



April 30, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Wanika B. Fisher, Esq., Chair,
Public Safety, Health, and Human Services (PSHHS) Committee

THRU: Sylvia King *SK*
Senior Legislative Budget Officer

FROM: David Williams *DW*
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

RE: Fire/Emergency Medical Services Department
Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Review

Budget Overview

- The FY 2027 Proposed Budget for the Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department is \$336,542,100, representing an increase of \$12,072,900, or 3.7%, above the FY 2026 Approved Budget.
- The FY 2027 Proposed General Fund Budget is \$326,101,500, which represents an increase of \$11,003,100, or 3.5%, over the FY 2026 Approved Budget.
- The proposed budget increases are driven primarily by mandated annualizations in FY 2026, 22 new civilian positions, 46 new sworn positions, and three recruit classes totaling 100 recruits. Additionally, increased funding for budgeted salary attrition and salary lapse.
- The Department projects that it will require a supplemental appropriation in FY 2026 in the amount of \$1,550,000, due to a higher-than-anticipated number of accidents involving agency assets and costs related medical supplies, vehicle equipment, vehicles, and related repairs.

Actual Fiscal Year 2025 to Proposed Fiscal Year 2027:

Fund	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Approved	FY 2026 Estimated	% Change - Est vs App	FY 2027 Proposed	\$ Change, Prop vs App	% Change
General Fund	\$ 277,111,800	\$ 314,948,400	\$ 305,232,000	-3.1%	\$ 325,926,500	\$ 10,978,100	3.5%
Grants	4,139,082	9,520,800	469,300	-95.1%	10,615,600	1,094,800	11.5%
Total	\$ 281,250,882	\$ 324,469,200	\$ 305,701,300	-5.8%	\$ 336,542,100	\$ 12,072,900	3.7%

Authorized Staffing (Full-time) - All Classifications

	FY 2026 Approved	FY 2027 Proposed	Change
General Fund	1,232	1,300	68
Grants	45	45	0
Limited Term Grant*	1	1	0
Total	1,277	1,345	68

* Limited Term Grant-funded position is a Counselor position

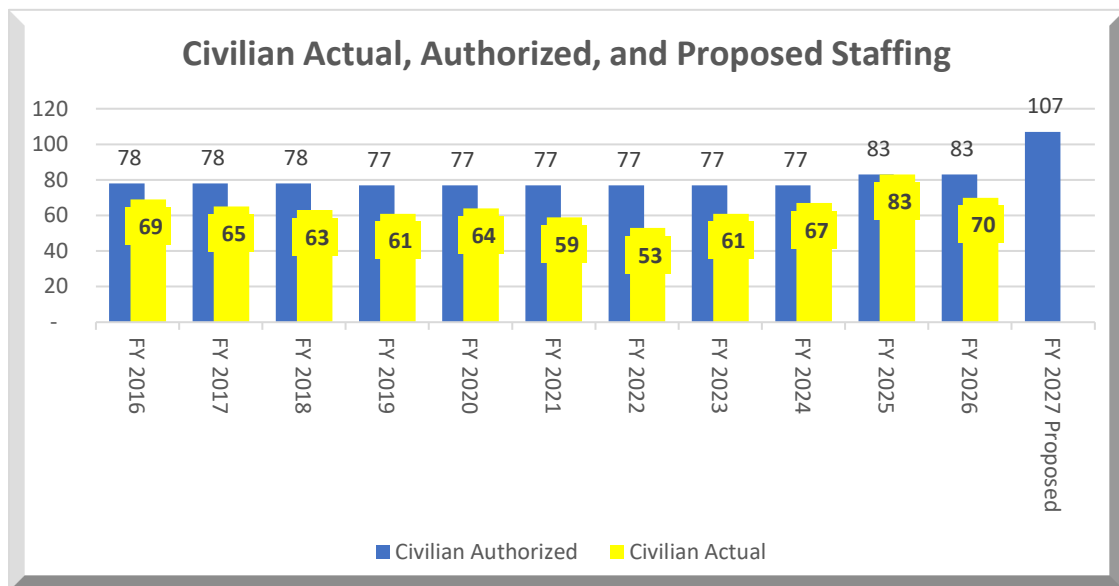
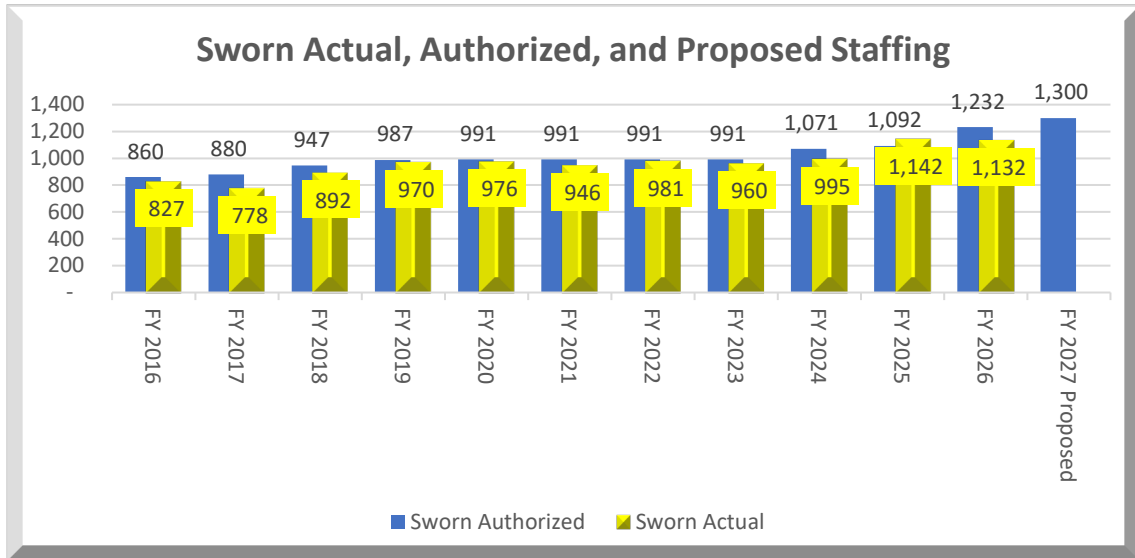
Budget Comparison – General Fund

Category	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Approved	FY 2026 Estimated	FY 2027 Proposed	Change Amount	Percentage Change (Approved Budget)	Percentage Change (Estimated Budget)
Compensation	\$ 142,482,530	\$ 159,667,700	\$ 159,379,400	\$ 163,466,200	\$ 3,798,500	2.4%	2.6%
Fringe Benefits	100,743,818	120,868,400	108,277,700	121,945,800	1,077,400	0.9%	12.6%
Operating Expenses	33,777,474	34,562,300	37,724,900	40,539,500	5,977,200	17.3%	7.5%
Capital Outlay	281,825	-	-	150,000	150,000	N/A	N/A
Subtotal	\$ 277,285,647	\$ 315,098,400	\$ 305,382,000	\$ 326,101,500	\$ 11,003,100	3.5%	6.8%
Recoveries	(173,847)	(150,000)	(150,000)	(175,000)	(25,000)	16.7%	16.7%
Total	\$ 277,111,800	\$ 314,948,400	\$ 305,232,000	\$ 325,926,500	\$ 10,978,100	3.5%	6.8%

Compensation

- In FY 2027, General Fund compensation expenditures are proposed at \$163,466,200, representing an increase of \$3,798,500, or 2.4%, above the approved FY 2026 budget.
- The increase in proposed compensation is primarily due to the annualization of FY 2026 and planned FY 2027 salary adjustments, overtime costs associated with mandatory shifts, and funding for 68 new positions and three (3) classes totaling 100 recruits.
- The FY 2027 Proposed Budget includes 1,300 authorized General Fund full-time positions.
- As of March 2026, there were 88 sworn position vacancies, representing a 7.6% vacancy rate.
- As of March 2026, the Department’s actual civilian staffing level was at 70 employees, along with 12 vacancies, representing a 14.5% civilian vacancy rate.

- See the chart below for Sworn and Civilian Authorized levels from FY 2016 – FY 2027 Proposed.



- As of March 2026, the Department reports a sworn attrition rate of 3.38% and a civilian attrition rate of 0.50%.

Fringe Benefits

- A five-year trend analysis of fringe benefit expenditures is included below:

Fringe Benefits Historical Trend						
	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Budget	FY 2026 Estimated	FY 2027 Proposed
Compensation	\$ 128,832,219	\$ 141,395,530	\$ 142,482,530	\$ 159,667,700	\$ 159,379,400	\$ 163,466,200
Fringe Benefits Expenditures	\$ 91,554,390	\$ 100,344,016	\$ 100,743,818	\$ 120,868,400	\$ 108,277,700	\$ 121,945,800
As a % of Compensation	71.1%	71.0%	70.7%	75.7%	67.9%	74.6%

- In FY 2027, fringe benefit expenditures are proposed at \$121,945,800, representing an increase of \$1,077,400, or 0.9%, above the FY 2026 approved level.
- The largest component of fringe benefits is the Fire Retirement Plan (accounts for 58.6% of the Department’s fringe expenditures).

Operating Expenses

- FY 2027 General Fund operating expenditures are proposed at \$40,539,500, representing an increase of \$5.97 million, or 17.3%, above the approved FY 2026 budget level. The increases are for software maintenance, general and administrative contract, training, personal protective equipment/uniforms, utilities, office equipment noncapital, vehicle repairs and scheduled maintenance, office automation charges, and insurance premiums.
- The most significant dollar increase in the FY 2027 Proposed Budget is in the Vehicle Equipment Repair/Maintenance category for \$2,706,400, or 48.4%, increase over the FY 2026 approved level.

See the table of expenditures on the following page.

General Fund							
Account	Operating Objects	FY 2026 Approved	FY 2026 Estimated	FY 2027 Proposed	\$ Change	% Change	Explain reason for budgetary change for each object
5101	Telephone	\$ 442,300	\$ 400,000	\$ 219,600	\$ (222,700)	-50.4%	based on OIT adjustment in telephone cost
5102	Utilities	1,342,600	1,200,000	1,600,000	\$ 257,400	19.2%	based on increased need for volunteer stations
5103	Printing	2,800	2,800	1,500	\$ (1,300)	-46.4%	based on actuals
5105	Periodicals	20,300	33,000	20,300	\$ -	0.0%	
5107	Office Automation	9,407,700	9,407,700	9,814,500	\$ 406,800	4.3%	based on countywide cost allocation charges
5108	Training	97,600	97,600	121,600	\$ 24,000	24.6%	based on need for new leadership
5109	Advertising	3,000	-	-	\$ (3,000)	-100.0%	based on actual spending
5111	Membership Fees	25,300	25,000	25,300	\$ -	0.0%	
5112	Mileage Reimbursement	4,100	2,400	1,500	\$ (2,600)	-63.4%	based on actual spending and historical costs
5115	Insurance Premiums	1,824,000	2,400,000	2,424,000	\$ 600,000	32.9%	based on anticipated increase in premiums
5117	General & Administrative Contracts	3,687,800	4,121,300	4,236,200	\$ 548,400	14.9%	based on increase in software and net medical contracts
5117	Operating Contracts	413,400	413,400	365,500	\$ (47,900)	-11.6%	decrease in paramedic program cost and recruiting
5118	General Office Supplies-Medical Supplies	2,604,100	2,600,000	3,775,000	\$ 1,170,900	45.0%	increase in ppe of \$1.2 million, decrease in general office supplies and medical supplies
5119	Office and Operating Equipment Non-Capital	1,798,000	1,730,000	2,400,000	\$ 602,000	33.5%	based on actuals
5120	Other Operating Equipment Repair/Maintenance	250,000	570,000	275,000	\$ 25,000	10.0%	based on anticipated costs
5121	Vehicle Equipment Repair/Maintenance	5,593,600	7,876,800	8,300,000	\$ 2,706,400	48.4%	based on increase in countywide allocation of fleet charges, anticipated accident repairs and mandatory maintenance
5122	Gas and Oil	2,270,000	2,270,200	2,200,000	\$ (70,000)	-3.1%	based on actual costs
5123	Equipment Lease	72,900	70,900	72,900	\$ -	0.0%	
5125	Building Repair/Maintenance	767,700	667,700	650,000	\$ (117,700)	-15.3%	based on actual costs
5126	Grants/Contributions	1,153,000	1,202,400	1,100,000	\$ (53,000)	-4.6%	based on actual station management spending
	Interagency Charges	336,100	336,100	560,900	\$ 224,800	66.9%	based on comp and fringe (OOL, OCS)
5141	Miscellaneous	\$ 2,446,000	2,300,000	2,375,700	\$ (70,300)	-2.9%	based on ambulance billings of \$2.3 million and decrease in cash match of -\$75,700
TOTAL		\$ 34,562,300	\$ 37,727,300	\$ 40,539,500	\$ 5,977,200	17.3%	

Recoveries

- There are recoveries of \$175,000 for insurance reimbursements from a third-party vendor budgeted in FY 2027, which is an increase of \$25,000 over the FY 2026 Approved Budget.

Grants

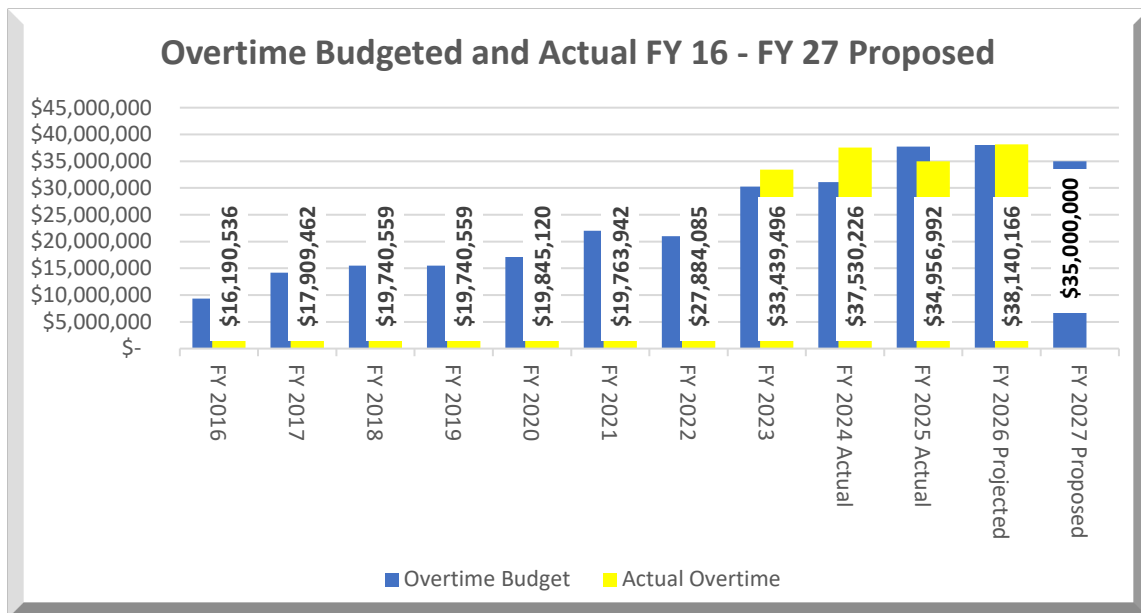
Category	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Budget	FY 2026 Estimate	FY 2027 Proposed	Change FY26-FY27	
					Amount (\$)	Percent (%)
Compensation	\$78,466	\$2,646,000	\$—	\$2,560,500	\$(85,500)	-3.2%
Fringe Benefits	1,289	2,003,000	—	1,910,100	(92,900)	-4.6%
Operating	4,035,827	5,283,100	454,300	6,190,700	907,600	17.2%
Capital Outlay	47,000	—	15,000	30,000	30,000	
SubTotal	\$4,162,582	\$9,932,100	\$469,300	\$10,691,300	\$759,200	7.6%
Recoveries	—	—	—	—	—	
Total	\$4,162,582	\$9,932,100	\$469,300	\$10,691,300	\$759,200	7.6%

- FY 2027 grant funds are proposed at \$10,691,300, representing a \$759,200, or 7.6%, increase above the FY 2026 approved level.

- The Department proposes a FY 2027 full-time Grant Funded staff complement of 45 sworn positions, through the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant, which is unchanged compared to the FY 2026 level. Additionally, the FY 2027 proposed budget includes one (1) Limited-Term Grant Funded (LTGF) position, which is unchanged from the FY 2026 approved budget.

Overtime

- FY 2027 General Fund overtime compensation is proposed at \$35,000,000, representing a \$3,040,300 decrease under the FY 2026 approved level (\$38.04 million).
- See below for a chart of Overtime expenditures from FY 2016 to FY 2027 Proposed.



- As of March 3, 2026, the Department reported that its projected FY 2026 overtime spending will be above the budgeted level of \$38.04 million by approximately \$99,866.
- Additional information on overtime can be found in response to the *FY 2027 First Round Budget Review Questions No. 27*.

Workload

- Below is a chart of fire incidents investigated by the Department from FY 2022 to FY 2026 YTD:

Fiscal Year	Fire Incidents Investigated	YOY Change (%)
2022	478	N/A
2023	466	-2.5%
2024	511	9.7%
2025	473	-7.4%
2026 YTD	72	

- Below is a chart of Service Call distribution for additional information on calls for service data (by call type) can be found in response to the *FY 2027 First Round Budget Review Questions No. 41, pg. 19*.

Service Calls Calendar Year Data					
	2021	2022	2024	2025	2024-2025 Change
Basic Life Support (BLS)	69,156	76,098	63,688	65,994	3.62%
Advanced Life Support (ALS)	53,299	51,107	52,358	54,089	3.31%
EMS Subtotal	122,455	127,205	116,046	120,083	3.48%
Fire	18,318	18,376	17,465	22,560	29.17%
Hazmat/Technical Rescue	3,004	3,276	2,780		-100.00%
Rescue			16,274	15,474	-4.92%
Admin			466		-100.00%
Non-Emergency	13,484	10,063	11,758	14,941	27.07%
Fire Subtotal	34,806	31,715	48,743	52,975	8.68%
TOTAL INCIDENTS	157,261	158,920	164,789	173,058	5.02%
% EMS	77.9%	80.0%	70.4%	69.4%	-1.47%
% Fire	22.1%	20.0%	29.6%	30.6%	3.49%

- Workload matters are discussed in response to the *FY 2027 First Round Questions No. 44-46*:
 - ❖ The Apparatus Maintenance Unit has experienced an increase in repairs due to extreme weather damage sustained by agency assets. Agency vehicles have experienced high mileage use due to transporting patients out of the County. Hospital wait times contribute to additional wear and tear on agency assets.
 - ❖ The Emergency Services Command Division has experienced an increase in call volumes across all call types.
 - ❖ Multifamily dwelling inspections compounded with rising calls for service will result in further stress on workloads.

- The Department reports that the collection rate for ambulance transports has decreased from 24% in FY 2025 to a 21% rate (year-to-date) in FY 2026. The third-party vendor billed \$46.6 million in FY 2025, and \$25.3 million (to-date) in FY 2026.
- Detailed information relating to ambulance billing is contained within the response to the *FY 2027 First Round Pg. 35 – 36, Question 60 (a-e)*.
- Program Management matters are addressed in additional detail within their responses to the *FY 2027 First Round Pg. 22 – 40, Questions No. 47-63*.

Equipment & Information Technology

FLEET AND APPARATUS MAINTENANCE								
Type	Total Fleet	County Owned	Vol. Owned	No. of Equip. Exceeding Replacement Age	% Apparatus That Exceeds Replacement Age	Replacement Cost of Equip. That Exceeds	FY 2025 Maintenance Cost	*FY 2026 YTD Maintenance Cost
ENGINE	88	30	58	56	64%	\$78,400,000	\$1,907,643	\$1,250,000
TRUCK	22	12	10	9	41%	\$18,900,000	\$712,283	\$250,000
TANKER	5	3	2	3	60%	\$3,000,000	\$32,172	\$24,702
MINI-PUMPER	5	0	5	3	60%	\$3,900,000	\$7,432	\$4,100
SUPPORT VEHICLE	309	192	117	120	39%	\$12,000,000	\$862,883	\$829,000
BRUSH TRUCK	8	3	5	2	25%	\$250,000	\$22,502	\$6,000
SPECIALTY VEHICLE	101	83	18	50	50%	\$6,250,000	\$151,024	\$98,314
SQUAD	12	5	7	7	58%	\$14,000,000	\$387,438	\$112,000
AMBULANCE	142	109	33	109	77%	\$54,500,000	\$1,363,609	\$695,374
TOTAL:	692	437	255	359	52%	\$191,200,000	\$5,446,985	\$3,269,490

YTD as of: 3/03/2026

- Below is a chart detailing the average annual maintenance costs for Engine/Pumper and Ambulance units from CY 2021 – CY 2025 Projected:

Average Maintenance Costs	CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023	CY 2024	CY 2025	CY 2026 Proj.
Engine/Pumper	\$ 18,637	\$ 20,125	\$ 25,234	\$ 18,825	\$ 19,995	\$ 21,250
Ambulance	\$ 15,234	\$ 15,615	\$ 16,750	\$ 8,462	\$ 9,875	\$ 10,750

- More details on the Department’s equipment and information technology needs can be found in response to the *FY 2027 First Round Pg. 44, Questions No. 69-70*.

Department Identified Critical Issues:

- ❖ The Apparatus Maintenance Unit will require more funds to handle the higher-than-normal amount of repairs.
- ❖ The Department will require additional funds for PPE gear for active and training personnel.
- ❖ The Department requires additional funding for uniforms, including Class A and Class B.
- ❖ Replacement of EMS medical equipment

A comprehensive breakdown of the Department's asset demand forecast can be found on the FY 2027 First Round Responses on pages 37 - 40 Question 63

FY 2027- FY 2032 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Overview

- The Fire/Emergency Medical Services (Fire/EMS) Department is responsible for fire suppression, emergency medical services, fire prevention, research, training, and coordinating the Volunteer Fire Companies. The Fire/EMS Department operates 45 Fire and EMS stations, as well as several other support facilities that are located throughout the County.

CIP Budget Overview

- The FY 2027 - 2032 CIP total project cost funding request is \$32,436,000. The total project cost is \$105,075,000.
- The FY 2027 Proposed Capital Budget for the Fire/EMS Department is \$4,765,000.
- All four (4) CIP projects listed in the FY 2027 – 2032 Proposed CIP Budget have funding or spending for either FY 2025 or FY 2026.

- The following is an update on the four (4) Capital projects with FY 2025 and/or FY 2027 funding and/or spending:

1. **Fire Station Renovations**

FY 2027 funding request: \$4,015,000

Estimated cost expenditures for FY 2026 are \$5.11 million

Total project cost: \$74.01 million

Project status: Ongoing.

This project provides for designing and replacing electrical, mechanical, structural, and plumbing systems at numerous Fire/EMS facilities throughout the County. The 45 stations vary in age and require ongoing maintenance to continue providing service to their communities.

- Funding will support renovations at multiple stations based on the prioritization from the completed station conditions assessment conducted in conjunction with a consultant and the Office of Central Services (OCS).

2. **Fire Station Roof Renovations**

FY 2027 funding request: \$750,000

Estimated expenditures for FY 2026 are \$1,125,000

Total project cost: \$14.0 million

Project Status: Ongoing.

Based on roof assessments and a review of existing warranties, a roof replacement schedule has been developed that will enable replacements to be more proactive rather than reactive to emergencies due to water infiltration and damage.

- \$750,000 is budgeted annually for this endeavor, which began in FY 2026 and runs through 2030.

3. **Hyattsville Fire/EMS Station**

FY 2027 funding request: \$0

Estimated expenditures for FY 2026 are \$7.43 million

Total project cost: \$10,513,000

First year in the CIP: FY 2004

Project status: Completion is anticipated in FY 2027

The project has changed from the construction of a new fire station to a major renovation of the existing station.

4. Water Storage Tanks

FY 2027 funding request: \$0

Estimated expenditures for FY 2026 are \$3.47 Million

Total project cost: \$6.6 million

Project status: The project is ongoing and four additional tanks will be installed in the southern portion of the County. 'Other' funding is public safety surcharge revenue.

This project provides funding for installing 30,000-gallon underground storage tanks and the installation of dry fire hydrants in rural areas not served by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission or other municipal water supply systems.

Appendix A

Fringe Benefits Mapping FY 25 – FY 27

Fringe Benefits Mapping					
Fringe Benefit Cost Category	SAP Commitment	Account Description	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Estimated	FY 2027 Proposed
Fire Retirement Plan	505031	Fire Retirement	\$57,679,280	\$61,352,700	\$71,480,400
LOSAP	505090	LOSAP	\$4,227,217	\$5,304,200	\$5,100,000
Health Insurance	505010	Group Health	\$14,698,700	\$15,426,700	\$18,519,200
Disability Insurance	505080	Disability Insurance	\$500	\$800	\$900
County Fringe	505910	County Fringe	\$29,436	\$0	\$0
Social Security	505070	Employer FICA	\$9,763,621	\$10,441,500	\$9,672,100
State of Maryland Employees'	505030	Employees Retirement	\$564,133	\$648,100	\$1,490,100
Supplemental Retirement Plans	505035	Supplemental Retirement	\$1,300,573	\$1,459,500	\$1,948,800
Life Insurance	505020	Group Life	\$1,383,315	\$1,618,900	\$1,675,200
Retirees Life	505021	Retirees Life			
Workers' Compensation	505050	Workers' Comp	\$11,097,407	\$11,000,000	\$12,059,100
	505150	Workers' Comp	\$0	\$0	\$0
	505150	Workers' Comp	\$0	\$0	
Retirement	511631	Retirement Annuities	\$252,000	\$0	\$0
Retirement contrib	511632	Retirement Contributions	\$160,000	\$0	
Service Disability Annuities	511633	Disblility Annuities	\$72,100	\$0	\$0
Non-Service Disability Annuities	511634	Non-Service Disability	\$12,250	\$0	\$0
Other Benefit Refund Expenses	511636	Other Benefit Refund Expenses	\$497,243	\$0	\$0
Total			\$101,737,775	\$107,252,400	\$121,945,800