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Contact: Rob Wattsman
PresidentL2562@gmail.com
518.542.3929

Cohoes Fire Fighters Call on City Officials to Act Swiftly in Hiring New Recruits

Cohoes Fire Fighters are urging members of the City Council and the Mayor to support hiring of three fire fighters this summer to ensure adequate staffing in light of a series of anticipated retirements from the existing roster of 32.

The comments were offered by Rob Wattsman, president of the Uniformed Fire Fighters of Cohoes during the public comment period of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Cohoes City Council.

“By hiring three new recruits, the city will maintain a roster of 32 active fire fighters – each prepared to respond to our nearly 3,655 calls for help each year. Over the course of the last year, that means that within our City of 16,500 residents there was an alarm every two-hours and twenty-four minutes.

While training may be scheduled to begin in 104 days – the recruitment and hiring process is approaching rapidly.

The path to the academy also begins much sooner than that. In fact, it is our estimate that if the traditional process is followed our new fire fighters would be sworn in on August 2 – 97 days from now.

However, before that they must also be subject to an assessment of their physical fitness and participate in an interview estimated to take place on July 12 – 76 days from today.

In addition, a canvass of candidates to be considered, based on their performance of the qualifying exam would be July 5 – 69 days from today.

The recent news that the City’s financial circumstances have dramatically improved is terrific in every way. And, while there are many local needs worthy of consideration we believe hiring three replacement fire fighters – which are necessary due to attrition – is why the American Rescue Plan was authorized by Congress and signed into law by President Biden – and it can and should begin in less than 10 weeks.

We look forward to discussing this important initiative and respectfully request your support.”

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The 32 members of the Uniformed Fire Fighters of Cohoes – IAFF Local 2562 serve the city’s 16,500 residents, as well as business owners and visitors. Local 2562 is affiliated with the 18,000-member New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association and the 324,000-member International Association of Fire Fighters.