

# COUNTY OF YORK

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** May 21, 2025

**TO:** York County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Mark L. Bellamy, Jr., County Administrator 

**SUBJECT:** Replacement of Hazardous Materials Training Facility Modular Classroom Space

### **Background:**

In 2013, York County's Department of Fire and Life Safety (YCFLS) and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) formalized a long-standing partnership to support hazardous materials (HazMat) response training throughout the Commonwealth. This collaboration began years earlier, when VDEM sought a new training site for HazMat Technicians and Specialists. YCFLS stepped in by offering space at the York County Department of Fire and Life Safety/Dominion Power Training Center, allowing critical training to continue despite logistical challenges such as transporting training props and using off-site locations for some exercises.

This training has been essential for maintaining regional and statewide readiness to respond to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) threats. Recognizing the need for a permanent solution, VDEM and YCFLS evaluated several potential sites and ultimately selected the Fire Station #6 property in Seaford. The site was developed using in-house staff, donated used modular classroom trailers from the York County School Division, state grant funding, and private-sector support.

A formal use agreement was finalized in 2013. While the facility remains County property, its development was made possible through efforts by the County, VDEM and other partnerships. Since then, the site has trained thousands of emergency responders, who return to their communities with enhanced skills and capabilities. The facility also contributes to the local economy through visitor spending and provides a local training venue for YCFLS personnel, reducing costs and improving access to essential training.

Importantly, the facility has also served as a vital resource for a variety of additional YCFLS needs including recruit school academies, other training classes and logistics operations—especially critical after the loss of training space previously available at the Yorktown Dominion Power Station.

### **Current Initiative:**

The modular classroom trailers currently in use, now more than 25 years old, were originally donated by the School Division and required significant repairs when first installed. After years of ongoing maintenance, the facilities have surpassed their useful life and are no longer sustainable. While initial efforts to fund permanent brick-and-mortar buildings were unsuccessful, VDEM secured funding to replace the current

trailers with newer, larger modular units. These new units will be more energy-efficient, require less maintenance, and provide a long-term solution for both HazMat/CBRNE and a variety of YCFLS training needs.

The County envisions purchasing the new modular units—including installation—at an estimated cost of \$1.6 million and entering into a 10-year lease with the Commonwealth. This lease and other associated funding is projected to generate approximately \$1.9 million in revenue over its term. Like the County, the State includes a "subject to appropriation" clause in its agreements. While this does present some risk, it is not anticipated to be an issue given the importance of this public safety initiative.

Further the new facilities are expected to remain viable well beyond the initial lease term providing a durable and flexible training asset to the County for many years. It is also a possibility that VDEM may seek a lease extension beyond the initial ten year term.

Although the current cost estimate does not include trailer removal, the County is working with an organization interested in acquiring and removing the old units at no cost. If this option is unavailable, County staff are prepared to handle dismantling and disposal in-house.

Replacing the aging modular classrooms is in the best interest of York County and ensures the continued viability of this critical training facility. Funded through VDEM and the Commonwealth of Virginia, this project will enhance operational efficiency and provide much-needed classroom space, not only for statewide HazMat/CBRNE training, but also for the many training needs of the Department of Fire and Life Safety, which is in urgent need of dedicated, reliable space.

**Next Steps:**

We will be bringing this to the Board at the next Work Session on June 3, 2025. Pending final approvals, the County will move to finalize the lease agreement with the Commonwealth and begin procurement. The Board of Supervisors is expected to be asked in June to authorize the lease and grant the authority to proceed with the procurement and installation of the new modular units.

Kopczynski/3612