

**City of Alexandria, Virginia**  
**FY 2023 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP**  
**Budget Questions & Answers**

**April 2, 2022**

**Question:** Can you provide alternate funding scenarios for the SCBA Fleet Replacement, including a more gradual, annual schedule of equipment replacements over the life of the CIP?

**Response:**

The current CIP project recommends \$4.4M in FY 2028, and \$4.6M in FY 2029 in order to complete a replacement of the fleet of SCBAs in the Fire Department. This allows the Department to replace all SCBAs at one time and be on the same version and standard throughout the Department.

The Fire Department would not recommend replacing smaller amounts of SCBA over a more spread-out period. It is safer and logistically efficient to utilize only one version of an SCBA as opposed to even slightly different versions of SCBA. The National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) works to update the standards for breathing apparatus every five years often causing versions to become incompatible with previous standards. The repair parts also change, making it costly and impractical to stock enough parts in the City's in-house repair center. Currently, Arlington County uses regulators that will not connect to any Alexandria units. Most fire departments elect to use the same model year SCBA and components for these reasons and replace equipment all at one time.

Some jurisdictions lease their breathing apparatus and heart monitors in order to spread the cost over a period of years. Estimates were provided for a 5-year lease of this equipment which were then inflated to FY 2028/2029 costs. The interest rate is 2.75% (subject to change in any year even during the lease) and is estimated to be \$1.975M per year (FY 2028 dollars) for five years. This totals \$9.9M over the five years (subject to different interest rates). This option could have the side effect of using debt capacity for this item, along with paying a financing charge for the equipment. Shorter lease options are available, such as two to three years, but the manufacturer did not have any lease plan longer than five years.

Since the last purchase, the cost of SCBA has gone up in price per unit by double. The Department paid \$5,195 per pack in 2014/2015 and the equivalent equipment is now \$11,900 (FY 22 dollars).