the County and you look where the fire departments are, they are centrally located, most of them. Parsonsburg is in the middle of where they serve Pittsville and Willards, pretty much. He said they were looking at a fire department that was going to go on Snow Hill Road within a few blocks, a mile or so, not even a mile from another station. He said when he is looking at this map, his thoughts are why is the station not centrally located. He said now he is hearing they do not know where the station is going to go, they do not know where their service area is going to be. Mr. Joe Holloway said they are hearing that they are going to fund this at \$100,000 plus dollars, but we do not know where a station is going to go, they do not know where their service area is going to go. He then asked doesn't all this need to be resolved? Chief Morris responded that he thinks Chief Polidore could answer those questions. He said getting back to the County aspect of it, if it is on Snow Hill Road, if somebody else decides that they are going to pull out, would Snow Hill Road be centrally located? Mr. Cannon asked for clarification on what Chief Morris meant on if somebody else pulls out, to which Chief Morris responded, if another station decides to pull out, would the Snow Hill Road location be centrally located. Chief Morris said Station Two or Sixteen, the Snow Hill Road Station is in the middle. Mr. Joe Holloway asked, in the middle of what, it is not in the middle of the map that has been drawn. Chief Morris said not in the middle of that map, no, he was not talking about the map. He said they said later on down the road if somebody else decides to separate. He said he does not know all the underlying details of all of this and what has happened. Mr. Joe Holloway said Council does not either, and that is the problem.

Mr. Davis asked, by July 1st, if the County did not fund this \$408,000, what would happen, to which Chief Morris responded, how they came up with the date of July 1st was in the letter that Company One gave them. They said they were

willing to work with the City of Salisbury up until July 1st. He said that night they were locked out of their station and not allowed to come back in. He said this company that they are talking about was willing to stay, keep responding, and work with the existing entity that they run. He said that is how July 1st came up. He said he thinks some of this is being done on purpose because the longer you drag something out, the more everybody is tired of hearing it. He said by July 1st if they are still where they are at, then they are going to have to start making some decisions because July 1st, if the Bylaws do not change for the Wicomico County Association, Station Two and Station Sixteen have to have ownership of an engine, which they do not have at this point, to stay within the Wicomico County Firemen's Association. Mr. Joe Holloway said if they own a pumper, an engine, is Salisbury going to let them put it in their station, to which Chief Morris said he did not know, they should ask the City of Salisbury. Mr. Joe Holloway asked if that would make them invalid. Chief Morris said that came up because somebody got mad and said they do not own a firetruck, so they cannot be a fire company. Mr. Larry Dodd said getting back to Councilman Davis' question, he was asking what is going to happen if this body does not fund that \$408,000, are they still going to be able to operate. Mr. Davis asked what is going to happen to the service in this district that no one has taken control of, if they are not funded by this body, are they going to be able to operate? Mr. Joe Holloway said it is being serviced now, the City is still servicing it. Mr. Davis asked if the City is still going to service that district if the County gives the \$408,000 or not. Chief Beach said it goes back to the Fire Service Agreement where they are paying per call. Chief Morris said, however, they are going to pay more, because if that stays, then this whole thing pulls away. Mr. Joe Holloway asked Mr. Strausburg if that was correct, would the County pay more if this does not work out, would the City keep servicing that area. Mr. Strausburg responded, no. He said the Fire Agreement with the City is based on the 2016 verified first call. Mr. Joe Holloway clarified that the service area will be covered by the City under this Fire Agreement. Mr. Strausburg said the City has agreed to service a fire district. Chief Morris asked how much are they going to be paid per call, to which Mr. Strausburg gave Chief Morris a printout. Mr. Kilmer asked Mr. Strausburg to clarify, under the Fire Service Agreement, the City is already getting paid that \$900,000, no matter what, no matter if Station One Volunteers serve that entire pink territory, the City is getting a certain amount of money no matter what. Mr. Strausburg said that is their appropriation for the coming year. The appropriation then for 2019 would be based on the calendar year 2017. He said that is the way the agreement is structured. Mr. Kilmer said this coming fiscal year there would not be any savings, there might be potential savings, but they do not know how much. Mr. Strausburg said that is part of the reason he gave Council the mapping of the service calls to see proportionately how it might change. Chief Morris clarified they are still going to be paid per call, added to the count, to which Mr. Strausburg responded, yes. Chief Morris said any County area, they would be paid per call. Mr. Joe Holloway said that area is not really highly

populated. Chief Morris said they would be paying per call. He said, it depends, you would have to pay for the extra calls because that agreement has the amounts. Mr. Cannon said they do have some questions answered, but they are going to have to come to some conclusion as to what to do at some point in time. He said it would be nice to see a solid business plan as far as what the monies are going to be and what is involved in this station. He said that depends on what they anticipate their number of calls might be. He said he did not know how they can establish a business plan under a number of calls, because as of right now they do not have an established district or location. He said they need to find out where the location is going to be. They have to know where the district is going to be in order to move forward with this. Mr. Strausburg said they do not fund volunteers based on calls. Mr. Cannon said he understands that. He said he was talking about deciding whether or not they are going to move forward in funding. Chief Morris said they are funding the City basically on calls. He said they will have to refer those questions to Chief Polidore and Company One's administration. Chief Morris said he is here for the entire County. The Council thanked them for coming before them. Mr. Kilmer said Council has to pass the budget by the beginning of June. He then asked what is the next step for the County, for them to get this resolved. Mr. Strausburg asked if he was he talking about the funding appropriation, or was he talking about settling the issues that Mr. Morris and Mr. Beach have been discussing. Mr. Kilmer said the funding issue, as that concerns the budget and with that deadline, but it seems the territory issue is tied up with the funding issue. Mr. Kilmer said this amendment came from the Executive's Office. He then asked how do they proceed. Mr. Cannon said the questions that are still up in the air are, where is the station going to be located, where the district is going to be, and what agreements are going to be made between this fire station and Salisbury as far as mutual aid might be concerned. He said where does the County comes into play as far as a per call basis, based on the district.

Mr. Strausburg said he will answer each one of those questions. He said the mutual aid agreements are all negotiated amongst the fire companies. He said the County does not get involved with that, nor do they want to get involved in that. He said those are operational issues in which they have no expertise. He said they were given assurances by the Mayor that the City would honor all mutual aid agreements. The City would honor a mutual aid agreement with this new company. He said he is calling it a new company but the Station One Volunteers who left; the County was given assurance that the City would provide mutual aid. Mr. Strausburg said from their standpoint, they are still operating under the basis that if this station does go forward, there will be mutual aid agreements in place. Those are not something that they negotiate, as they leave that to the fire professionals. In terms of where the station would be located, that simply has not been decided. He said they suggested the airport because if they look at that certain area, once you get outside the Bypass, a station located at

the airport would serve two purposes. He said it could be a base for ARF operations, and it could be a base for going out into the areas that are east of the Bypass. He said the residents probably will get a better logistical response. He said, however, as Chief Morris has already indicated, that impacts Parsonsburg because the airport is Parsonsburg's first call area right now. He said they do not cover ARF, but they are first call to the airport. Mr. Strausburg continued, he said, again, going to what Chief Morris and Chief Beach said, the affected Fire Chiefs should be working out those details because they are the people best suited to work out those details. They are the people who provide us that service, and they are the people who can best tell them how to most effectively provide that service. Mr. Strausburg said the working out of the fire district, he thought has to be worked out amongst the Chiefs involved and that necessarily is going to involve the City. He said he cannot answer that question for them. He said, in terms of funding, they will have to go back and look at the budget that they have put forward and determine how they would approach proposed funding an additional \$408,000. He said he will have to do that and he will do that as promptly as he can. Mr. Cannon said the reason he asked about mutual aid is simply because of what is involved with the district itself. Hypothetically, if Parkside High School were to catch fire, and the City of Salisbury responded, as it is across the street, is that a mutual aid call, or is that a per call basis? Mr. Strausburg responded, in all of these discussions that have been going on, he has never had any inkling whatsoever that a fire company would not respond. Mr. Cannon said he was not suggesting that, what he was asking is, is that a per call basis from the County's perspective, or is that mutual aid. Mr. Strausburg clarified, at that point in time that would be mutual aid. Mr. Joe Holloway said from the County's perspective, when they come from the City it might be different. Mr. Strausburg said if they established a territory for the new station that includes Parkside High School, then that would be funded through stipend that the County provides to that volunteer company like all of the other volunteer companies. Mr. Cannon clarified that entire district is now going to be mutual aid instead of a per call basis. Mr. Strausburg asked if Mr. Cannon if he was saying that if that entire Fire District One was awarded to the new volunteer company, the unincorporated areas of that fire district that would be covered by the stipend, and if the City responded, they would respond through mutual aid. Mr. Cannon responded, yes that was his question. Mr. Strausburg said, yes. Mr. Joe Holloway asked approximately how much more is the County paying in the fire agreement than they were last year. Mr. Strausburg responded that they are paying about the same. Mr. Joe Holloway said they said it was costing more. Mr. Strausburg said if they look at all of the appropriations that were given to the City Fire Service, as a whole last year, it was \$965,000. This year it is proposed to bring in \$950,000. Mr. Cannon asked if there was \$300,000 extra on hold, to which Mr. Strausburg responded, no. Mr. Cannon said there is \$45,000 more to each volunteer company. Mr. Joe Holloway said he was talking about what they were paying the City. Mr. Strausburg said the ten-year negotiations with the City that

they were ready to wrap up, the only stipend that remains County to City in the new agreement is the phased out specialized operations stipend. Mr. Joe Holloway asked if that was extra over the \$950,000, to which Mr. Strausburg responded, no, that is included in the \$950,000. He said in the coming year what they have in the budget is \$950,000. When the group collectively made the decision to go to funding on a per call basis, then stipends are off the table because you are paying per call, and you are paying on at agreed-upon rate, less the insurance recovery. He said that was the whole basis for this new agreement. Mr. Joe Holloway clarified if they go with the \$408,000 and the \$300,000, they are talking \$700,000 more, to which Mr. Strausburg responded, yes, and the wildcard there for him is he does not know where they will land with the airport because he has not yet begun to discuss that whole issue with Piedmont Airlines. He said if they cast that out a year from now, it may not cost anything. It probably will, but it may not be \$300,000. Mr. Cannon thanked the Chiefs for taking their time and coming before Council.

Open Work Session
May 2, 2017
Station One Volunteer Firefighters



John T. Cannon, President



Larry W. Dodd, Vice President, District 3



Ernest F. Davis, District 1



Marc Kilmer, District 2



John B. Hall, District 4



Joe Holloway, District 5



Matt Holloway, At-Large



Laura Hurley, Council Administrator