

IAFF Asks EMS Employees To Abstain From Volunteering In Order To Leave Shifts Unfilled

County Officials have been made aware of a letter circulating local Fire and EMS Stations urging members to not volunteer at stations during critical times. It appears that this request is being made in order to justify future staffing levels with Allegany County EMS. This letter was penned by IAFF Local 203, at the urging of IAFF Local 1715. This information has been provided by several different sources, and comes on the heels of a Public Board of County Commissioners meeting where Union members accused the Commissioners of endangering the public.

Department of Emergency Services employee and IAFF 1715 President Steven Corioni spoke at the Public Business Meeting on Thursday, August 22nd, and read a series of headlines that he predicted were coming to the area due to “reckless layoffs and budget cuts that you’ve done to our EMS system.” After reading the series of tragic headlines, he stated, “These are all things I don’t want to see happen in Allegany County.” He continued that, “These things happen, we get that . . . but when we actively take moves that increases the likelihood of these things happening in our community, I think it should get our attention.”

When discussing the County’s budget cuts, he indicated, “I think it’s a shame. I think it’s going to hurt the community. I think it’s going to hurt our ability to respond to calls. It’s going to put more stress on our people because our people are going to be running more calls...” He further indicated that this was a burden he is choosing to take on, to make the public aware of the Commissioners wrongdoing, stating, “If this does result in bad things, I’m going to be the bad guy. I’m going to make sure the public knows about it because the public needs to know. They have a right to know.”

Following his presentation, Corioni was asked, “You’d agree with me that volunteers helping out at this point would be essential?” by County Attorney Lee Beeman. Corioni responded, “It absolutely is,” and further indicated that “We didn’t force our way into any station.” County Administrator Jason Bennett indicated to Corioni that he had received information from numerous sources indicating that Allegany County’s paid DES employees were discouraging volunteers from volunteering and asked the IAFF 1715 members present if their group was discouraging volunteerism. Corioni responded, “No,” while Luke Merkel, another member of IAFF 1715 leadership stated, “I will guarantee you that’s not happening.” Corioni indicated that volunteerism will temporarily increase, but that “. . . [Paid providers] existed in those places because they needed us and it’s not going to take long that they’re going to not be able to meet the demand and they’re going to need us again.”

Despite Corioni’s reassurances that IAFF 1715 was supporting volunteerism, it appears that IAFF’s position depends on their audience. Allegany County officials have received a truly disturbing communication that was forwarded by IAFF 203 (Cumberland Fire Department) leadership to its membership. In it, IAFF 203 Secretary, Nicholas Miller indicates that they are putting out the following requests at the request of IAFF 1715.

While Corioni has accused the Commissioners of engaging in reckless budget cuts, IAFF 1715’s actions intentionally sabotaging volunteer efforts is outrageously irresponsible and likely a breach of the ethical responsibilities that its members hold as licensed EMTs and Paramedics. According to IAFF 203’s

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David J. Caporale, President

William R. Atkinson, Commissioner

Creade V. Brodie, Jr., Commissioner

Jason M. Bennett, CPA, Administrator

T. Lee Beeman, Esq, Attorney

correspondence, IAFF 1715 requested that its members refrain from volunteering at Allegany County volunteer departments that provide EMS, including Cresaptown VFD, Mount Savage VFD, Tri-Towns EMS, LaVale, VRS, and Georges Creek Ambulance Service. IAFF 1715 further requested that IAFF 203 members refrain from working part-time work with Allegany County. David Caporale, President of the Board of County Commissioners stated, "When we began examining budget cuts, we approached this in a manner that would allow us to provide service to the most members of the County possible, while cutting down on built in overtime. We failed to get the Union's buy-in to move forward in that manner, but moved forward in the best way we were able. To find that the Union is intentionally sabotaging the efforts of volunteers to support the EMS system is not only disappointing, but entirely disingenuous to the communities they serve."

Cumberland Fire Fighters, IAFF Local 203
123 E Roberts St, Cumberland MD 21502

August 11th,

Membership of IAFF Local 203, as of August 9th, 2024, the Government of Allegany County, Maryland, enacted budget cuts to their Emergency Services division. These cuts have resulted in the immediate layoffs of six DES employees (four EMT's and two Paramedic's) along with coverage time changes at two stations.

These coverage changes affect Cresaptown and LaVale bringing both stations down to only 12 hour coverage. The crew working at Cresaptown will staff the station for 12 hours before moving to LaVale to finish another 12 hours there or vis versa. This will leave both stations with opposite hours of no DES staffing with the Allegany County Governments FaceBook pages "media release" stating: "leveraging the volunteer community to fill in any gaps created by these changes."

IAFF Local 1715 Allegany County Emergency Services has reached out to us asking for our memberships support and assistance in helping them justify and reobtain adequate staffing out county stations. They have asked that any of our members who are also active members of these Allegany County volunteer departments that provide EMS; Cresaptown VFD (Co. 9), Mount Savage VFD (Co.15), Tri-Towns EMS (Co.50), LaVale VRS (Co. 52), and Georges Creek Ambulance Service (Co.55) to abstain from running volunteer EMS calls during this time. They have also asked that our members refrain from working part-time jobs with Allegany County Department of Emergency Services or any of the above mentioned volunteer companies. While this affects only a small portion of our membership, Local 203 asks its members to honor the request of our fellow IAFF brothers and sisters until further notice.

Sincerely,



Nicholas Miller, NRP
IAFF L203 Secretary