


**ACTION ITEM
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

DATE April 1, 2008

TO Board of Supervisors

FROM J Robert Brown, Jr
Fire and Rescue Chief 

ISSUE Authorize a Public Hearing to Amend Fees Charged for Ambulance Cost Recovery and Expands the Definitions of Services

RECOMMENDATION Approval

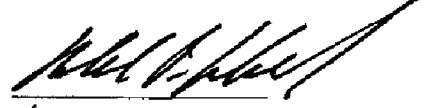
BUDGET IMPACT Revenue of approximately 8.5% or \$160,000 in FY2010

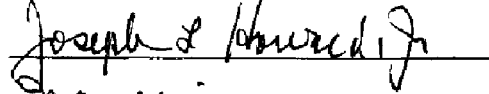
ATTACHMENTS (3)

[1] Background Report [3] Reso/Ord/Proc # R08-199

[2] Proposed Ordinance O08-41 [] Reso/Ord/Proc #

[] [] Reso/Ord/Proc #

REVIEW [X] County Administrator's Office 

[X] Legal 

[X] Budget 

- [X] Consent Agenda [] Other Business [] Public Hearing
- [] Discussion Item [] Presentation [] Unfinished Business
- [] New Business

PRESENTATION BY N/A

ELECTION DISTRICT N/A

BACKGROUND REPORT

Proposed Resolution R08-199 authorizes advertisement of a public hearing to amend Stafford County Code, Chapter 12, Article VII, for the purpose of (1) amending fees charged for ambulance cost recovery and (2) expanding the definitions of services provided to be consistent with those utilized by the County for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) These fees were first established on June 6, 2006, and amended on September 9, 2006, to correct a typographical error in mileage charges The established fees were set at

Basic Life Support-Emergency (BLS)	\$350 00
Advanced Life Support-Emergency (ALS-1)	\$450 00
Advanced Life Support (ALS-2)	\$550 00
Mileage (per ground transport mile) (GTM)	\$ 9 00

The following definitions shall apply to emergency medical transport charges

1 Basic Life Support (BLS)

Basic life support (BLS) is transportation by ground ambulance vehicle and the provision of medically necessary supplies and services, including BLS ambulance services as defined by the State The ambulance must be staffed by an individual who is qualified in accordance with State and local laws as an emergency medical technician-basic (EMT-Basic) These laws may vary from State to State or within a State For example, only in some jurisdictions is an EMT-Basic permitted to operate limited equipment onboard the vehicle, assist more qualified personnel in performing assessments and interventions, and establish a peripheral intravenous (IV) line

2 Basic Life Support (BLS) - Emergency

When medically necessary, the provision of BLS services, as specified above, in the context of an emergency response An emergency response is one that, at the time the ambulance provider or supplier is called, it responds immediately An immediate response is one in which the ambulance provider/supplier begins as quickly as possible to take the steps necessary to respond to the call

3 Advanced Life Support, Level 1 (ALS-1)

Advanced life support, level 1 (ALS-1) is the transportation by ground ambulance vehicle and the provision of medically necessary supplies and services including the provision of an ALS assessment or at least one ALS intervention An advanced life support (ALS) assessment is an assessment performed by an ALS crew as part of an emergency response that was necessary because the patient's reported condition at the time of dispatch was such that only an ALS crew was qualified to perform the assessment An ALS assessment does not necessarily result in a determination that the patient requires an ALS level of service An advanced life support (ALS) intervention is a procedure that is in accordance with State and local laws, required to be done by an emergency medical technician-intermediate (EMT-Intermediate) or EMT-Paramedic

4 Advanced Life Support, Level 1 (ALS-1) - Emergency

When medically necessary, the provision of ALS-1 services, as specified above, in the context of an emergency response. An emergency response is one that, at the time the ambulance provider or supplier is called, it responds immediately. An immediate response is one in which the ambulance provider/supplier begins as quickly as possible to take the steps necessary to respond to the call.

5 Advanced Life Support, Level 2 (ALS-2)

Advanced life support, level 2 (ALS-2) is the transportation by ground ambulance vehicle and the provision of medically necessary supplies and services including (1) at least three separate administrations of one or more medications by intravenous push/bolus or by continuous infusion (excluding crystalloid fluids) or (2) ground ambulance transport, medically necessary supplies and services, and the provision of at least one of the ALS-2 procedures listed below:

- a Manual defibrillation/cardioversion
- b Endotracheal intubation
- c Central venous line
- d Cardiac pacing
- e Chest decompression
- f Surgical airway
- g Intraosseous line

Fees are inclusive of all services rendered to include care given, all equipment utilized, transport, and disposables expended, but do not cover the full cost of providing ambulance services. These fees are supplemental to General Fund expenditures for fire and rescue services, to include the provision of EMS and ambulance transportation. Fees are evaluated each year and have not been increased since originally established in September, 2006.

It is proposed that the fees be increased to the following:

Basic Life Support-Emergency (BLS)	\$400.00
Advanced Life Support-Emergency (ALS-1)	\$500.00
Advanced Life Support (ALS-2)	\$675.00
Mileage (per ground transport mile) (GTM)	\$ 10.00

The purpose of the proposed rate increase is to maximize cost recovery and adhere to Medicare's national fee schedule. Since the initiation of the present fee schedule, the cost associated with providing ambulance service has increased and will continue to increase. In the last two years, vehicle insurance costs have risen more than 20% and fuel has increased approximately 30%. The cost of medical supplies has increased along with the required advanced medical equipment. The maintenance and replacement cost associated with this equipment continues to escalate as well. In addition, Ambulance fleet and diagnostic equipment replacement is an ongoing cost to the County.

Although the proposed rates are based on the cost of services that we provide, the cost of providing services is no different in Stafford County as it is in all of Northern Virginia. Our proposed fee structure reflects the same charges as current and proposed ambulance cost recovery fee structures in other Northern Virginia localities such as the City of Fairfax, Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria - - all who share the same Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Reimbursement Region and Urban Reimbursement Rates as the County.

This proposed increase will continue to have no out-of-pocket expense to our residents. The County will continue our policy of third party billing and compassionate collections to recover our charges from private insurance and government subsidized insurance programs. Our policy of compassionate billing, whereas no one will ever be refused ambulance service based on their ability to pay, will continue. County residents who are not insured or who are self-insured will not be responsible for the cost of ambulance services.

It is important to note that the new rates will begin to be charged as soon as the ordinance is enacted. However, revenue from the increase in fees will not be realized for twelve months. As such, the proposed fee increase will result in additional revenue of approximately 8.5% or \$160,000 in Fiscal Year 2010. This delay of one fiscal year is due to the normal delay (float) in the reimbursement cycle of the medical insurance industry and demonstrates the importance of revising our rate schedule regularly.

The proposed increase in ambulance cost recovery fees will increase revenue with no out-of-pocket expense to the citizens of the County. The proposed increase in fees will offset some of the increased costs of providing ambulance services and will increase the total revenue collected by the County an estimated 8.5% or \$160,000 in FY10. Actual revenue received will be affected by collection rates that will vary with changes made by CMS to the reimbursement rates.

PROPOSED

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF STAFFORD
STAFFORD, VIRGINIA

ORDINANCE

At a regular meeting of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors (the Board) held in the Board Chambers, Stafford County Administration Center, Stafford, Virginia, on the 6th day of May, 2008

MEMBERS

VOTE

George H Schwartz, Chairman
M S "Joe" Brito, Vice Chairman
Harry E Crisp II
Mark Dudenhefer
Paul V Milde III
Cord A Sterling
Robert "Bob" Woodson

On motion of , seconded by , which carried by a vote of , the following was adopted

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AND REORDAIN THE STAFFORD
COUNTY CODE, CHAPTER 12, ARTICLE VII, ENTITLED
"AMBULANCE COST RECOVERY"

WHEREAS, the provisions of public safety services are a primary responsibility of the County, and

WHEREAS, the Ambulance Fee Cost Recovery program enhances fire and rescue service in the County, and

WHEREAS, the Board believes the Ambulance Cost Recovery program is necessary and in the public's best interest, and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to expand the definitions of services provided to be consistent with those utilized by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and

WHEREAS, the cost of providing ambulance service has increased since the Ambulance Cost Recovery program was initiated, and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to consider an increase in the charges for the Ambulance Cost Recovery program, and

WHEREAS, the Board has conducted a public hearing and carefully considered the recommendations of staff and the testimony at the public hearing, and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that public necessity, convenience, and general welfare requires adoption of such an ordinance,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 6th day of May, 2008, that Stafford County Code, Chapter 12, Article VII entitled "Ambulance Cost Recovery" be and it hereby is amended and reordained to read as follows, all other portions remaining unchanged

Sec 12-81 Cost reimbursement for ambulance service.

(a) Reasonable fees, reviewed annually ~~as a part of the county budget process~~, shall be charged for emergency medical transport services provided by the department The amount of the fees shall be modified when appropriate The revenue recovery program is intended to pursue reimbursement for EMS ambulance transports by recovering funds that may already be designated for the purpose

(b) The following definitions shall apply to emergency medical transport charges

~~(1) Basic life support (BLS) means services shall be medical treatment or procedures provided to a patient as defined by the National Emergency Medicine Services (EMS) Education and Practice Blueprint for the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Basic~~

~~(2) Advanced life support level 1 (ALS-1) means services shall be medical treatment or procedures provided to a patient beyond the scope of an EMT-Basic as defined by the National EMS Education and Practice Blueprint~~

~~(3) Advanced life support level 2 (ALS-2) means services shall be defined as advanced life support (ALS) services provided to a patient including any of the following medical procedures~~

- ~~a Manual defibrillation/cardioversion;~~
- ~~b Endotracheal intubation;~~
- ~~c Central venous line;~~
- ~~d Cardiac pacing;~~
- ~~e Chest decompression;~~
- ~~f Surgical airway;~~
- ~~g Intraosseous line, or~~
- ~~h Administration of three (3) or more medications~~

~~(3) Ground transport mile (GTM) Emergency demand zones are established by the fire and rescue chief Transportation fees shall be assessed per statute mile from the location of the incident scene, or from the center point of the emergency demand zone, if applicable, where an incident scene or address is located, to a hospital or other facility where a patient is transported~~

(0) Basic life support (BLS) is transportation by ground ambulance vehicle and the provision of medically necessary supplies and services, including BLS ambulance services as defined by the State. The ambulance must be staffed by an individual who is qualified in accordance with State and local laws as an emergency medical technician-basic (EMT-Basic). These laws may vary from State to State or within a State. For example, only in some jurisdictions is an EMT-Basic permitted to operate limited equipment onboard the vehicle, assist more qualified personnel in performing assessments and interventions, and establish a peripheral intravenous (IV) line.

(0) Basic life support (BLS)-Emergency. When medically necessary, the provision of BLS services, as specified above, in the context of an emergency response. An emergency response is one that, at the time the ambulance provider or supplier is called, it responds immediately. An immediate response is one in which the ambulance provider/supplier begins as quickly as possible to take the steps necessary to respond to the call.

(0) Advanced Life Support, Level 1 (ALS-1) is the transportation by ground ambulance vehicle and the provision of medically necessary supplies and services including the provision of an ALS assessment or at least one ALS intervention. An advanced life support (ALS) assessment is an assessment performed by an ALS crew as part of an emergency response that was necessary because the patient's reported condition at the time of dispatch was such that only an ALS crew was qualified to perform the assessment. An ALS assessment does not necessarily result in a determination that the patient requires an ALS level of service. An advanced life support (ALS) intervention is a procedure that is in accordance with State and local laws, required to be done by an emergency medical technician-intermediate (EMT-Intermediate) or EMT-Paramedic.

(0) Advanced Life Support, Level 1 (ALS-1) - Emergency. When medically necessary, the provision of ALS-1 services, as specified above, in the context of an emergency response. An emergency response is one that, at the time the ambulance provider or supplier is called, it responds immediately. An immediate response is one in which the ambulance provider/supplier begins as quickly as possible to take the steps necessary to respond to the call.

(0) Advanced Life Support, Level 2 (ALS-2) is the transportation by ground ambulance vehicle and the provision of medically necessary supplies and services including (1) at least three separate administrations of one or more medications by intravenous push/bolus or by continuous infusion (excluding crystalloid fluids), or (2) ground ambulance transport, medically necessary supplies and services, and the provision of at least one of the ALS-2 procedures listed below.

- a Manual defibrillation/cardioversion
- b Endotracheal intubation
- c Central venous line

- d Cardiac pacing
- e Chest decompression
- f Surgical airway
- g Intraosseous line

(6) *Ground transport mile (GTM)* Emergency-demand zones are established by the fire and rescue chief. Transportation fees shall be assessed per statute mile from the location of the incident scene, or from the center point of the emergency-demand zone, if applicable, where an incident scene or address is located, to a hospital or other facility where a patient is transported.

Sec 12-82 Fees

(a) The schedule of rates for emergency ambulance transport services by the Stafford County Fire and Rescue Department EMS System shall be based on a schedule which will be developed and reviewed yearly to maintain compliance within the allowances established by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

(b) The Stafford County Fire and Rescue Chief is hereby authorized and directed to establish rules and regulations for the administration and collection of the charges imposed by this section.

(c) Fees for emergency medical transport services shall be charged per patient transported for services rendered and transportation provided, as initially set and reviewed annually.

TABLE INSET

BLS	\$ 350.00 <u>\$400.00</u>
ALS - 1	450.00 <u>\$500.00</u>
ALS - 2	550.00 <u>\$675.00</u>

(d) Transportation fees ~~Nine dollars (\$9.00)~~ Ten Dollars (\$10.00) per GTM

AJR JLHjr ce

PROPOSED

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF STAFFORD
STAFFORD, VIRGINIA

RESOLUTION

At a regular meeting of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors (the Board) held in the Board Chambers, Stafford County Administration Center, Stafford, Virginia, on the 1st day of April, 2008

MEMBERS

VOTE

George H Schwartz, Chairman
M S "Joe" Brito, Vice Chairman
Harry E Crisp II
Mark Dudenhefer
Paul V Milde III
Cord A Sterling
Robert "Bob" Woodson

On motion of , seconded by , which carried by a vote of , the following was adopted

* A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO ADVERTISE A PUBLIC HEARING TO AMEND AND REORDAIN STAFFORD COUNTY CODE, CHAPTER 12, ARTICLE VII, ENTITLED "AMBULANCE COST RECOVERY"

WHEREAS, the provisions of public safety services are a primary responsibility of the County, and

WHEREAS, the Ambulance Fee Cost Recovery program enhances fire and rescue service in the County, and

WHEREAS, the Board believes the Ambulance Cost Recovery program is necessary and in the public's best interest, and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to expand the definitions of services provided to be consistent with those utilized by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to consider an increase in the charges for ambulance recovery costs, and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to consider public comments concerning the proposed fee changes,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 1st day of April, 2008, that the County Administrator be and he hereby is authorized to advertise for a public hearing to allow for presentation regarding the amendment to Stafford County Code, Chapter 12, Article VII, for the purpose of amending fees charged for ambulance cost recovery

AJR JLLHjr ce