

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF STATE LEGISLATION ADDRESSING THE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER
AND EMS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CRISIS

WHEREAS, Throughout the state, municipalities are grappling with a shortage of volunteer firefighter and EMS personnel in their communities; and

WHEREAS, the shortage of available personnel is both an issue within volunteer fire companies as well as community ambulance corps; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board of the Town of Dryden recognizes the importance of our Volunteer Fire and Ambulance service members to maintain the public safety of the residents of the Town of Dryden;

WHEREAS, according to a 2015 study by the Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY), volunteer firefighters alone save New York State more than \$3 billion each year; and

WHEREAS, as training requirements and call volumes have increased, it has become harder for volunteers to make the time commitment departments need; and

WHEREAS, according to FASNY, the number of volunteer firefighters in New York State has dropped from 110,000 in 1990 to fewer than 100,000 today; and

WHEREAS, volunteer firefighters and members of ambulance corps do not receive any direct monetary compensation for their service; and

WHEREAS, towns across the state have been working on this issue for decades; and

WHEREAS, counties have had to petition the State on an individual basis for the authority to provide real property tax exemptions for volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance service members and to continue this exemption in the case of certain un-remarried spouses of deceased volunteers, as well as to provide lifetime exemptions for members with 20-years or more of service; and

WHEREAS, there is presently a bill in the committee for the County of Westchester, S6811, that states that "an enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service or such enrolled member and spouse shall be exempt from taxation to the extent of ten percent of the assessed value of such property for city, village, town, part town, school district, special district or county purposes, exclusive of special assessments, provided that the governing body of a city, village, town, school district, or county, after a public hearing, adopts a local law, ordinance or resolution providing therefor"; and

WHEREAS, converting S6811 to have statewide application would benefit communities and volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance members across the State; and

BE IT RESOLVED That the Town Board of the Town of Dryden supports statewide legislation to provide property tax benefits to our volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance members, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk to the Board shall forward copies of this resolution to Governor Kathy Hochul, New York State Senator Peter Oberacker, New York State Assemblywoman Anna Kelles, the New York State Association of Towns, and all others deemed necessary and proper.