



Brevard County Fire Rescue
1040 South Florida Ave.
Rockledge, FL 32955
321-633-2056

TO: Frank B. Abbate, County Manager
THRU: Matthew Wallace, Public Safety Director
FROM: Patrick Voltaire, Fire Chief
SUBJ: Citizen Efficiency and Effectiveness Recommendation #2025020

CEER #2025020, titled Emergency Services, was received by the County from Mr. John Dacko.

Citizen Statement:

Brevard EMS 1: A Countywide Proposal for Free ALS Transports

Brevard County has the opportunity to create a sustainable, equitable emergency medical transport system by funding it through a 1-cent or 0.5-cent sales tax. This tax would allow all Advanced Life Support (ALS) 911 transports to be free of charge, ensuring no one hesitates to call for help due to cost concerns. Basic Life Support (BLS) services could remain billable through Brevard County Emergency Services or be contracted out to a private entity for fee-based management.

A similar model has been in place in King County, Washington, for over 40 years through their Medic One program. This system has provided exceptional emergency care to residents while removing financial barriers to critical services. Brevard County could adopt this proven approach to meet the growing demands of its community.

Citizen Recommendation:

Key Features of Brevard EMS 1

1. Sales Tax Funding:

- A countywide 1-cent or 0.5-cent sales tax would replace the current EMS funding mechanism in property taxes.
- This shift eliminates EMS-related property taxes for homeowners while ensuring sustainable funding for emergency medical services.



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- Based on Brevard's population and economic activity, a 1-cent sales tax would generate more than enough revenue to fully fund the system and provide financial stability for the long term.

2. City-Based Ambulance Deployment:

- Each city would maintain and operate its own ambulance(s) using municipal employees, fully funded through the sales tax.
- This local model ensures faster response times and a tailored approach to the unique needs of each community.

3. Countywide Collaboration:

- Cities would become direct stakeholders, with representatives sitting on a countywide governing board to oversee EMS operations.
- This ensures transparency, accountability, and consistent service standards across all areas of Brevard County.

4. Year-Round Lifeguard Services:

- Any surplus revenue from the sales tax could fund year-round lifeguard services for the county's 72 miles of coastline.
- Each city would contribute its own lifeguard staff, while a countywide organization would oversee operations to ensure safety and efficiency.

The Benefits of Brevard EMS 1

- **Free ALS Transports:** No one should hesitate to call 911 during a medical emergency due to high transport costs.
- **BLS Transports** could be managed separately, either through billing by the county or contracting with private ambulance providers to ensure cost recovery without impacting ALS services.
- **Property Tax Relief:** EMS costs would no longer be funded through property taxes, reducing the financial burden on homeowners.
- **Improved Emergency Response:** Locally stationed ambulances ensure faster response times, better coverage, and efficient use of resources.
- **Unified Services:** The governing board ensures a coordinated, transparent system that works for all cities and unincorporated areas of Brevard County.



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- **Enhanced Coastal Safety:** Year-round lifeguard services would improve safety for residents and tourists, protecting one of the county's most valuable resources—its beaches.

Why Now?

Brevard County's current EMS funding system relies on property taxes, which can create inequities and limit resources as the county grows. Transitioning to a sales tax-based model shifts the cost to a broader base, including visitors who use the county's services. This ensures that everyone contributes to maintaining a robust emergency medical system.

By adopting the Brevard EMS 1 model, the county can deliver high-quality emergency care, reduce financial stress on residents, and create a safer community for all.

Staff Analysis:

The recommendation presents one example of an Emergency Medical Service model that has been successful in a community in Washington. Some operational aspects have been adopted by BCFR, such as the "pit crew" CPR strategy developed by King County. However, the recommendations put forward as a complete model are outside the operational control of Brevard County Fire Rescue.

The Board of County Commissioners may, by ordinance, levy a discretionary sales surtax of up to 1 percent for emergency fire rescue services and facilities pursuant to Section 212.055(8), Florida Statutes. The term "emergency fire rescue services" in this context includes, but is not limited to, preventing and extinguishing fires; protecting and saving life and property from fires or natural or intentional acts or disasters; enforcing municipal, county, or state fire prevention codes and laws pertaining to the prevention and control of fires; and providing prehospital emergency medical treatment.

Upon the adoption of an ordinance, the levy of the surtax must be placed on the ballot by the Board of County Commissioners. The ordinance will only take effect if approved by a majority of the electors of the County voting in a referendum placed on the ballot of a general (even year) election. Surtax collections shall be initiated on January 1 of the year following a successful referendum.

Pursuant to Section 212.054(4), Florida Statutes, the proceeds of the discretionary surtax, less an administrative fee that may be retained by the Department of Revenue ("DOR"), shall be distributed by DOR to the County. The County shall distribute the proceeds it receives from



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DOR to each local government entity providing emergency fire rescue services in the County. The surtax proceeds, less an administrative fee not to exceed 2 percent of the surtax collected, shall be distributed by the County based on each entity's average annual expenditures for fire control and emergency fire rescue services in the 5 fiscal years preceding the fiscal year in which the surtax takes effect in proportion to the average annual total of the expenditures for such entities in the 5 fiscal years preceding the fiscal year in which the surtax takes effect. The County shall revise the distribution proportions to reflect a change in the service area of an entity receiving a distribution of the surtax proceeds. If an entity declines its share of surtax revenue, such revenue shall be redistributed proportionally to the entities that are participating in the sharing of such revenue based on each participating entity's average annual expenditures for fire control and emergency fire rescue services in the preceding 5 fiscal years in proportion to the average annual total of the expenditures for the participating entities in the preceding 5 fiscal years.

Upon the surtax taking effect and initiation of collections, each local government entity receiving a share of surtax proceeds shall reduce the ad valorem tax levy or any non-ad valorem assessment for fire control and emergency rescue services in its next and subsequent budgets by the estimated amount of revenue provided by the surtax. In other words, the surtax is not intended to supplement existing revenue sources, but instead replace them.

Use of these surtax proceeds does not relieve a local government entity from complying with Chapter 200 and any related provision of law that establishes millage caps or limits undesignated budget reserves and procedures for establishing rollback rates for ad valorem taxes and budget adoption. If surtax collections exceed projected collections in any fiscal year, any surplus distribution shall be used to further reduce ad valorem taxes in the next fiscal year. These proceeds shall be applied as a rebate to the final millage, after the TRIM notice is completed in accordance with this provision. If a local government entity receiving a share of the surtax is unable to further reduce ad valorem taxes because the millage rate is zero, the funds shall be applied to reduce any non-ad valorem assessments levied for the purposes described in this section. If no ad valorem or non-ad valorem reduction is possible, the surplus surtax collections shall be returned to the County, and the County shall reduce the County millage rates to offset the surplus surtax proceeds.



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Staff Recommended Action:

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners reject CEER #2025020 because it is outside of the Board's exclusive authority and control as it would require approval by the voters at a referendum that cannot be held until November 2026 at the earliest. It would entail a significant planning exercise with multiple local government bodies and municipal agencies to dramatically reimagine the provision and funding of fire control and emergency fire rescue services throughout the County, with no assurance that the referendum would be approved. That exercise may hinder current efforts to address fire control and emergency fire rescue services funding concerns through measures that are within the control and authority of the Board of County Commissioners.

CC: Frank Abbate, County Manager

Horst, Rachel

From: CEER@brevardfl.gov
Sent: Saturday, January 11, 2025 1:29 PM
To: Horst, Rachel
Subject: A new CEER Recommendation has been submitted as ID #2026020

Recommendation # 2026020

Dear CEER Administrator,

Speak Up Brevard Recommendation ID #2026020 has been submitted. Please login to the CEER Application to start the recommendation evaluation workflow.

Contact Information:

Group/Organization

Name	John E Dacko
Address	1558 Meadow Lark Dr, Titusville FL 32780
Phone	(321) 258-7583
Email	Srfderrth@bellsouth.net
Alternate Email	

Recommendation Information:

Recommendation ID	2026020
Recommendation Title	Emergency Services
Areas Affected	All of Brevard County
Department Affected	FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT
Current problem	See attached Word Documentation for a full analysis
Recommendation	See attached Word Documentation for a full analysis
Attachments	Brevard EMS 1 Proposal.docx

Please do not reply to this e-mail, as it will go to an unmonitored mailbox.

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