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OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE 153RD ANNUAL
MEETING OF THE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF THE
STATE OF NEW YORK, HELD FROM THE 7TH DAY OF
AUGUST THROUGH THE 9TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2025, HYATT
REGENCY, HAUPPAUGE, NEW YORK.

August 7, 2025

B E F O R E: EUGENE PERRY, JR., President

Jamie J. Woodard

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2 MR. PERRY: Can everybody please take their
3 seats? There will be no standing in the back of
4 the room. Everybody has to be seated.

5 Good morning, everyone.

6 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

7 MR. PERRY: Welcome to Long Island. We are
8 excited to be here for our annual meeting and
9 convention. I would ask everyone to please take
10 your seats as we are about to begin the opening
11 session.

12 The fire exits are in the rear of the
13 ballroom. If there is an emergency at any point
14 during the program, it will be announced from the
15 dais. Please exit the ballroom and the building
16 in an orderly fashion.

17 I am also asking everyone to please silence
18 your cellphones and pagers.

19 At this time, I would like to call upon the
20 Van Guard Hose Company of the Patchogue Fire
21 Department to present our nation's colors.

22 Can you please stand.

23 (Whereupon, the Colors were posted by the
24 Van Guard Hose Company of the Patchogue Fire
25 Department.)

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2 MR. PERRY: I will now ask our Chaplain,
3 Barrie-Lyn Forster, to deliver the invocation.

4 (Invocation by Chaplain Barrie-Lyn Foster.)

5 MR. PERRY: I will now call upon
6 Sergeant-at-Arms to lead us in the Pledge of
7 Allegiance.

8 (Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was
9 recited by Sergeant-at-Arms Juan Batta and the
10 audience members.)

11 MR. PERRY: Thank you. Mr.
12 Sergeant-at-Arms, do we have a quorum?

13 SGT-AT-ARMS BATTA: Yes, we do,
14 Mr. President.

15 MR. PERRY: Thank you. Everyone can be
16 seated.

17 I would like to welcome everyone to the
18 2025 Firefighters Association of the State of New
19 York 153rd Annual Meeting and Convention.

20 At this time, I would call the meeting to
21 order.
22 (Whereupon, a video was played from Senator
23 Kirsten Gillibrand.)
24 MR. PERRY: I would like to introduce our
25 invited guests and ask them to say a few words.

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2 The first one would be our Suffolk County
3 Executive Edward P. Romaine.
4 (Applause.)
5 MR. ROMAINE: Good morning.
6 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.
7 MR. ROMAINE: And welcome to Suffolk
8 County. Very happy to be here. Very happy to
9 Gene Perry, who is a great firefighter in the
10 Patchogue Fire Department. He's your president,
11 and I'm happy to be joined by a number of our
12 officials. We have some state senators here.
13 Monica, give a wave. We have some state
14 assemblymen here, some county legislators, our
15 county clerk, who has been a firefighter in
16 Nesconset for 53 years, our Sheriff, Dr. Toulon,
17 give a wave; and of course, our director of fire

18 rescue and emergency management, Rudy Sunderman,
19 who has done a great job for us.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. ROMAINE: What a great place to have a
22 convention, and I want to thank the FASNY
23 officers for the job they do throughout the state
24 of New York to make sure our communities are
25 safe.

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2 Suffolk County is the first English
3 speaking county that was settled in New York. We
4 were settled in 1640 in Southampton and Southold,
5 and we're the county that the sun hits first in
6 New York state. We're the eastern most county,
7 and we're the fourth largest county in the state.
8 Only Queens, Kings, and Bronx are larger. We
9 have a million and a half people here. So we
10 stretch all the way from the Nassau line, all the
11 way out to Fisher's Island, so kind of unique,
12 but great, and we have over 13,000 firefighters
13 in this county. When I think of a county, I
14 think of all the small communities that make up

15 Suffolk County, and believe it or not, each of
16 those communities are defined in a large way by
17 the fire departments and fire districts that
18 number Suffolk County. What people don't realize
19 is that we have a 109 fire departments and fire
20 taxing districts that allow our department to
21 have some of the finest equipment that they have,
22 but the equipment is nothing without the
23 leadership of the departments that are in this
24 county. They do a great job protecting us, and
25 when -- all members of FASNY, and we're so happy

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2 that we have our volunteer firefighters. They
3 make the difference in our communities. They are
4 the leaders in each of our communities, and we
5 depend on them, and they have never let us down.

6 I just want to point out that I know
7 firefighting has become a little bit more
8 difficult to retain people, and we're doing
9 everything we can to provide incentives. I want
10 to point out that one of our county
11 legislatives -- Dominick, give a wave -- Thank
12 you -- Dominick Thorne introduced legislation,

13 which I was very happy to sign at the Brookhaven
14 Fire Department, which I believe our president's
15 son is a member of that department, and that was
16 an incentive where we gave preference to
17 firefighters and EMS workers for affordable
18 houses, something that's becoming a little bit
19 more difficult on this island to achieve, and we
20 wanted to make sure that any affordable housing
21 that was being built that had some type of --
22 usually does -- some type of government incentive
23 that firefighters got preference for those as a
24 way to retain and recruit firefighters, and I'm
25 hoping that that type of initiative becomes a

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2 statewide initiative so we recognize the value of
3 our firefighters, but again, thank you. I see
4 our former president in the back here from
5 Selden, a dear friend.

6 So I'm happy to be here, and I cannot say
7 thank you enough for what you do for your
8 communities. You help define them, and far more
9 importantly, you help protect them, and you

10 protect life. We appreciate it so much. I know
11 you work very closely -- I see one of our chief
12 of patrols is here from the Suffolk County Police
13 Department. We want to work very closely with
14 all of our police departments with our
15 firefighters. Together we protect our
16 communities.

17 God bless you for what you do. God speed.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. PERRY: Our next speaker will be the
20 Commissioner of Suffolk County Fire Rescue and
21 Emergency Services, Rudy Sunderman.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. SUNDERMAN: Good morning.

24 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

25 MR. SUNDERMAN: As you heard from the

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2 county executive, I'm the commissioner of the
3 department of fire and rescue and emergency
4 services. I would like to thank everyone
5 attending the annual FASNY conference, and I
6 would like to welcome everyone here to our home,
7 the County of Suffolk. We are very excited about

8 holding this annual conference here in Suffolk
9 County. Thank you to the directors, the
10 officers, the staff, and all FASNY members for
11 making this happen.

12 I would first like to recognize FASNY
13 President Eugene Perry from the Patchogue Fire
14 Department. Gene's dedication to the fire
15 service is amazing. He's always answering the
16 phone, attending meetings, and striving to make
17 the volunteer fire service a better place. For
18 that, I commend him and thank him for his
19 service.

20 I would also like to thank our local
21 director and trustee from FASNY, Frank Guarino
22 and Bob Sutton, as their hard work does not go
23 unnoticed.

24 As some of you know, I'm a current
25 volunteer in the Mastic Fire Department for

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2 almost 39 years. Last night we were at a fire in
3 Brookhaven until 1:00 a.m. in the morning. I was
4 the chauffeur of the engine. I'm also a former

5 fire chief and current fire commissioner in the
6 Mastic Fire Department and a former chief in the
7 Mastic Ambulance. As a leader, I value the
8 dedication and the commitment each and every one
9 here does back home in your communities, day in
10 day and day out, 24/7, as a volunteer fire and
11 EMS provider.

12 I would like to thank you and your families
13 for your dedication and service to your
14 communities.

15 Suffolk County Fire and Emergency Service
16 supports 109 fire departments as you heard and 27
17 independent EMS agencies in Suffolk County. We
18 have approximately 13,000 volunteer fire and EMS
19 members proudly serving 1.5 million residents.
20 Our communication division answered over 4,000
21 phone alarms last year, with approximately
22 300,000 being 911 emergency calls, 400,000 phone
23 alarms, 300,000 being 911 emergencies. In our
24 department of fire rescue and emergency services,
25 we also have the county fire marshals, the EMS

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3 and finance, and also our administration
4 division. I can talk for hours about what each
5 division does, because they are great at what
6 they do, and they are all proudly serving the
7 county residents while providing support and
8 resources to our fire and EMS agencies. We have
9 a very close relationship and a partnership with
10 the Suffolk County Fire Academy. That's where
11 our Suffolk County bravest are trained. Last
12 year the Suffolk County Fire Academy hosted over
13 2,000 classes with a total of 53,000 student
14 contacts. We have some of the best leadership
15 and instructors training our dedicated volunteer
16 fire and EMS personnel. This is what makes
17 Suffolk County stand out.

18 In August of 2024, Suffolk County
19 experienced a large scale flooding event,
20 resulting in nearly 3,000 residential homes
21 damaged and between 6 to 10 inches of rainfall
22 within a four to six hour period. The severity
23 of the storm led to federal major disaster
24 declaration, which reported damages totally
25 approximately 54 million dollars. The intense

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2 rainfall led to the breach of two local damns,
3 Mill Pond and Stump Pond, causing widespread
4 flooding across residential, commercial, and
5 public areas and resulted in severe damage to 70
6 structures. This event resulted in volunteer
7 fire and EMS departments responding to a total of
8 1,224 calls within a 24 hour period.

9 In March of 2025, we had a large scale
10 wildfire, known as the Westhampton Pines
11 Wildfire. It was the third largest brush fire in
12 Suffolk County since the 1995 and 2012 wildfires.
13 We had over 91 volunteer fire and EMS agencies
14 respond from Suffolk and Nassau, along with the
15 New York State Army National Guard and our Air
16 National Guard with water drops supports.
17 Additionally, we had support from many local law
18 enforcement agencies assisting with road closures
19 and security. Also providing support to Suffolk
20 County was the New York DEC and the New York
21 State OFPC. Our commitment to public safety was
22 parallel. The volunteers worked nonstop
23 throughout the day and night to accomplish
24 extinguishment and containment. A special thank
25 you to the Westhampton Beach Fire Department and

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2 the Westhampton Beach Ambulance. As we all know,
3 responding agencies for their quick response
4 action did a great job. We are also grateful
5 when all levels of government come together for
6 one common goal, the residents of Suffolk County.

7 I'm looking forward to the next few days of
8 this conference, from the upcoming speakers, to
9 the hot training, hosted by the Suffolk County
10 Fire Academy and the Suffolk County EMS Division.

11 If anyone would like a tour of the Suffolk
12 County Fire Rescue Emergency Service facility, or
13 the Suffolk County Fire Academy, while you are
14 here, please let me know.

15 I wish everyone a great conference, and I
16 look forward to seeing you over the next few
17 days.

18 Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. PERRY: Our next speaker will be Chief
21 Gerald Hardy, Chief of Patrol of the Suffolk
22 County Police Department representing Suffolk
23 County Police Commissioner Kevin Catalina.

24 (Applause.)

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2 for all for being here today. I want to thank
3 Gene, and I want to thank the Board for inviting
4 me to speak before you today. I will keep my
5 remarks brief.

6 First of all, I want to welcome everyone to
7 Suffolk County. It's an incredible place to live
8 and to vacation and to spend some time in, so I
9 hope you enjoy your next few days here, and I
10 hope you get a lot out of the conference.

11 I've been in law enforcement for 34 years.
12 I've been a member of the Suffolk County Police
13 Department for that entire time. Actually, I did
14 do a brief stint in New York City as a probation
15 officer when I was beginning my career, but the
16 Suffolk County Police Department is an incredible
17 department, and the work that we do, we would not
18 be able to get that work done without the support
19 of hardworking men and women of our fire and
20 rescue services of Suffolk County. I just heard
21 the county executive mention that there's 13,000

22 members. That was new to me. I was aware that
23 we have 109 departments in the Suffolk County
24 area, so the work that we do every day would not
25 get done without the work of our volunteer

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2 organizations. I remember as a young cop in the
3 third precinct in Brentwood, I had a very good
4 working relationship with the Brentwood Legion
5 Ambulance. They were incredible, and it was a
6 really good feeling to see them rolling down the
7 block either in a fire truck or an ambulance. We
8 knew that we were covered, and we were going to
9 get the job done.

10 So I won't belabor the point, but I just
11 want to welcome everyone. I want to thank you
12 all for being here. I want you to enjoy your
13 time in Suffolk County, and thank you for all
14 being here.

15 Thank you.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. PERRY: Next, we have Dr. Errol D.
18 Toulon, Jr., our Suffolk County Sheriff.

19 (Applause.)

20 DR. TOULON: Good morning.
21 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.
22 DR. TOULON: Thank you to the president and
23 the board for all that you're doing. I can tell
24 you that the fire service is probably one of the
25 most difficult, even though I've worked in jails

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2 my entire career. Very quickly, when I was a
3 young correction officer, I thought I wanted to
4 be a firefighter in New York City, and I took the
5 test, and then I realized -- or I should say my
6 wife at the time told me you know you're scared
7 of fires, so why are you going to do that.

8 (Laughter.)

9 DR. TOULON: So I wound up staying on
10 Rikers Island for the rest of my career, but more
11 importantly, you know, outside welcoming you to
12 Long Island and to this conference. I want to
13 thank you, because I've heard what's going on
14 with mental health in the fire service, and I can
15 tell you how important it is to me to partner and
16 collaborate with the fire service on this

17 initiative. You know, I started my career in
18 August of 1982, so I'm almost 43 years in, but I
19 have experienced lymphoma, pancreatic cancer,
20 skin cancer, a cardiac tamponade. My first wife
21 passed away from suicide after 29 years, and when
22 I worked for Mayor Deblasio, and I was a deputy
23 commissioner, he forced me to resign. So for an
24 entire year dealing with trying to pay bills and
25 trying to make ends meet is something that I know

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2 all of us have experienced. One of those that I
3 may have gone through, Chief Kenny, wherever you
4 are, God bless you. You're in my thoughts and
5 prayers, and I thank you for your resiliency, but
6 more importantly, we have to take care of each
7 other. We have to stand with each other. We
8 never know what the person in front of you or
9 behind you is going through, and we have to be a
10 little bit more humane.

11 So I stand with you. I thank you for your
12 service. God bless all of you and your families.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. PERRY: Our last speaker just left the

15 room, but that is Luci Cabriola-Cuff, the Deputy
16 New York State Fire Administrator, so we will
17 just -- We have several other dignitaries in
18 attendance, and I would like to acknowledge them.
19 Please stand when your name is called, and I
20 would ask everyone to hold their applause until
21 the end.

22 We have Lindsay Ekizian, Community Affairs
23 Representative for Congressman Andrew Gabarino,
24 the Second Congressional District; New York State
25 Senator Monica R. Martinez, Fourth Senatorial

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2 District; New York State Assemblyman Michael
3 Fitzpatrick, Eight Legislative District; our
4 Suffolk County Clerk, Vincent Puleo; Paul Marra,
5 Suffolk County EMS Coordinator; Trish Bergin,
6 Suffolk County Legislator, Tenth Legislative
7 District; Dominick Thorne, Suffolk County
8 Legislator and Chairman of the Suffolk County
9 Fire Rescue Committee; Joseph Trzedpizur, Deputy
10 Commissioner, Suffolk County Fire Rescue and
11 Emergency Services; Allison Alevoli, Director,

12 Suffolk County Emergency Management; Scott
13 Davonski, our Executive Director of Suffolk
14 County Fire Academy; Daniel Sicilian, Deputy
15 Director, Suffolk County Fire Academy; Toni
16 Casey, President of the Ladies Auxiliary of the
17 Firefighters Association of the State of New
18 York.

19 From our firematic partners that are here
20 with us today, we have the Association of Fire
21 Districts of the State of New York President
22 Joseph Badala; First Vice President David
23 Denniston, Second Vice President Ralph Raymond.

24 From the New York State Association of Fire
25 Chiefs, we have Bruce Heberer, Chief Executive

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2 Officer; we have Richard L. Lyman, President; we
3 have William K. Owen, First Vice President; we
4 have Timothy Boel, Second Vice President; Anthony
5 Vincent LaFerrera, Immediate Past President; and
6 Scott Ewing, Past President.

7 From the County Fire Coordinators
8 Association of the State of New York, we have
9 President William Streicher.

10 From the New York State Association of Fire
11 Chaplains, Richard Bolster.

12 President from the Volunteer Fire Police
13 Association of the State of New York, we have
14 President John Wicks.

15 From the Suffolk County Fire Districts
16 Officers Association, we have President Scott
17 Thebold.

18 From the Suffolk County Fire Chiefs Council
19 we have President Michael R. Barry.

20 From the newly formed Firefighter Cancer
21 Awareness and Mentoring of New York State, we
22 have President Tony Cruz and Vice President Ron
23 Barz.

24 And from Discover Long Island, we have Vice
25 President Mark Weinstein.

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2 We also have New York State Assemblyman
3 Joseph DeStefano from the Third Assembly District
4 and Kwani O'Parrow from the Eleventh District. I
5 apologize for that.

6 I would like now to introduce our

7 association officers that make this association
8 work. I would ask them all to stand when I call
9 your name, and hold your applause until everyone
10 is standing.

11 My First Vice President Donald J. Farrell,
12 Second Vice President Kenneth J. Holmes, Sr.,
13 Immediate Past President Edward Tase, Jr.,
14 Director Thomas M. Arsenault, Director Michael R.
15 Caron, Director Frank Guarino, Director Michael
16 G. Karashay, Director Michael K. Krummenacker,
17 Director Robert H. Ottaviano, Jr., Director Diana
18 G. Pfersick, Director Andrew E. Pilecki, and
19 Director Paul Rieben.

20 Give them all a round of applause.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. PERRY: The appointed officers of our
23 association:

24 Association Secretary, John S.
25 D'Alessandro.

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2 Our Association Treasurer, Sean Kerwin.

3 Our Association Chaplain, Barrie-Lyn

4 Foster.

5 Our Sergeant-at-Arms is Juan C. Batta.

6 And our Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms is Eric

7 Orr.

8 Our Association Counsel is the Hannigan Law

9 Firm, Terrance S. Hannigan and Timothy C.

10 Hannigan.

11 And our Past Presidents, our history, who

12 are in attendance with us today are Past

13 President Robert N. McConville, Steven E. Klein,

14 and Edward Tase, Jr.

15 Thank you.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. PERRY: I would like to ask all of our

18 Past Directors to please stand and be recognized.

19 Thank you for all your service to our

20 association.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. PERRY: At this time I would call upon

23 the President of the Firefighters Home Board of

24 Trustees, Douglas Van Etten, to introduce his

25 board members.

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2 MR. VAN ETTEN: Good morning.

3 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

4 MR. VAN ETTEN: What a great day. It's
5 wonderful to be here on Long Island for the
6 convention. It's an honor and privilege to stand
7 before you as President of the Board of Trustees
8 of your Firefighters Home on the Hudson.

9 I am going to at this point announce our
10 trustees here with us. Vice President of the
11 board, Tony DeMarco. Please stand for your
12 applause. Secretary of the board, Marsha
13 Holland; Vinnie Ammirati, Anthony Clark, Barbara
14 Fisher, Walter Frame, James Interdonati, Michael
15 Kislack, Sr., Michael Lapinski, Thomas McKinney,
16 Robert Outhouse, Tom Rothdiener, Robert Sutton,
17 Marty Thomas. Current board, thank you for your
18 service and what you do to bring the heart to the
19 home for our members.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. VAN ETTEN: A little more challenging
22 now as I work around the room. Past trustees,
23 Fred Griffiths, Dennis Eickoff, Michael J.
24 DeVittorio, Paulie O'Brien is here somewhere.
25 There he is watching in the background. Bill

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2 Murray; past president of the board, Jerry
3 Owenburg; past president Jim Farrell, past
4 president Marilyn Schrader, past president Dave
5 Schmidt. Wayne Butts is trying to get away with
6 hiding over on this side of the room, past
7 president of the board. We also have past
8 trustee and past board of director member, Jose
9 DaRocha; past trustee Steve Klein is here
10 somewhere. I know I saw Steve. I think I've
11 caught everybody in the room. Of course, our
12 past presidents of the association also served as
13 members of the Board of Trustees. Thank you for
14 your service.

15 Thank you to these fine folks who set a
16 great example for us.

17 (Applause.)

18 MR. VAN ETTEN: I would ask you to keep in
19 your thoughts and your prayers the family of Walt
20 Geidel. Walt, past trustee, past secretary of
21 the board, amazing person, friend, colleague,
22 passed away last week. A number of us were able
23 to attend his services in Walton, New York on
24 behalf of the association, condolences. The
25 family was grateful to see us. Please keep Walt,

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2 his family, in your thoughts and prayers. Walt
3 set a standard, certainly for us trustees to
4 follow.

5 We're pleased to have with us the home
6 administrator, Keith Henchey. Keith will stand.
7 I talked about the heart of the trustees, but
8 Keith, you're the man on the ground and probably
9 the skeletal systems that carries it all. I want
10 to continue my anatomy analogue, so thank you for
11 what you do.

12 And members of the home with us who
13 certainly brings to us all the excitement,
14 energy, and enthusiasm, the man, Billy
15 Rosenhagen.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. VAN ETTEN: Our members are certainly
18 blessed with a wonderful staff led by Keith. I
19 appreciate you folks. There are a number of
20 staff members here on the island with us to help
21 support the operations this weekend of members
22 present as well as some of the fun things that
23 we'll be doing. So thank you, of course, to our

24 fine staff.

25 And finally, thank you to you all. Suffolk

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2 County, just like many in the state, have been
3 fine supporters of the home and our efforts
4 making magical things happen for our members, for
5 your contributions and your support, so thank you
6 for that.

7 Mr. President, thank you for the
8 opportunity to address the assembly.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: For those of you who
11 have come to the convention before, you know we
12 work hard to keep on the schedule. We only
13 deviate for the most important reasons. Well,
14 I'm happy to say today that we have one of those
15 very important reasons.

16 Kathy Hochul is the 57th and first female
17 governor of New York State. She began her career
18 in public service on her local town board before
19 serving as Erie County Clerk and as a member of
20 congress for New York's 26th Congressional
21 District. As Lieutenant Governor, Kathy Hochul

22 chaired the statewide Regional Economic
23 Development Councils and served as co-Chair of
24 the state's Heroin and Opioid Task Force, Women's
25 Suffrage commission, and Child Care Availability

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2 Task Force. Since being sworn into office in
3 2021, Governor Hochul has led by establishing the
4 bold vision for New York's future. She has also
5 been a strong supporter and advocate for
6 volunteer first responders and understands that
7 we are the foundation of public safety across New
8 York. On a personal note, it's important to
9 acknowledge that she has consistently attended
10 the Fallen Firefighter Ceremony every year to
11 honor our brothers and sisters who have made the
12 ultimate sacrifice.

13 Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm
14 FASNY welcome to the Governor of the State of New
15 York, Kathy Hochul.

16 (Applause.)

17 GOVERNOR HOCHUL: Thank you, Gene, for the
18 warm welcome. I'm always so honored and humbled

19 to be in a room full of people who could have
20 chosen any path in life. Most people do not go
21 through the rigors of training, the sacrifice of
22 time, the role is to put yourselves in harm's way
23 on a volunteer basis throughout the state of New
24 York, and I'm always in awe of the men and women
25 in the firefighting service, and I want to

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2 applaud you, right now, for all you do for the
3 people keeping 20 million New Yorker's safe. So
4 thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I have a
5 heart full of gratitude.

6 I also want to recognize -- You have an
7 extraordinary leader here. Gene Perry has been a
8 friend and ally, a champion, in cause of support
9 in all that you do. Just give you a little bit
10 of a break in life to understand the challenges
11 you're going through and help us understand how
12 important you are to all of us. So I want to
13 give Gene a round of applause as well, our
14 President of FASNY.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. PERRY: I would also like to give a

17 special shout out to Jackie Bray. If you don't
18 know Jackie, then you should, because she is the
19 person who calls me when there's a fire, a
20 crisis, a tragedy. She is our head of Homeland
21 Security and Emergency Services. She does an
22 extraordinary job, and please give my ally and
23 partner in government, Jackie Bray, a round of
24 applause as well.

25 (Applause.)

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2 GOVERNOR HOCHUL: I know we have a number
3 of state elected officials. I'm grateful for
4 their support -- of Monica Martinez. Senator
5 Martinez, great to see you. Mike Fitzpatrick as
6 well. Good to see you again, Mike. I know we
7 had Joe DiStefano, Kwani O'Parrow here as well
8 from the state legislatures. Thank you for your
9 support for this extraordinary organization. Ed
10 Romaine, my great friend from Suffolk County.
11 Ed, where you are? Good to see County Executive.

12 (Applause.)

13 GOVERNOR HOCHUL: Every time he sees me, he

14 needs more money, so I try and slip out the door
15 in time, our profits in tact this time. And
16 also, I know the Sheriff Toulon, I met a short
17 time ago with the County Executive as I was able
18 to come and commend the extraordinary work done
19 by the men in uniform as well keeping our
20 community safe. So I want thank Sheriff Toulon
21 for being here as well.

22 A few reflections right now is you
23 mentioned that I spent 14 years in local office.
24 Fourteen years, 10 volunteer fire companies in my
25 town. I calculated that's 140 firemen

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2 installation dinners I went to. My husband was
3 always so happy, because he knew at least 10
4 times a year he was going to get a good meal.

5 (Laughter.)

6 GOVERNOR HOCHUL: My husband was a federal
7 prosecutor in the law enforcement and felt a
8 special bond with the people in the volunteer
9 service and always enjoyed those dinners as well.
10 It gave me such an appreciation, because I saw
11 not just people gathering for annual awards, I

12 saw people gathering as a family. The bonds that
13 are created among people who are literally in the
14 line of fire in the trenches, responding to
15 emergency calls in people's homes, going into the
16 unknown with such a selfless attitude. I always
17 treasured those opportunities and to support them
18 from the local level, and I've never lost that
19 desire to do everything I can to support you.

20 There's a few things we've been able to do.
21 We want to make sure that the volunteer stipend
22 program was important, because I heard this all
23 my life that we want more people, but the cost of
24 the time away for getting the training. We said
25 let's just make life easier, let's put together a

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2 stipend program. We actually had 3,200 volunteer
3 firefighters who were able to help pick up the
4 cost for this as well, because I know all of you,
5 you want to expand the ranks to more. How do we
6 open the doors to get more people, young people
7 excited about it, have the same excitement that
8 you had when you started out making your

9 decisions? And for many I know this is
10 generational. There was grandpa and grandma,
11 mom, dad, brothers, sisters. It becomes a
12 personal journey for your family of great
13 tradition of service, but it does take its toll
14 on people, so we're trying to help with that as
15 well. We put in millions of dollars for our fire
16 service. We also are aware of one more thing,
17 the mental toll that it takes on people. I
18 acknowledge this. I have seen mental health
19 challenges from people in uniform, whether you're
20 law enforcement, firefighting service, and many
21 others, first responders. You see humanity at
22 its worst sometimes, and they're also humans, and
23 for us to finally acknowledge that we need to be
24 providing mental health support for people who
25 ask for it. Remove the stigma associated with

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2 it, because I get very concerned when I see high
3 rates of suicide for people who wear uniforms,
4 because they're crying for help and no one is
5 answering. So I want you to know I'm also
6 committed to this as well. We put a billion

7 dollars to help with mental health and launched
8 the Cares Up Program, and I want your ideas as
9 well, your ideas on what we can do to be
10 supportive so others will not be afraid of being
11 criticized or stigmatized by getting that
12 important help.

13 Now FASNY has been an organization since
14 1872. It's hard to believe how long that's gone
15 on and representing your 80,000 people across
16 this state. You're really a powerhouse, and I
17 try to interact with firefighters casually and
18 formally, and any chance I get. I'm going to the
19 Erie County fair in Buffalo, New York. Flying up
20 there tonight. Why, because tomorrow is
21 firefighters day at the fair, and I want to go
22 stop by all the trucks, and I like to climb on
23 them and get a chance to see my friends that I've
24 developed such a close relationship over many,
25 many years. So I just want you to know that I

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2 recognize something that Ralph Waldo Emerson once
3 said, "the hero is no braver than an ordinary

4 man -- I should say woman too -- but he's brave
5 five minutes longer." It's often that five
6 minutes where if something goes off in your mind
7 and you're willing to go into this place, there
8 is danger, there's fear, but I am so impressed
9 that all of you here and the people you represent
10 across this state, tens of thousands of ordinary
11 New Yorkers, who become extraordinary in the
12 moment, they are the bravest, but also I know
13 they're one of the humblest. So to them, the
14 women's auxiliary organizations, I love the
15 women's axiliary, because they're also the heart
16 and soul. They're the ones that make it all
17 happen to take off some of the burden on our
18 firefighters. I want to thank them as well.

19 And know this, I'll always have your back.
20 You've had ours. I'll have yours. So as I
21 continue on as your Governor, the highest honor
22 of my entire life as someone who started in the
23 shadow of a Bethlehem steel plant in Buffalo,
24 very, very humbled beginnings, I will never take
25 for granted the trust that people have in me, and

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2 I'll always be there for all of you.

3 So with that, I just want to say I came
4 here to say thank you. Thank you. Thank you
5 again, because I don't know where we'd be without
6 all of you being willing to do what you do and
7 the sacrifice on behalf of your fellow residents
8 across this state.

9 Thank you very much.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. FARRELL: Good morning.

12 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

13 MR. FARRELL: How do you follow up the
14 Governor?

15 (Laughter.)

16 MR. FARRELL: Bad position to be in, I
17 guess.

18 As chair of the convention and exhibits
19 committee, I look forward to all the attendees
20 having an enjoyable and productive time this
21 week.

22 Before we get down to business, I would
23 like to ask Debra Tassone from Discover Long
24 Island to say a few words.

25 (Applause.)

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MS. TASSONE: Good morning. Hello. Yes, I'm Debbie Tassone, Discover Long Island. I was on stage last year in Niagara Falls first introducing Long Island to so many of you letting you know that for the 153rd conference was going to be held at our beautiful region. I took you on a quick tour just to give an idea and a sense of what Long Island is all about. I mentioned our North Shore, where you can embrace quaint, calm, waterfront towns. If I were to explain it, you can be part of a Hallmark movie. We also reminisced for those that have been on Long Island born and raised on our beautiful wine country. How you can grab your glass of red or white and sip your way through out North Fork area. We don't discriminate with your breweries, distilleries, moonshine testing, the whole family is there. I toured you through a little shortcut us locals know through Shelter Island, which will bridge you from the North Fork to the South Fork bringing you to Sag Harbor, such history that you can see in these waterfront towns, steps away to the famed Hamptons. We talked about Montauk, and so many of you know what we call Montauk. Give

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it to me again.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: The end.

MS. TASSONE: The end. Thank you. Yes.

Steps in miles, miles from where you are right now are South Shore, our beautiful beaches, Fire Island. Get your feet in the sand. Now I'm on the stage welcoming you, so welcome to Long Island. Amongst us, oh my gosh, so many wonderful elected officials, County Executive Mr. Ed Romaine was here, and also welcoming all of you is our Vice Chair, Mr. Mark Weinstein, from Mark of Elegance. I may be on stage, but we are all here welcoming you, sharing with you what Long Island has. So I encourage you to explore it. Sip it, taste it, touch it, feel it. It is unique in each region that we have here. I'm so happy to be able to share everything that is offered. Come visit our welcome table in the lobby. We have a QR code where you can download an app, and it will show you all of the wonderful activities, the restaurants that are available for you. Grab a pair of sunglasses, because it's

24 nice and sunny out here today. I am also happy
25 to be here with President Eugene Perry, Jr. I

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2 was able to meet so many of you. Eugene, Cathy,
3 I don't know if she's in the room, but
4 congratulations. It speak miles for your
5 character and for your family.

6 Thank you for welcoming us here with this
7 extended family of yours, and I appreciate being
8 on stage once again, and I cannot leave it
9 without thanking April Rounds, who puts this
10 together for you, does an amazing job, and I have
11 such a great time working along side of her in
12 helping any way that I can and to the Hyatt
13 Regency trying to pull out all of those stops to
14 make this event a success for you.

15 So welcome to Long Island. Enjoy it, and I
16 look forward to seeing you again.

17 Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. PERRY: I want to like to thank all of
20 our guests for taking time out of their busy

21 schedules to be with us this morning. I

22 apologize if I missed anybody.

23 All of our honored guests are welcome to
24 stay for our memorial service and awards program
25 if you would like, but we certainly understand if

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2 you do need to leave.

3 At this time, I would call among
4 association Chaplain Barrie-Lyn Foster to begin
5 our annual joint FASNY/LAFASNY Memorial Service.

6 (Whereupon, there was a brief recess.)

7 (Whereupon, the Memorial Service was
8 conducted.)

9 MR. FARRELL: At this time, I now call upon
10 Mackenzie Farrell of our Firefighter of the Year
11 Committee and the Chair of our EMS Committee, Ms.
12 Wendi Walker, to begin our Annual Heroes Awards
13 Program.

14 MS. FARRELL: Good morning, President
15 Perry, Vice Presidents Farrell and Holmes, FASNY
16 officers, LAFASNY officers, Reverend Clergy,
17 delegates, members, and distinguished guests, I
18 would like to welcome everyone to the 2025 FASNY

19 and VFIS Heroes Awards Ceremony.
20 My name is MacKenzie Farrell, and I'm
21 honored to stand here before you as a member of
22 the Firefighter of the Year Committee and present
23 awards for 2025.

24 I would ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please
25 assemble the FASNY officers, the committee

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2 members of both the Firefighter of the Year and
3 EMS Committees, and this year's award recipients
4 in the main hallway.

5 Since last year's convention, the
6 Firefighter of the Year Committee received nine
7 applications for consideration, and the EMS
8 Committee received a total of four applications
9 for consideration.

10 At this time, I call upon the Nassau County
11 Firefighter Pipe and Drums and the Color Guard of
12 the Pleasant Valley Fire District to please lead
13 the 2025 EMS Provider of the Year and the 2025
14 Firefighters of the Year award winners into the
15 grand ballroom.

16 (Whereupon, the Nassau County Firefighter
17 Pipe and Drums and the Color Guard of the
18 Pleasant Valley Fire District posted the Colors.)

19 MS. FARRELL: You may be seated.

20 At this time, it gives me great pleasure to
21 turn this part of the program over to the
22 Chairwoman of the EMS Committee, Wendi Walker,
23 for the presentation of the 2025 EMS Provider of
24 the Year.

25 MS. WALKER: Good morning.

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2 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

3 MS. WALKER: I am Wendi Walker and the
4 Chairwoman of the FASNY EMS Committee. This year
5 our committee received four nomination letters
6 for 2025 EMS Provider of the Year. Our committee
7 reviewed all submission letters and chose the
8 Otisco Fire Department as this year's winner.

9 "On the early morning of July 6, 2024,
10 Otisco Fire Department was alerted to a traumatic
11 injury, a person pinned under a tree at 4812 Cook
12 Road at Wonderland Forest, a 400 acre concert
13 venue consisting of mountainous terrain and

14 hiking trails mixed in the woods and waterfalls.
15 Immediately post dispatch the Otisco Chief, cars
16 one, two, and three, checked and brought to the
17 scene unknowing what they would encounter. While
18 in route to the scene, Onondaga County 911
19 updated the Otisco car one that this would be in
20 a camping area at the Wonderland Forest and that
21 all they had was that a person was in a hammock
22 camping and the tree came down on top of her.

23 Upon arrival, the Otisco's Chiefs they were
24 directed by bystanders through the fields into
25 the woods where the patient was. With assessing

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2 the situation at hand, Otisco Chiefs Harty and
3 Spicer found the patient to have severe injuries
4 to her head, neck, and back and would require
5 chainsaws and all hands working to remove the
6 patient from under the fallen tree.

7 Otisco UTV was already on the grounds due
8 to a weekend concert and preplanning that the
9 department had gone over ahead of time.

10 Firefighter Harry Harty was to be the designated

11 person to respond directly to the grounds to pack
12 up the UTV, and there would be an incident in
13 which this case he was there in a very swift
14 manner. While assessing and communicating with
15 911 in Otisco squad two, everyone was updated
16 with a confirmed assessment of the situation,
17 conscious, breathing, and pinned under the tree.

18 We're going to need hands working here in a
19 moment to get her freed up. At this point, the
20 Otisco squad two made its arrival to the scene
21 and members grabbed available chainsaws and tools
22 to make the trek into the woods and start their
23 technical rescue. After 15 gruelling minutes of
24 working a chain saw in very close proximity to
25 the patient's head and body, removing limbs and

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2 part of the tree, members were able to gain
3 access to the patient. Upon that time, members
4 were able to have a good c-spine stabilization
5 and full assessment of the patient. It was found
6 that she had a severe head wound and possible
7 broken back and neck. Members acted swiftly to
8 package the patient and carefully extricate her

9 from underneath the remaining hammock and canopy
10 to a backboard. From there they were able to get
11 her into a Stokes basket and into the Otisco UTV
12 that was eagerly waiting. Members were able to
13 escort the patient all the way out of the woods
14 through the field into a designated staging area
15 for the arrival of the Marcellus ambulance. She
16 was transported to Upstate Community Trauma
17 Center for further diagnosis and emergency
18 surgeries.

19 I am happy to announce that I have kept in
20 constant contact with the patient, and to this
21 day, she is still making it through her physical
22 therapy and on her road to recovery.

23 She can not thank the members who were
24 there that early morning for saving her life,
25 being by her side and for all that they do.

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2 For this, I, Tyler Harty, Chief of the
3 Otisco Fire Department, would like to nominate
4 the following members of the Otisco Fire
5 Department for the 2025 EMS Provider of the Year:

6 Austin Shute, Ben Reed, Don Nichols, Doug
7 Bloodgood, Harry Harty, Kate Fischer, Mike
8 Spicer, and Terry Fischer."

9 Today we have Austin Shute and Harry Harty
10 with us, along with their Chief, Tyler Harty.

11 Ladies and Gentlemen, I present to you the
12 FASNY 2025 EMS Providers of the Year.

13 (Applause.)

14 MS. WALKER: Everyone can be seated. You
15 guys stay standing.

16 (Laughter.)

17 MS. WALKER: I call upon President Perry to
18 present the Medal of Valor to our recipients.

19 (Whereupon, President Perry presented the
20 Medal of Valor to the recipients.)

21 MS. WALKER: I call upon Vice President
22 Farrell to present the Life Saving Bar to our
23 recipients.

24 (Whereupon, Vice President Farrell
25 presented the Life Saving Bar to the recipients.)

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2 MR. FARRELL: Gentlemen, congratulations,
3 and thank you very much. Proudly wear the bar on

4 your uniform.

5 Thank you so much.

6 Congratulations.

7 MS. WALKER: I now call upon Vice President
8 Holmes to present the monetary award to Chief
9 Tyler Harty.

10 (Whereupon, Vice President Holmes presented
11 a monetary gift to Chief Tyler Harty.)

12 MS. WALKER: I'll now call upon Joseph
13 Georgio from VFIS to present the plaque to Chief
14 Harty of the Otisco Fire Department for their
15 heroic actions.

16 (Whereupon, Joseph Georgio from VFIS,
17 presented a plaque to Chief Tyler Harty.)

18 MS. WALKER: Now at this time, we'd like to
19 let Chief Harty say a few words.

20 CHIEF HARTY: How's everybody doing today;
21 good?

22 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Great.

23 CHIEF HARTY: Awesome. So when I first got
24 the letter from FASNY in the mail, I was
25 ecstatic. I was excited for my members. They

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2 deserve nothing but recognition for it, and then
3 it dawned on me, it's down in Long Island. Down
4 in Long Island. We're from Otisco in Onondaga
5 County up in the hills in the countryside where
6 our version of a traffic jam is a farm tractor
7 going down the side of the road.

8 (Laughter.)

9 (Applause.)

10 CHIEF HARTY: But we found our way here.
11 We found our way here. We're very glad to be
12 here, and we're excited to be here, but all
13 kidding aside, it's very humbling to be here.
14 It's an extraordinary honor. I'm very proud of
15 our members. We're missing six of them, but
16 we're very proud of them for their actions that
17 night on July 6th. It just goes to show you that
18 the preplanning and drilling that we had been
19 doing months before paid off. They executed the
20 technical rescue very quickly, and like the
21 letter said, in very close proximity to the young
22 lady's head and body with a chain saw. And I am
23 also proud to say, I've been still in constant
24 contact with her, and she is still undergoing
25 recovery. She's doing great, and she gives all

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these men and women the credit, and it's thanks
to them. I could not be more proud of them.

And like I said before, I'm just like a
conductor in the orchestra. I wave my hands, and
my men and women know what to do. It's awesome.
It's great, and I could not be more proud of
them.

So thank you, FASNY. Thank you very much.
Thank you for having us here. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. WALKER: I would like to thank the EMS
committee members for their dedication and their
hard work throughout the years. I have David
Simmons here. He's my Vice Chair. Carl Turner,
Tom Dwyer, Jason Haag, Meryl Montrose, Angela
Outhouse; and Diana Pfersick, who is our liaison;
and sadly we lost one of our members in March,
and that was Royer.

This concludes the EMS portion.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. FARRELL: I would like to thank Wendi
and the entire EMS committee for doing an
outstanding job.

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At this time, I would like to invite the recipients from the 2025 Firefighter of the Year award up to the stage.

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This is a submission by the Pleasant Valley Fire District.

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"On October 13, 2024 at 22:35 hours, the Pleasant Valley Fire District was dispatched simultaneously for a mutual aid with the East Clinton Fire Department for a house fire with a report of people trapped at 320 Clinton Hollow Road in the East Clinton fire district.

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Arriving first on the scene was East Clinton Chief Don Estes and troopers from the New York State Police. Together they confirmed occupants were still trapped in the residence. Immediately after the arrival of Chief Estes, Pleasant Valley Fire District Assistant Chief John Cronk arrived on the scene. As Chief Cronk was donning his bunker gear, firefighter Eddie See arrived on the scene and donned his bunker gear. Both members entered the structure with

23 full disregard of their personal safety under
24 extreme conditions. Chief Cronk was wearing an
25 SCBA and was able to locate a lifeless three year

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2 old child in the far bedroom on the second floor
3 of the structure. Firefighter See in the house
4 without the protection of an air pack assisted
5 Chief Cronk even though conditions became
6 unbearable. Firefighter See stayed with Chief
7 Cronk in removing the child from the structure.
8 At this point, firefighters Eddie See then donned
9 Chief Cronk's SCBA and mask and quickly reentered
10 the structure proceeding to the second floor
11 where he was confronted with rapidly worsening
12 conditions. Firefighters Pat McKeever and Chase
13 Russell entered the structure with an SCBA and
14 charged hose line, knocked down the bulk of the
15 fire enabling Firefighter See to locate the
16 lifeless mother and infant in another bedroom on
17 the second floor. As Firefighter See grabbed the
18 infant, and before leaving the second floor, he
19 directed Firefighters McKeever and Russell to
20 shut down the line and remove the mother from the

21 bedroom. Chief Cronk, who had reentered the
22 structure, met them in the stairway and assisted
23 with the removal.

24 With all three victims removed from the
25 structure, numerous firefighters and EMS

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2 personnel performed CPR and all other lifesaving
3 measures working tirelessly to revive the
4 victims. The victims were then transported to
5 local hospitals. Firefighters from several other
6 departments assisted in completing the
7 extinguishment of the fire and ventilating the
8 structure.

9 Point of information, from the time that
10 Pleasant Valley firefighters arrived, they had
11 the first child out of a fully engulfed house in
12 three and half minutes, and the other, two
13 minutes later. Amazingly, all three residents
14 were removed in seven minutes after Pleasant
15 Valley's arrival.

16 Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you the
17 Firefighters Association of the State of New York

18 2025 Firefighters of the Year, Chief John Cronk
19 and Firefighter Eddie See of the Pleasant Valley
20 Fire District.

21 (Standing ovation.)

22 MS. FARRELL: You can all be seated.

23 I now call upon Mr. Joseph Georgio of the
24 Volunteer Fire Insurance Services, VFIS, to
25 present the association plaques to Chief Cronk

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2 and Firefighter See.

3 (Whereupon, Joseph Georgio from VFIS,
4 presented a plaque to Chief John Cronk and
5 Firefighter Eddie See.)

6 MS. FARRELL: I now call upon President
7 Perry to present the Medal of Valor.)

8 (Whereupon, President Perry presented the
9 Medal of Valor to Chief John Cronk and
10 Firefighter Eddie See.)

11 MS. FARRELL: I now call upon Vice
12 President Farrell to present the awards bars.

13 (Whereupon, Vice President Farrell
14 presented the Life Saving Bar to the recipients.)

15 MR. FARRELL: Gentlemen, thank you for your

16 service. Wear your awards bars proudly. Great
17 job. Congratulations. Thank you very much.

18 MS. FARRELL: I now call upon Vice
19 President Holmes to present the monetary award on
20 behalf of the association.

21 (Whereupon, Vice President Holmes presented
22 a monetary gift to Chief John Cronk and
23 Firefighter Eddie See.)

24 MS. FARRELL: I once again call upon Joseph
25 Georgio of VFIS to present the department plaque

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2 to Pleasant Valley Fire District.

3 (Whereupon, Joseph Georgio of VFIS
4 presented a department plaque to the Pleasant
5 Valley Fire District.)

6 MR. GEORGIO: Good morning, everyone.

7 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

8 MR. GEORGIO: Actually, I'm kind of in awe
9 standing up here on this dais to present the
10 awards today. There is some true valor, courage,
11 and heroism today, and it's just incredibly
12 striking to me.

13 On behalf of all of the associates at VFIS,
14 we are honored to be a part of this awards
15 ceremony and have been for a long time with our
16 dear friends and partners, FASNY. We want to
17 thank them for that opportunity and everyone for
18 their valor and courage, and I'd like to give
19 just a quick shout out to the associates we have
20 here in New York who are dedicated to providing
21 any assistance that you need. I'm just in awe.
22 What an incredible job, and we thank you for what
23 you do everyday and the courage you displayed.
24 Thank you very much.
25 (Applause.)

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2 MS. FARRELL: I now call upon Chief Cronk
3 to say a few words.
4 CHIEF CRONK: Good morning, everyone.
5 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.
6 CHIEF CRONK: Bear with me. Myself and
7 Eddie, we spoke highly about this. We'd like to
8 dedicate our awards to the real hero. Her name
9 was Shannon Hubbard. She's the mother that night
10 who ran up those stairs. She knew what she was

11 doing. She was either going to save her babies
12 or die trying. She's the real hero here. So
13 we'd like to dedicate our awards to her.

14 (Standing ovation.)

15 CHIEF CRONK: Lastly, we would like to
16 thank our family, board of fire commissioners,
17 and our fellow firefighters from the Pleasant
18 Valley Fire District and all the surrounding
19 departments that were there that night. Thank
20 you for your continuing support throughout this.

21 Thank you to FASNY and everyone who put
22 this incredible day together. I'm at a loss.

23 Thank you, Eddie, for everything you did
24 that night.

25 Thank you. Thank you.

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2 (Standing ovation.)

3 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I can't follow that up.
4 I'm sorry.

5 (Laughter.)

6 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: On behalf of the Pleasant
7 Valley Fire District, I'd like to congratulate

8 Chief John Cronk and Lieutenant Eddie See for
9 receiving the Firefighter of the Year award from
10 New York State FASNY. We couldn't be more proud
11 of these two. They've been over 25 years of
12 service each, and especially the Chief is doing
13 an excellent job as a Chief. He works really
14 well with the commissioners. I can't thank him
15 enough, and he helps out the rest of the crew.
16 We have a good volunteer organization. We have
17 over 75 active members.

18 So thank you again, Chief, and thank you,
19 FASNY.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. FARRELL: At this time, I would ask any
22 past recipients of the EMS Provider of the Year
23 and any past recipients of the Firefighter of the
24 Year award to please stand and be recognized.

25 (Standing ovation.)

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2 MS. FARRELL: In closing, I would like to
3 thank Director of Operations, Andrew Doyle, and
4 his staff in the FASNY office for all their help
5 in putting our program together this morning. I

6 would be remiss if I did not introduce my fellow
7 committee members for their dedication and hard
8 work throughout the year. Larry Hall, our
9 Chairman -- Unfortunately, Larry passed away this
10 year, and he's in our thoughts and prayers today,
11 but we appreciate everything he's done for this
12 committee. Thomas Pasquel, our Vice Chair;
13 Elizabeth Christensen, Peter Holmes, and Jim
14 Riester.

15 President Perry, this concludes the 2025
16 FASNY VFIS Heroes Award Program.

17 Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. PERRY: On behalf of the entire
20 association, I would like to congratulate our
21 award recipients for exhibiting the best
22 qualities of the volunteer fire and EMS services.

23 I would also like to thank both the
24 Firefighters of the Year and EMS Committees for
25 putting together a wonderful awards program.

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3 heroes award program again this year.

4 This concludes the morning business
5 session. I will entertain a motion to recess
6 until 1:30 p.m.

7 MR. CARON: Motion by Mike Caron.

8 MR. PERRY: Motion by Mike Caron.

9 MR. TASE: Second.

10 MR. PERRY: Seconded by past president Ed
11 Tase.

12 Any questions on that motion?

13 (No response.)

14 MR. PERRY: All in favor?

15 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

16 MR. PERRY: Opposed?

17 (No response.)

18 MR. PERRY: So carried.

19 We will reconvene at 1:30 p.m. for the
20 afternoon session.

21 Thank you.

22 (Whereupon, the convention was adjourned
23 until 1:30 p.m.)

24 MR. PERRY: Mr. Sergeant-at-Arms, can you
25 get everybody in the room and close the door,

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please?

Welcome back, everyone. I hope everyone had an enjoyable lunch break. Once again, the fire exits are at the rear of the ballroom. If there is an emergency at any point during the session, it will be announced from the dais. Directions will be given from the podium. Please exit the ballroom in an orderly manner.

I ask that you please silence your cellphones and pagers.

Thank you.

Fire Chief Patrick Kenny shares his journey to overcome what he perceived as his failure as a leader in his most cherished duty, that of being a protector. His "cape" failed to shield his 20 year old son, Sean, who tragically died by suicide after a lifelong battle with mental illness. This anguish was further complicated by Pat's role as the leader of a fire department.

However, this is not a story of darkness, but one of hope. Pat reveals the path he took to move forward with his life and return to a leadership role.

Through his personal experiences, you will

1
2 gain valuable insights and guidance to help you
3 understand and embrace the limitations of your
4 own leadership -- your cape -- so you can better
5 serve those suffering from mental illness,
6 enhance your leadership skills, and enrich your
7 life.

8 It's my pleasure to introduce Chief Patrick
9 Kenny.

10 (Applause.)

11 CHIEF KENNY: Good afternoon, everybody.

12 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good afternoon.

13 CHIEF KENNY: Always leader and the speaker
14 after lunch and there is concern, how many of
15 you, raise your hands, had one of those brownies?
16 Don't be ashamed now.

17 (Laughter.)

18 CHIEF KENNY: All right. Keep your hands
19 up if you had two.

20 (Laughter.)

21 CHIEF KENNY: Oh my, God. We'll try to --

22 (Laughter.)

23 CHIEF KENNY: First of all, I'm going to
24 tell you some things about what I saw today that

25 has nothing to do with this presentation, and

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2 it's important for you to hear as an association.
3 I am extremely blessed over the last 16 years to
4 travel around the country, go to a couple of
5 other countries, and sit in on loads of
6 conferences. I have not seen a couple of things
7 that I saw today in years that really it just
8 impressed me enough to bring me to tears. First
9 of all, all of you wearing your Class A's, and
10 you'll see about two slides from now why to me
11 that's really important. Pride in your Class A
12 uniform, because it is. It's noble. It's
13 powerful, and it sends a signal to people whether
14 you're retired or whether you're currently in the
15 service about something they should know. The
16 second part was your memorial. We are afraid as
17 a country to talk about our faith. We are afraid
18 as a country to realize there's a higher power.
19 We're afraid as a country that we are going to be
20 somehow chastised, and I'm not talking about
21 putting a label on a form of religion, what I'm
22 talking about is when we deal with mental health,

23 a component in every theory about mental health
24 is resilience, and part of that resilience is to
25 believe there's a higher power, and so seeing all

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2 you today all I could picture -- I didn't know
3 any of those names of those men and women that
4 you talk about from your Ladies Axillary all the
5 way through your fire department, but I was
6 picturing them walking through that door and
7 coming across this stage, and how we say we'll
8 never forget and how sometimes that's bologna, we
9 do, but you didn't, and for their families there
10 and for those who stood up, I could feel their
11 presence in the room. So don't lose that.

12 That's powerful. That's something you need to
13 pass on, and when I go home back to Illinois,
14 that's something I'm also going to pass on about
15 why don't we do this, because it's a great -- It
16 was very uplifting for me, and honestly, it was
17 very, very emotional.

18 When President Perry reached out to me two
19 years ago and said will you come be a keynote

20 speaker, I thought he meant last year, so I'm on
21 my calendar going for April -- April Rounds, by
22 the way, is a saint. I don't know -- she's
23 babysat me, hold my hand through the whole
24 thing -- sainthood. And she goes, Chief, it's
25 2025. I'm like, whoa, this is a planner, right.

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2 He told me what his whole theme was going to be,
3 and he wanted me to be the keynote and talk about
4 mental health, and we're sending the signal that
5 we are stronger together, which we all know that.
6 When you're dealing with a mental health crisis,
7 whether it's a major challenge or something as
8 natural as you've lost a loved one and you're
9 depressed, it's a very lonely feeling, and you
10 feel like there's nobody else in the world that
11 has ever experienced that, and that's not true,
12 and the ability to reach out that what I always
13 called the greatest healer in the world, that hug
14 to get from somebody, somebody who realizes they
15 can't fix it, but they can sure make you better
16 is part of how to keep your mental health
17 stronger and also keep them stronger. So that's

18 part of what the program is going to be. It's
19 called, "Taking the Cape Off," and as the Chief
20 summarized very quickly, my belief is when you
21 answer this vocation, whether your career,
22 combination, volunteer, it doesn't matter, it's
23 not a job, it's a vocation. It's a calling that
24 your brought for all the years that you do it.
25 That doesn't mean there aren't going to be ups

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2 and downs and roller coasters and politics and
3 other things that you never get involved what
4 they do, but you are absolutely called to do what
5 you do. When you respond to that vocation, I
6 really believe you're given a cape, and that cape
7 is there to allow you to go and do things that
8 nobody else will do. Now a lot of times
9 firefighters, first responders, whether you're a
10 police officer, military, whatever, we're called
11 heroes. I was never comfortable with that. I
12 think you're called to do heroic acts, and you
13 are called in this vocation, because when you're
14 called to do it, you will respond. You won't run

15 the other way. You will run toward the danger,
16 and you do that well, and you lead your people to
17 do that, but there are inherent problems with the
18 cape, things that we don't think about that if
19 you're not aware of, it then begins to work
20 against you, and in my life it worked against me
21 a number of times, and it took me a long time to
22 learn how I was supposed to do it. So there's
23 nothing worse than giving an Irish guy who likes
24 to tell stories a microphone --

25 (Laughter.)

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2 CHIEF KENNY: (Continuing) -- but that's
3 what you just did. So what I'm going to do is
4 take you through a journey, my story, but I want
5 you to really think about your story as I'm doing
6 it. What are the parallels. Some things are
7 going to be very, very different. Some things
8 you're going to go, oh, yeah, and we're going to
9 learn together.

10 Father Gavin Quinn, everybody has people in
11 their life that make an impact and you go, how
12 did that person end up in my life? I don't have

13 enough time to tell you about how Father Gavin
14 got here, but he taught me one really important
15 thing, a model that I live by. You are where
16 you're supposed to be always even when you don't
17 want to be here. So if you're sitting here right
18 now going, oh, my God, I'm tired. I had a big
19 lunch. I've got stuff on my mind. Work just
20 called, whatever, I should be doing something
21 else. The answer to that is, no. The answer to
22 that is you are exactly where you're supposed to
23 be just like I am not in 2024, but supposed to be
24 here in 2025. And if at the end of 90 minutes if
25 you go, ph, no, you were wrong, I should have

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2 never been in that damn room, then we'll talk
3 about it.

4 (Laughter.)

5 CHIEF KENNY: So now, I'm going to show you
6 a video clip. I want you to do me a favor. Some
7 of you have seen this clip. Some of you have
8 seen this clip a hundred times, some of you may
9 not. So act like you've never seen. I want you

10 to watch all the actors as to what they do,
11 facial gestures, the little nuances. Listen to
12 sounds, and when we're all done at the end of
13 this presentation, if I get it right, I'm going
14 to bring this clip back, and I'm going to tie it
15 to you, I'm going to tie it to your mission, and
16 I'm going to tie it to me.

17 (Whereupon, a video was played.)

18 CHIEF KENNY: Now something struck me for
19 the very first time that I've been doing this
20 presentation, truly, as many years as I have, it
21 figures they'd hit it off a Cubs pitcher, and
22 it's a New York player.

23 (Laughter.)

24 CHIEF KENNY: With more pain in the wound
25 for me. So I'm going to come back to that, and

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2 hopefully, if I do it right now, I'm going to
3 show you what one December 25th that meant for me
4 and what that story means about what we do and
5 about our own mental health. Now you have to be
6 pretty much an egotistical SOB if the next slide
7 is a picture of yourself, especially since that

8 was a few years ago and a few pounds ago and a
9 lot more hair. I pictured myself in that
10 vocation as a hero when I was wearing my Class A.
11 That was my cape. Nothing made we feel -- and
12 not with all the bling on it, but when I got
13 sworn in in the academy and I got to stand up
14 there and raise my hand and give that oath about
15 what I was going to do for the people I was going
16 to serve and how proud that made my family, I
17 felt I was smarter, taller, stronger than I had
18 ever been in my life. Every single time I put
19 that on, even if it was for a funeral, a line of
20 duty death that would break your heart, I felt
21 strong enough to get through it because I was
22 wearing it. You all have that. It isn't
23 necessarily your Class A uniform. It could be
24 a sweatshirt. It could be a bunker coat. It could
25 be a stethoscope, whatever you identify with, but

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2 you identify with something that turns on that
3 hero switch. I can do an heroic account because.
4 The shamrocks, there's no coincidence the

5 shamrocks are in there either. No coincidence I
6 am wearing green. I'm wearing a shamrock tie.
7 You're too far away to see the shamrock clip. I
8 grew up in a very Irish family, and that impact
9 about my life and what it taught me and how one
10 day it also was huge is important to go through.
11 So that's going to follow me through.

12 Does anybody know what's 222 days from now?

13 UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER: St. Patrick's
14 Day.

15 CHIEF KENNY: St. Patrick's Day, very good.

16 I am in the state of New York. Yes, St.
17 Patrick's Day. When I became Chief I thought I
18 was hot stuff. I saw your Governor here this
19 morning. We have never, ever in the history
20 of -- fire chiefs had a governor come to any one
21 of our conferences. Never. So I don't know
22 about the politics, I know that really impressed
23 me, but when I became Chief, I thought I'm hot
24 stuff, so I wrote a letter to our governor saying
25 I think you should make St. Patrick's Day at

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3 Pulaski. He doesn't have saint in from of his
4 name, but this Polish guy we get the day off for.
5 Why aren't we doing about the Irish, and I never
6 got an answer. So I wrote it to the next
7 governor. I never got a answer either. And then
8 finally it dawned on me one day, both of them
9 were in federal prison.

10 (Laughter.)

11 CHIEF KENNY: -- make a nice license plate.
12 Those were important, and they build for who I am
13 and what I stand for.

14 Now when you came into this conference, as
15 you come into any conference, you got a little
16 goody bag with some real neat stuff in there, but
17 you didn't get this in your bag, I am sure,
18 although you will all have it in your bag,
19 because you see, I have my own. I didn't realize
20 I had my own until I retired. I wore this every
21 single day from 1982 to January of 2021, every
22 single day, on duty or off duty. If I got
23 called, I reached for this and put it on, but
24 here's the other part that you need to know about
25 this cape is I also wore it when I went to little

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2 league. I also wore it when I coached at the
3 high school. I wore it when I was a husband and
4 a dad. Now you're immediately you're sitting
5 there now going I am watching a 68 year old man
6 walk around this stage with a cape on. What am I
7 doing here? Is it his mental health that's the
8 problem?

9 (Laughter.)

10 CHIEF KENNY: Stay with me. Stay with me.
11 I felt like I could literally touch this, walking
12 into a home of somebody that woke up in the
13 morning, said goodbye to their husband, came home
14 for lunch, and they were gone. Didn't know what
15 to say. A child who wasn't breathing and they
16 wanted you to save their life and you realize
17 when you walked in the room they had been in
18 God's arms for 12 hours. I reached for this, and
19 sometimes amazing child births and delivering
20 babies, when I reached for it, it worked, but
21 there were other times that it didn't work, and I
22 didn't realize what it was doing to me when it
23 didn't work. A lot you know Paul Combs, great
24 illustrator. I can't draw stick people. Paul
25 sat in on this presentation a number of years

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2 ago, and he, Pat, is this what you're talking
3 about? So you see the firefighter on your left,
4 he's doing something obviously he enjoys. He's
5 got a nice smile on his face, but nothing really
6 extenuating about it, but then all of a sudden
7 when you look to the right, pager has gone off,
8 tones have gone, they've got called out. He now
9 is what I described. He's bigger. He's
10 stronger. He's smarter. He's ready. He's ready
11 to put his life on the line for someone.
12 Absolutely true. What you don't notice though is
13 that firefighter on the right, take a look at
14 where the cape is by his Adam's apple. It is
15 right up against it. It's in the choking
16 position. So if he doesn't realize, the
17 limitations of when he puts that cape on, the
18 choking process starts, and little by little, the
19 life that you have starts to get drained out of
20 you even though you're doing what you're called
21 to do. You're doing the right thing, but you
22 can't be perfect. You can't be superman, and
23 realizing what you need to do when that happens,
24 for you, your people, and your family, is huge.

25 So what is bravery look like? Yes, that young

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2 man looks brave. Do you have to be brave to be a
3 firefighter? One hundred percent true, and we
4 should be extremely proud of that. You got into
5 this profession knowing that you were going to be
6 put in some pretty difficult positions. You lead
7 people you have to put in difficult positions. I
8 don't know how you felt, but the farther I got
9 removed from going into the building, the more
10 nervous I got. I was much better going give me
11 the nozzle, let's go, then I was standing outside
12 worrying is it time to go or no go. I agreed,
13 but in this talk what I want you to do is I want
14 you to take that bravery and that definition, and
15 I want you to expand it. Bravery also includes
16 going I'm in trouble, I need help. I need
17 somebody to come to me. I can't handle this one.
18 I can't fix it. I don't understand this, but I
19 should, but I don't understand it. So keep that
20 in mind as we go through here. This is military
21 mantra. When I got promoted I was a Chief in one

22 department for almost 15 years and 11 at another
23 one. Every morning when I went into my office
24 one of my buddies gave it to me the first day I
25 was Chief in 1994, and I put it on the wall right

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2 when I walked in. So I opened that door every
3 morning in both offices, and that's the first
4 thing that stared me in the face, because I
5 wanted to remind myself what's this about. It's
6 about the mission. How am I going to accomplish
7 the mission? Through my people, our most
8 valuable resources. How many times do we hear
9 that that people are the most valuable resources?
10 But how many places really believe that? How
11 many people act that way and carry it out?
12 There's some places I will tell you do not, and
13 some stories in today's environment you would
14 think would never happen that would curl your
15 hair, but do we do that? And then if we do that
16 correctly, I'm last. I'm last. The joy I get is
17 my people come back safely, they made a
18 difference in somebody's life, sometimes a huge
19 difference, but we move on with it. Today though

20 I want you to flip that. I want to make you the
21 priority. So we flip it so you are going to be
22 on top. So thinking about you and your welfare
23 and what you do, how you operate. Then that's
24 going to take you to your people, because if
25 you're at a hundred percent, you can then be

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2 present for your people, and trust me, you will
3 then be able to carry out the mission. So flip
4 it today, as hard as that's going to be.

5 World War Two vets came home as an entire
6 company by ship and took weeks sometimes, and
7 Vietnam Vets -- Do I have Vietnam Vets in the
8 room? Is anybody a Vietnam Vet? I saw some.
9 Will you guys please stand?

10 Let's give these guys a --
11 (Applause.)

12 CHIEF KENNY: They're the forgotten group
13 and never gets recognition.

14 Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you.
15 (Applause.)

16 CHIEF KENNY: And if you want to embarrass

17 a firefighter, you do what I just did, right?
18 That's the last thing they want is to get that
19 attention, but these folks deserve it. They're
20 our true heroes. They flew home and sometimes
21 were home overnight. Which one of those two
22 groups according to this study has the highest
23 incident of PTSD?

24 UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Vietnam Vets.

25 CHIEF KENNY: Vietnam Vets. Why?

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2 UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER: Because they were
3 ignored.

4 UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER: No support.

5 CHIEF KENNY: They had no support. Why
6 else?

7 UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER: They were hated
8 for some.

9 CHIEF KENNY: They were despised, correct?

10 What else?

11 UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER: Instant switch.

12 CHIEF KENNY: Instant switch. Very good.

13 I am in this horrible war zone. I get off a

14 plane -- This is a true story -- An American --

15 Chicago American newspaper -- I remember reading
16 it as a kid -- There was a Marine that was coming
17 home from Vietnam -- And I think in our Class A's
18 we look pretty sharp. A Marine who's all decked
19 out looks pretty incredible to me. This was a
20 black Marine. He's walking through Chicago
21 Airport. I'm ashamed to say, that was the
22 airport. And as he's walking through, people are
23 calling him a baby killer, and they're spitting
24 on him. Try to think about that, right? You
25 rescue somebody from a fire and come out and

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2 people start swearing at you and spitting on you,
3 you'd be like, did you just see what happened
4 here? Do you have any idea? They didn't. So
5 what did he do, he went in, he had a little
6 duffel bag, he went into the bathroom, he took
7 his whole dress uniform off, he tried to flush it
8 down the commode, he had gym shorts and a T-shirt
9 in that bag that said nothing about Marines, he
10 put them on, he walked through that airport so
11 nobody knew who he was, and then on that Monday

12 he was supposed to be carpenter, an electrician,
13 a firefighter. Immediate switch. No time to
14 decompress. Now those gentlemen who came, the
15 World War Two Vets, did they come home without
16 PTSD, no, but it's proven through science that if
17 you talk about it, there's less chance of that
18 having that dynamic impact on you then if you
19 hold it to yourself and figure that it's just
20 going to stay there, but it's like a burning fire
21 behind a door that's got no oxygen and all of a
22 sudden the door gets kicked open and you've got
23 yourself one hell of a problem. The World War
24 Two Vets we're in better shape. They actually
25 were doing peer support before we called it that.

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2 They're talking to each other. So what do we
3 learn from that, and have we learned from that?
4 This is a -- I saw this. Probably four months
5 ago I took this picture. Just a little piece of
6 advice, be careful if you take a picture outside
7 the women's bathroom, because some of the looks
8 you get is not good.
9 (Laughter.)

10 CHIEF KENNY: But this was outside the
11 women's bathroom. Read that. When people tell
12 me, Pat, we've come a long way, you started
13 teaching in '09, look where we're at in 2025. My
14 answer to them is yes, we've made progress, but
15 are we where we need to be, no. Three tours, two
16 purple hearts, and then he gets an eviction
17 notice. Why? Because his landlord finds out he
18 has PTSD. That's a hero. That's a real hero,
19 and that's the response that he gets. So do we
20 still misunderstand? Are we still ignorant about
21 that mental illness is a physical illness. We'd
22 have to go eight or sixteen hours on brain
23 chemistry, which I don't know well, but I always
24 listen to learn, and a lot times your reaction,
25 you don't really even have any control over.

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2 It's the way your brain goes on automatic pilot.
3 This poor kid needs support. Instead, he ends up
4 out on the street, so we are not where we need to
5 be. The best peer support, as I said, is an
6 incredibly amazing thing, but we still wait too

7 long to call for it. When I came into the
8 service, and for many of you can relate, we had
9 no mayday. There was no mayday to call. When we
10 first started to use mayday, people were afraid
11 to even use it then, because in theory -- now
12 let's go structurally now instead of mental
13 illness -- when are you supposed to call a
14 mayday?

15 UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER: Life is in
16 danger.

17 UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER: Last resort.

18 CHIEF KENNY: Okay, last resort.

19 UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER: Life is in
20 danger.

21 CHIEF KENNY: Your life is in danger. Even
22 if you're not sure, you're supposed to call it,
23 because what's the worst case scenario if you'd
24 be able to get out and be fine? That's good,
25 except when people were getting out and being

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2 fine, they were ridiculed. Hey, Pat, 1719,
3 mayday, mayday, mayday. Have you ever seen a
4 window, that big thing you crawled by and said

5 you'll look for that next time? So am I more
6 likely the next time I think I'm in danger to
7 call mayday, no. No, it's taught me to go the
8 opposite direction, and we double out of this
9 with peer support. Okay, use it, use it, but we
10 make it so it sounds like it's this incredible
11 mystery and you had to really be in trouble to
12 use it, and that's just the wrong aspect. Peer
13 support is a day to day thing. It's talking to
14 your buddy. Here's a shock, you may even talk to
15 your significant other. I know a lot of you
16 don't do that. I didn't either, one of the big
17 mistakes I made. I'm going to protect my wife
18 from what I do. She didn't sign up for this.
19 Guess what? That motto is BS, because they do.
20 No, they weren't standing next to you taking the
21 oath, but they might as well have been. You can
22 talk to somebody. Get it off your chest, and a
23 lot of times that process will work, because if
24 you hold onto that maybe. We look at substance
25 abuse, some people start to self-medicate. We

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2 look at divorce because the communication in the
3 home is gone. I don't know who you are.
4 Depression sets in because you're not who you
5 want to be, and eventually, you know, I don't
6 think I want to be here anymore. I think I'm
7 done. Definitely -- and there are statistics you
8 can throw whatever -- This was through the NLLL.
9 My point in making it is when people say, we
10 don't have any bigger problem in our service than
11 the general population. And by the way, mental
12 health challenge is a population, not a first
13 responder issue. It's a country issue, but this
14 shows you what PTSD in the general population may
15 be 3.5 percent. For us, 11 to 37 percent.
16 Depression, 22 to 40, and even suicide, the idea
17 of taking your life, almost 50 percent, so we
18 have a problem, which you already recognized. My
19 job when I do this is to keep it in the front,
20 because it's too easy to go, okay, that's kind of
21 the sexy thing. Yes, we have a program, but does
22 it work? Have you validated it? Does everybody
23 in your organization know what it is? Do they
24 have access to it? If not, you just got an
25 exercise, you don't really have a program.

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2 FASNY is one of the ones that I use when I
3 travel around the country to talk about what you
4 have, the resources you have, what you get out to
5 your people. Your challenge coin that Chief
6 Perry showed me. Amazing, along with that QR
7 code. Okay, I could go to that. I'm a typical
8 fireman so I get the challenge coin and I get the
9 code and I immediately go to see does it work,
10 right. Perfect, it takes you right to the page,
11 right to the resources that can be updated,
12 because the big question that I get is what if
13 somebody comes up to me and says, you know, I
14 can't do this anymore. I just want to die, and
15 you don't know what your resources are, or you
16 don't have them in your organization. You got
17 them on a coin with resources that you can go to
18 right away while you're standing there and gives
19 two or three places, locations that you can get a
20 number right away and hand the phone over.
21 Priceless to keep in your pocket, not to trade,
22 to keep in your pocket, and I already told him,
23 I'm going to steal that. So there's loads.
24 Nobody can say to me anymore we don't know where
25 the resources were. In '09 if you went to Google

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2 and you put in firefighter mental health,
3 behavioral health, whatever you want to put in,
4 you might have got a page with four or five
5 things. Now you'll get pages and pages and
6 pages, which is great. The only advice I give
7 you is be careful which ones you pick because
8 like our industry always is, once something
9 becomes sexy, you start to get vendors who want
10 to make money off of you. So you make sure you
11 vetted them so your people know what that
12 resource is and ensure it with them.

13 The international fire chiefs, the
14 volunteer combination section put together a
15 Yellow Ribbon Report. I'd be honored to sit on
16 that and rewrite. It's a long document. It's
17 about everything that you could do. A lot of
18 what you can't do in your organization. Don't
19 let that freeze you and go, well, I'm not going
20 to do anything. Take bits and pieces that you
21 think might work for you and use it. You have to
22 start somewhere. Mental health has always been
23 this albatross because we try to take one bite,

24 and we're going to swallow the whole thing. It's
25 too complicated. It doesn't work that way.

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2 What is this talk about? This is not a
3 resource guide. There are loads of resources out
4 there, and we could literally spend eight hours
5 going through what does each one provide for you
6 and your organization. That's not what I'm going
7 to do. We're going to agree that mental health
8 education and cancer prevention are key
9 components of overall first responder safety, and
10 both are physical illnesses. So two important
11 things in there. I didn't know we were talking
12 about cancer. Well, we are. You're going to see
13 why. And both of them are physical illnesses.
14 Mental illness is not a choice. It is not a
15 character deficiency. It is not a weakness. And
16 anybody in the room who thinks it is, I'll see
17 you outside afterwards. I'm 68, you'll probably
18 kick my ass, but I'm going to swing.

19 (Laughter.)

20 CHIEF KENNY: It is not in any way, shape,
21 or form that. Just as somebody doesn't choose to

22 have OCD, they don't choose to be a diabetic. It
23 doesn't happen. It's a physical reaction. So
24 we're going to agree by the time we're done today
25 there's a reason both of those mask against each

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2 other, and I'm going to prove it.
3 Some of this material I'm going to talk
4 about is very sensitive, so now here's your
5 challenge. I want you to promise me as I'm going
6 through this that you're going to put your
7 cellphone down. If you have an iPad, put that
8 down and not look at it, and here's why. Now I'm
9 going to take this cape off now, because now this
10 is my time, and I'm going to hang it and refer
11 back to it, but I'm going to realize it doesn't
12 work at what I'm going to tell you. The reason I
13 want you to make sure that you're not looking
14 down is I can't hid from you. I'm up here in
15 front of you now and some of the material I'm
16 going to go through is very sensitive to me. I
17 don't know when, I don't how it ever happened.
18 Every time I do this it's a little bit different.

19 So here's what I need you to do the rules of
20 engagement. If I start to get emotional, I don't
21 want you to put that on, because if you sit there
22 hoping to save me and wait until I get done,
23 you're going to be sitting there thinking when
24 it's going to happen again. You are not going to
25 be sitting there listening to me. So we're going

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2 to waste 90 minutes here of your valuable time
3 and mine by being a savior for me. I will get it
4 back. I've done it enough that I will recover.
5 You've just got to give me a little room, and
6 then I'll get it. Are we all good for those?

7 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Yes.

8 CHIEF KENNY: All right. Here we go. So I
9 told you I grew up in an Irish Catholic house.
10 Mom and Dad both born in the same little town in
11 Ireland 15 miles outside the city of Galway.
12 Never met. Met at a dance in Chicago and got
13 married. My Dad, Mike; and Mom, Maureen. This
14 is the one that's really tricky, and it actually
15 is the truth, only child, Irish Catholic family.

16 (Laughter.)

17 CHIEF KENNY: Everybody says that's not
18 humanly possible. Well, it was, probably because
19 it was me, but one child. So I grew up with my
20 Mom and Dad, never drove. Everywhere they went
21 they rode the bus. No one had a driver's
22 license. My Dad was an engineer. He went to the
23 UK and got educated. My Mom had a second grade
24 education. Both of them grew up on a farm. My
25 godmother -- thank God -- she lost her husband

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2 when I was born, and so she moved in with us.
3 From the day I was brought home until she passed
4 away she lived with us and became like a second
5 mother. So now picture the dynamics. So you
6 have two mothers feeding one child in this house.
7 So needless to say, old chubs there in the front
8 of that picture was doing really, really pretty
9 well as I was growing up. In my house there were
10 three pictures hung in the living room. There
11 was a picture of John F. Kennedy, there was a
12 picture of the Pope, and there was a picture, an
13 original, the original Mayor Daily. When you

14 walked passed those you were supposed to gentrify
15 and keep going. I don't know to this day why.
16 All I know is if I didn't, I had five fingers
17 coming across.

18 (Laughter.)

19 CHIEF KENNY: So this is how I -- very
20 strict discipline, very strong Catholic
21 upbringing. My Dad was a tremendous athlete in
22 Ireland. There's a sport called hurling. If you
23 ever look it up, it's definitely for insane
24 people who play, because back then, no helmet, no
25 protection, and this was the prime. He was the

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2 equivalent of what we would an all American here
3 in Ireland. I, by that time, in about fifth
4 grade, had zero athletic ability, had trouble
5 walking and chewing gum at the same time.
6 Somewhere around sixth grade I really believe the
7 good Lord looked down and went, oh, my God, what
8 a mess and turned on the athletic gene, and I
9 went from being not only the last kid picked on
10 teams, or not picked at all, to the first, and I
11 was going to go to high school, and I was a

12 catcher, and I was a middle line backer, and I
13 was going to go on scholarship. So I get out of
14 school at 14, and I think I got my whole life
15 figured out. Here we go. I'm going to go to
16 high school, and then I'm going to go to college
17 and play ball, and then I'm going to pick which
18 one I want to be a millionaire in. Each sport,
19 because they're played at a different time of the
20 year, has different girls that will follow you so
21 I'll have one girlfriend in one sport, and one
22 in -- I went to the store with two other buddies
23 to buy spikes for a trial, July 20, 1971. I get
24 hit by a car. All I remember is seeing yellow,
25 yellow street. I didn't cross at the corner. I

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2 crossed between two stop lanes of traffic. I
3 didn't know there was a gravel shoulder on the
4 outside. Somebody to cut up to go around and hit
5 me. I remember looking up and going, this is
6 just a bad dream, and I looked at people's faces,
7 and I thought they look really worried, where are
8 my buddies. I don't see my buddies. I'm getting

9 up and getting the hell out of this dream, and I
10 went to move, and I couldn't move, couldn't get
11 up. Ambulance comes. I had seen a couple of --
12 went to the hospital. Like I said, my Mom and
13 Dad didn't drive. So my godmother went and
14 picked them both up at work, brought them to the
15 hospital. By then, all the X-rays were done, the
16 tests were done. They were given the report, and
17 they were told, boy, is her lucky. The only
18 thing we found in the X-ray is there's something
19 the size of a dime in his right knee. We don't
20 know if that's a piece of the bumper or glass of
21 whatever. We see a lot of trauma, so we're going
22 to let this go, we'll see him on a follow up, but
23 here's the key, when you take him home, get him
24 up and make sure he walks around a while. Now my
25 Dad hated doctors. He didn't trust them as far

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2 as he could throw them, but when they told him
3 this is what you need do to get your little boy
4 back up, my God, this is what we're going to do.
5 Carried me to the house. Said okay, Pat, we're
6 going to start to get up and try to move around.

7 I remember getting up, and I remember the pain,
8 and I probably went from here to here. That's
9 probably a lot, and I passed out. Picked me up,
10 put me back in bed. What happened? He said, you
11 passed out. It's okay. Let's give this a few
12 minutes, we'll try again. So we did. This time
13 I didn't even get that far. He put me back in
14 bed. My Mom called the pediatrician. Back then
15 you could call the pediatrician and actually get
16 a phone call. He answered. The doctor said
17 something is really wrong, call the ambulance,
18 we're taking him to a different hospital. I'm
19 14. I think I'm invincible. I've been in the
20 back of an ambulance once already. He told me I
21 was fine, now you want to do it to me again. I'm
22 just being a wimp about this. I'll be fine. I
23 can do this. I can fix it. Remember that line,
24 I can fix it. Take me to other hospital, run the
25 same series of X-rays. I'm laying there in a

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2 bed, and all of a sudden the doctor meets with my
3 parents in the hallway and says, his legs are

4 shattered. He said his right knee is completely
5 gone except for a piece of bone the size of a
6 dime. His left is gone, and it's torn in three
7 different places. We'll do the best that we can,
8 but we're not sure he'll ever walk again. Now
9 I'm in the other room, right, just going when do
10 we get out of here so that I can start getting
11 ready to go back to practice. So my Mom comes
12 in, and my Mom begins to rant and rave. She was
13 a redhead, a real redhead, Irish redhead.
14 Ranting and raving about the fact you're never
15 going to go play baseball anymore. You're never
16 going to play football anymore. We're not sure
17 that you're even going to walk, and I remember
18 this was a young doctor just out of med school,
19 he comes in the room, excuse me, Mrs. Kenny --
20 and she continues to go -- He goes, Mrs. Kenny, I
21 said now. Now. If I ever talked to my Mom like
22 that, I'd still have a black eye.

23 (Laughter.)

24 CHIEF KENNY: So they go in the hallway.
25 And here's what you need to know about almost

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2 every theory of suicide that's out there, the one
3 common component of when people get to that line
4 and go I'm crossing over, I don't care what's on
5 the other side, because I can't take this pain
6 anymore, is you take away their hope, right. So
7 this doctor proceeds to ream my Mom about it,
8 you're taking about his hope. I don't know if
9 he'll ever walk again, but I sure the hell know
10 he won't if you don't make him believe he can.
11 I'm going to make him believe he can, and we're
12 going to work together to do that. Now you stay
13 out of that room. I don't know this. He comes
14 back in, he goes, I hear you're an athlete. Yes,
15 sir. A pretty good one. I kind of think so.
16 Hard practices? Yeah. He goes, well, you're
17 about to have the hardest practices you've ever
18 had in your life. In order for you to get up and
19 go back on both of those fields, you're going to
20 have to work your ass off so much harder than you
21 ever did. Are you up for that kid? Can you do
22 it? I'll help you, but you're going to have to
23 do it. And I remember looking him in the eye,
24 yeah, you bet, let's go. Can we start now? I'm
25 ready. So I started therapy. I started school

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the last day of October, Halloween, on crutches.
By December I'm now no walker, no nothing, in the
gym. I can go about a quarter of a mile.
Walking pretty slow, but I can do it. My Dad
loved duck, favorite meal. I really believe I
became a firefighter because my Mom made it for
him on special occasions. Every time she did,
she would fill the house with smoke. I would
have to crawl underneath the smoke, find the
source of the heat, turn off the ignition,
ventilate the window, and go back out. I didn't
know what I was doing, but that's exactly what I
was doing. That particular Christmas, he hardly
touched the duck. I didn't realize it until I
look back. The next day I heard him throwing up
in the bathroom. Knocked on the door because I
was afraid. He opened it, and blood clots
everywhere in the sick. I said, Dad, we have to
call an ambulance. He immediately said, yeah.
And remember I told you, he couldn't stand
doctors. Red flags should have gone off, but it
didn't. Two weeks earlier I had a dream that he
died. In the dream I saw him in the casket, the
color of his suit, the color of his shirt, the

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2 flowers that were there, and the smell of the
3 flowers, and I woke up in tears going, okay, that
4 was just a dream. So called the ambulance, the
5 ambulance gets to the door, my Dad at this point
6 is not that strapping guy you see on the left or
7 in the left corner in the other picture, big
8 strong, cut like a "V", very heavyset, graying
9 hair, but still strong as can be from the nipples
10 up. He blocks the stretcher as they're going out
11 the door, and he begins to cry. I had never seen
12 my Dad cry before, and he looks at me -- and now
13 the Irish, he's never called me Patrick or Pat,
14 it was Paddy Joe. Paddy Joe, I'll never be back
15 here again. No, no, Dad, it's going to be okay.
16 It's really be okay. Look, they didn't think I'd
17 walk, you can do this. Let me them take care of
18 you. Brought his hands in, they took him out the
19 door. Looking back now I realize in that moment
20 was the first time I put that on, I will save
21 him. I will do it. This is on me. Maybe the
22 stress came from this accident. It's my fault.
23 Four days later we go to the hospital to see him.

24 He is as yellow as a banana, and that little
25 voice you all have inside you, and all do, and we

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2 can debate where it comes from -- I know where
3 mine comes from -- was saying to me you need to
4 tell him you love him because he's going to die,
5 and you said a lot of stupid things that every 14
6 year old says. Now is your time to make amends
7 because he's coming home. That told me no
8 chance, not my Dad. My Dad is a hero. He's
9 going to be just fine. So I went in there, and
10 he kept making the sign of the cross, and he was
11 afraid, and I saw it, and I still didn't respond
12 to it. I said, Dad, you're going to be just
13 fine, be back to see you in a little bit. The
14 next day he died of a massive stomach hemorrhage,
15 and he had stomach cancer. They said he probably
16 had it for at least a year, but for the last six
17 months they said it must have been incredibly
18 painful to get up and go to work, and we look
19 back now, and he was a social drinker, but he was
20 drinking a lot at that point. So he was self

21 medicating to kill the pain. So I remember
22 standing there at that wake walking into that
23 funeral parlor and the suit was the same, the
24 casket was the same, and the flowers smelled the
25 same, and to this day if I go to somebody's wake

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2 and those flowers are there, I have to breathe
3 through my mouth, because it will trigger me, and
4 everybody who walked passed that casket had the
5 same message, Paddy Joe, your job is to be the
6 man of the house. You take care of your Mom.
7 Don't let your Dad down. I didn't know how to be
8 14 let alone wasn't walking. Let alone my hero,
9 my vision was when I'm playing those sports, I
10 don't care who else was at that game as long as
11 my Dad is in that front row up there going,
12 that's my son. That's him. That's my kid, and
13 now I don't have that either, but I felt that
14 power of you've got to fix this, it's your
15 responsibility. So the school bus that we had
16 that went to the high school goes right passed
17 the cemetery where my Dad was buried. About a
18 week after he was buried, a snowy day in January,

19 sunny, but very, very cold, I got off the school
20 bus to go into the cemetery, and I was about a
21 mile and half walk, and I told you I was doing
22 about a quarter mile in physical therapy, and it
23 was -- the windchill was zero. So I'm getting
24 there, because I am going to make it to that
25 grave, and I put my bookbag down on the grave

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2 next to his, because his was the only one that
3 wasn't covered in snow, and I laid down, and I
4 laid down to die. Now think about that for a
5 minute. Whenever you've heard about suicide
6 being the most selfish act anybody could, I've
7 got a Mom at home that in five days lost the love
8 of her life. She's got a second grade education.
9 We just built our own home for the first time,
10 and it has a mortgage on it that had just started
11 a few months earlier, and her kid is going to lay
12 down, and he's going to freeze to death by his
13 own decision. Sounds selfish? When I say it
14 that way, it sounds selfish to me, but it wasn't,
15 because I could tell you as somebody who was at

16 that line, I didn't see anything but crossing
17 that door and leaving this darkness. There was
18 no light. Never thought about my Mom. Never
19 thought about my godmother. Never thought about
20 my friends. Nothing. All I wanted was out of
21 that pain to get away. People who reach that
22 barrier if they make it through will repeat the
23 same thing. I didn't want to hurt anybody else,
24 but they were never on my radar. It was me. Me
25 struggling. I just couldn't take that anymore.

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2 So then for the first time -- and thank God it
3 wasn't the last time -- I laid down. I knew that
4 if I laid there long enough I would freeze to
5 death. I wasn't a dumb 14 year old. I had done
6 my homework. I heard a voice, and the voice was
7 outside me, not inside, and it said, you need to
8 get up and get out of there. I remember thinking
9 this is working. I'm hallucinating. It doesn't
10 hurt. Pretty soon I'll be gone, and I really
11 believed he was some place safe, and I really
12 believed he'd be pissed when I got there, but I
13 didn't care, because at least I'd be with him. I

14 would not be back, and I'd be whole. Then I
15 heard a voice again. This time it was a very
16 familiar tone, the same tone as when I said
17 something bad back to my Mom, when I got a bad
18 grade, whatever. I said to get up and get out of
19 there. I sat up and I looked over at his grave,
20 and I'm like, oh, my God, you are someplace. I
21 got to get out of here. I swear to all of you,
22 the only way I got out of that cemetery was he
23 had a hold of my belt, because my legs were
24 frozen at that point. Moving hurt. All the way
25 through there's no cellphones, across the street

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2 were pay phones. Called my godmother, she goes,
3 where are you? I said, I got off the bus, I
4 needed to go see Dad, and she said, put the phone
5 down, I'll come pick you up. To the day she
6 died, and the day my Mom died, I never told them
7 the real reason I went there. Could I have used
8 counseling? Yeah. Was I already buying into
9 that and the stigma about doing it? One hundred
10 percent. Go through high school, redefine who

11 you are -- I'm going to be a coach. I'm going to
12 be counselor. Graduate, go to college. I'm in
13 my third year in college. Now Irish mother who's
14 lost her husband, has an only child, and he's a
15 male, what does she want him to grow up to be?

16 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: A priest.

17 CHIEF KENNY: I am definitely in New York,
18 yes.

19 (Laughter.)

20 CHIEF KENNY: She wants me to grow up to be
21 a priest, right, but I never got that memo.

22 (Laughter.)

23 CHIEF KENNY: My third year of college, all
24 of a sudden little voice. This time inside.
25 Hey, did you ever think about that you should

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2 probably be dead now? You got hit by a car, and
3 you got lucky. I had poison in my legs from
4 walking on them that didn't go to your heart, and
5 then all of a sudden you're in the cemetery
6 laying there, you should have froze to death.
7 Maybe you have a calling in life. Maybe you're
8 supposed to do something important for me. So I

9 joined the seminary. Now you should have seen
10 the support group of my buddies when I told them
11 I was going in. Pat, listen, you know, we'll
12 find a girl. She might be blind and ugly and
13 stupid, but we'll find one for you, and you'll be
14 going --

15 (Laughter.)

16 CHIEF KENNY: (Continuing) -- don't do this
17 drastic thing. I was like, no, no, no, that is
18 not why I want to go in. I said I feel a
19 calling. I knew at that age I had a calling. I
20 didn't know what it was. So I went in, I
21 graduated from there. I get ready to go for my
22 further education, great grades and all this
23 stuff, and then I heard a voice again. This time
24 the voice says, are you sure you want to do this?
25 And I'm like, will you make up your mind.

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2 (Laughter.)

3 CHIEF KENNY: What do you mean am I sure
4 I'm going to do this? Well, you know what, you
5 got all the accolades of the last two years.

6 They told you you walked on water. They told you
7 you created water. They told you you're going to
8 be the greatest priest there's even been. All
9 the stuff you hope to get as an athlete you got
10 it that way so maybe this isn't what you're
11 supposed to do. Okay, great. Fine. I'll take a
12 year off, and if I still got this feeling, I'm
13 going in whether you like it or not. So I went
14 to work at a high school that did retreats, and
15 at that high school I met an Irish Catholic girl
16 except she was a real Irish Catholic girl. She
17 was one of 13.

18 (Laughter.)

19 CHIEF KENNY: Now they used the rhythm
20 method. Did you guess it's the wrong method? I
21 think so.

22 (Laughter.)

23 CHIEF KENNY: I walked into the first
24 family gathering, and it looked like this, and I
25 said, who are your brothers and sisters? She

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2 goes, all of them.

3 (Laughter.)

4 CHIEF KENNY: Eight brothers, favorite
5 sisters. More hoops to jump through than I knew,
6 but it was great. I didn't want to be alone. I
7 hated being an only child, and now I was part of
8 a family, and I had somebody special in my life,
9 and I'm like, okay, that's my vocation. I'm
10 supposed to teach, and I'm supposed to have a
11 family. So we get married. I have three boys,
12 Brendan the oldest on the left, Sean in the
13 middle, Patrick on the right. I am now not happy
14 teaching at all. Love coaching. I'm not great
15 at teaching, and I have a brother-in-law who's a
16 firefighter, and he goes, Pat, you're perfect.
17 That's your vocation. I can see you doing it.
18 You'll love it. It's the greatest thing anybody
19 has ever done. Dennis, I don't know if I'll pass
20 the physical. I don't know how to. So I took a
21 couple of tests, and I ended up first on one
22 department, and then a year later ended up on a
23 department called Hinsdale, which is where I
24 started almost for 27 years old, of which 14 of
25 that I was Chief. One station. A combination

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2 that went career. Twenty-eight people. Knew all
3 their lives. Knew all their kids. It was the
4 best, best job I had ever had in the world, and I
5 thought about that kid laying in the cemetery at
6 14 years old and went, wow, life changed. I'm
7 glad it's changed. Thank God. Thanks Dad for
8 pushing me back. This is what I'm supposed to
9 do. Well, that didn't go exactly the way I
10 thought it was going to. So now if somebody will
11 say, well, what's your education, and what are
12 your qualifications to talk about mental health?
13 I have a degree in psychology, a bachelor's
14 degree, which my mother said was always the
15 biggest waste of money ever because smart people
16 run out of burning buildings and you run in, so
17 why are we ever doing the psychology degree?
18 That's not what qualifies me to talk to you.
19 This guy qualifies me to talk to you. This is
20 Sean, this is the youngest. You can see by the
21 smile, you can see by size of him, Sean was going
22 to be my firefighter. My dream was to pin a
23 badge on him someday, because he had all the
24 qualities of people I would look to hire inside
25 that beautiful body, except when he was five

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2 years old diagnosed with clinical depression. I
3 didn't know you could have depression at five. I
4 knew you could be sad about I grounded you, or
5 you didn't get an extra scoop of ice cream, or
6 whatever it is, but I did not know that you could
7 clinically be diagnosed with as depressed.
8 Eileen saw it first. She noticed it because the
9 Velcro shoes were a big deal back then, he used
10 to do them on and off 50 times on each shoe
11 before even kinder. Fifty exact. If you
12 interrupted him, you got what I call an Irish
13 temper tantrum. Really what it was was a panic
14 attack. Took him to the pediatrician. Thank God
15 we had a forward thinking pediatrician that said,
16 you're right. She also told us that he had
17 colored everything in black, so would send him to
18 a child psychiatrist who diagnosed him. Gave him
19 medication, started therapy. Now the guy wearing
20 that back there, he's not buying any of this.
21 Nothing wrong, this is just a stage. So I went
22 along with it. Why, because it made my wife
23 happy, and I didn't see any negative side affects
24 to the medication he was taking, and he liked the
25 counselor. No harm, no foul. If that makes you

1
2 guys feel better, great. He's fine. He became a
3 middle line backer. He became a catcher, but by
4 junior high all of a sudden when your hormones
5 kick in, remember I said mental health, physical
6 illness, diabetes, you have the level chemicals
7 in your body, all of a sudden the hormones kick
8 in and his mental health challenges became
9 outrageous. His diagnosed with OCD, a possible
10 bipolar. They couldn't even figure out sometimes
11 what the disease was, all sorts of different
12 medications. He graduates from grammar school,
13 goes to high school, and the first day before
14 he's supposed to start high school he tells us I
15 can't do this anymore, and I said, Sean,
16 everybody is nervous before they go to high
17 school. Your two brothers were there, you'll be
18 okay. He said, no, no, I can't do this anymore.
19 Eileen again, Pat, Sean, what do you mean? He
20 goes, I want to die. Now you think having been
21 14, his age, and have thought about I wanted to
22 die also would have been a human being who would

23 caught on, but instead, I went into the phone
24 booth and put the cape on, and I became Chief.
25 Sean, you know what happens. You know what I do.

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1
2 Please tell us the thing about hurting
3 themselves, we take them to the hospital, and
4 it's not like your normal hospital, you go to a
5 floor and you get locked into that floor. I know
6 Dad, let's go, and he got in the car, and closed
7 the door. Now that silence from moving from the
8 front of the car to the driver's door felt like
9 four days. What am I going to say? What am I
10 going to -- I mean, I got nothing, and this thing
11 is not working. Whatever the hell that's
12 supposed to do, I'm saving other people's lives,
13 and my kid is going in -- I'm going to put him in
14 a psych ward. Go to the hospital, we go up the
15 same white elevators we took patients up for
16 years, get out, takes his clothes off, goes in a
17 gown, and disappears behind the door with all
18 these other losers, as I used to call them. When
19 I went on the ambulance, why is this two in the
20 morning, can't you have a panic attack at noon?

21 I mean, let's go, we're just giving them an
22 ambulance ride, we don't do anything for them,
23 and then we just put them in there. Except now
24 it's my kid. Now it's my youngest guy, and I'm
25 standing in front of those elevators, and I'm

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1
2 going, Jesus, what did I do? How did I mess this
3 up? Why didn't this work? I can't help him. So
4 high school was a journey. A number of suicide
5 attempts. Every medication you could think of.
6 Finally when he was a senior in high school we
7 got a second mortgage on our house, because we
8 were broke. Insurance didn't pay for almost
9 anything. We took him to the Mayo Clinic, a week
10 diagnose. At the end of the week they told your
11 son is terminal. I got relief. Okay, you found
12 something. Does he have a brain tumor? No, you
13 don't understand. Ten women come in here to Mayo
14 Clinic with breast cancer. Same age, set the
15 same stage, get the same treatment, nine walk out
16 completely healthy, one dies. We don't know why
17 they died, all we know is that the disease didn't

18 respond to the treatment. We went through your
19 son's file. He tried medications we didn't even
20 know existed, and the disease is not responding.
21 So every day when he wakes up he does not think
22 that day, is this the day I take my life? He
23 wakes up that day, and he thinks can I stay one
24 more day? And at some point the pain is going to
25 be too bad, and he is not going to stay. Long

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1
2 ride room, sit six hours from Rochester,
3 Minnesota to Illinois, I don't think I said a
4 word until we were a few blocks from home, and I
5 said, Sean, how did you feel? He said, Dad, they
6 believed me. They believed that I was sick.
7 They were great. They treated so good. I'm
8 like, Sean, you're only 19 years old, you've got
9 a shot here, man. Just give me more time. Give
10 me more time. I'll find a way. He said, Dad, if
11 it gets bad, I got to go. So we ended up having
12 to move him out of the house. This is a
13 terminally ill kid that the guy wearing a cape
14 goes you can't stay here anymore, because I can't
15 have your Mom or your brothers find you. So we

16 put him in a group home. A group home with a
17 nurse and a counselor and everything. He's there
18 six weeks, he goes missing. They call at 10:00
19 at night, your son's missing. Wait, what do you
20 he's missing? He was in your home. Well, it's
21 not a locked down facility. He left. So all
22 night we wait, pray, we wait, until the morning
23 we get a call from the local hospital. They said
24 we have your son, he was down we don't know how
25 long, you need to get here right away. So we

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1
2 rushed to the hospital, we get there, walk in the
3 ER, walk into his room, and it's a view you've
4 all seen, hopefully you've never seen it with
5 your loved one, he's on the vent. He aspirated
6 around the tube, he's ashon (phonetic). I mean
7 he's gone. I remember walking over to him and
8 kissing him on the head, and saying, hey, it's
9 time to go. The body you have sucks. It let you
10 down. I let you down. You could go. I'll take
11 care of Mom. I'll take of the boys, it's going
12 to be okay. Don't stay. Go. Go. Grandpa is

13 there. You're going to be okay. So they sent
14 him up to the ICU for all his cousins to say
15 goodbye, all through the night, literally. We
16 had cousins coming in and kissing him goodbye,
17 and it was like his own wake. In the morning the
18 doctor comes in and says, I want you to tear up
19 the DNR you signed earlier. I was like, what,
20 why would I do that? He said, he's trying. We
21 can see some brainwaves. You got it. Okay.
22 Tried to take him off the vent that day, five
23 days in a row nothing works. Day six they go if
24 he doesn't come off the vent today, you're going
25 to have to find a place for him. I was like,

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1
2 well, what does that mean? You mean like a
3 nursing home, so his Mom can go visit him and
4 watch him on a ventilator until the day he stops
5 breathing? Is that what we're talking about? He
6 said, yeah, because we can't keep him in ICU.
7 He's not getting any different. That day was St.
8 Patrick's Day. That day was his favorite day of
9 the year. Everything was green. None of my kids
10 were any good in math, but if you wanted to watch

11 them a pour a beer from a keg, a green beer on
12 St. Patrick's Day, they would nail it.
13 (Laughter.)
14 CHIEF KENNY: And he would get the biggest
15 tips on anyone. So my wife goes it's sign our,
16 Pat. It's our sign. He's going to be okay. I'm
17 thinking where am I going to find the money.
18 Where are we going to put -- What's this going to
19 do to her? What is it going to do to his
20 brothers who have been lost in this whole thing?
21 So into the room goes my wife. Old superman, big
22 fire Chief, big touch ass who wouldn't even go in
23 the room, because I knew what was going to
24 happen, and I was afraid, and I felt like such a
25 loser that I let him down. So I stood literally

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1
2 in the hallway like this, and back to the room,
3 and all of a sudden I hear a cough. That must
4 have been one of the nurses. And then I hear
5 another cough, and then I look around the corner
6 like literally like a little kid, he's off the
7 vent. He's staring at me in the doorway. He's

8 got his big beautiful smile like when he was
9 five, and I wore this hideous St. Patrick's Day
10 tie, and I said, are you laughing at my tie? And
11 he gave me this big smile. I don't think I've
12 ever gone across a room so fast in my life and
13 squeezed the living hell out of him, and I didn't
14 realize when I did it are all the way around, all
15 the nurses were crying, the doctor was crying,
16 because nobody believed he would come back. And
17 they're like you guys need to go home, we got him
18 now. It's going to be okay. So we go home. The
19 next morning the phone rings, it's the caller ID
20 from the hospital. I think he died during the
21 night. Pick it up, my hand shaking, it's him on
22 the other end of the phone, very raspy, Dad, are
23 you coming to see me today? Oh, man, you got it.
24 We're on the way. Now I used to not tell this
25 part of the story, and Eileen convinced me, this

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1
2 story is for at least one of you that's in the
3 room right now, so you need to tell it. So we
4 get to the hospital, he's sitting on the edge of
5 his bed very agitated. He keeps trying to talk.

6 I'm like, Sean, you had a tube down your throat.
7 We got all the time in the world. We got a
8 miracle. It's okay. My wife again, sit down for
9 a minute, will ya? Sean, what are you trying to
10 say? He goes, I saw Sean Kenny. And I'm
11 thinking, oh, he's brain dead. He doesn't even
12 know who he is. He's at least been damaged of
13 oxygen. All run medical running through my mind.
14 We're in the cape running through my mind. She
15 goes, no, no, slow down, you're Sean Kenny. No,
16 no, no, looks just like Dad, but younger. She
17 goes, who looks just like Dad but younger? He
18 said, Grandpa Mike. He then proceeds to describe
19 my Dad in details as a 25 year man, not as the
20 one picture he'd seen of him as an older guy, but
21 as a young man. He said, and we sat on this
22 concrete bench that had all sorts of
23 advertisements behind it. Remember I told you,
24 my Dad never drove. He took the bus everywhere
25 we went. He sat on concrete benches with

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2 advertisements. They didn't exist when Sean was

3 born. He'd never seen a picture of those at all.
4 She said, Sean, did he talk to you? He said, he
5 did. What did he say? Sean, you need to go
6 back. It's not your time. I'm like, here we go.
7 This is it. This is definitely -- He's seen my
8 Dad. I wondered if my Dad ever saw anything I'd
9 ever done in my entire life, and I'm like, oh, my
10 God, this is great. It didn't work, three months
11 later he's getting worse and worse and worse, and
12 on June 3rd of 2006 he died by suicide. Now
13 people say to me all the time are you angry with
14 him. I never, other than one other person, saw
15 anybody fight as hard as he did, because he knew,
16 he researched, he knew he was sick. He knew he
17 wasn't weak by any stretch of the imagination.
18 He was a great kid, but he had this illness that
19 consumed him to the point that finally the
20 darkness was a better option, and I really
21 believe somewhere now he sits with my dad, and
22 when I do this talk, I know exactly where he is,
23 he's not up there, he's up there. I wouldn't be
24 doing this if he hadn't had this journey. Do I
25 wish this mission had passed over me? Hell,

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yeah. He would have been 40 this September 17th.
A big 40th birthday party for my two other boys,
and on his birthday I'm going to think about not
going to happen, but that was his mission to hand
that off to me and go, I've taught you now the
truth about mental illness, you need to go help
your brothers and sisters and make sure they
understand, not only for their families and their
fire department, but for themselves, so they can
take care of themselves.

So we started travelling around the
country, my wife and I doing this talk. I love
this statement, the coincidence is just God's way
of remaining anonymous. None of the things that
have happened in my life, including the people
I've met through my career is a coincidence. I
may not realize why for 10 or 15 years and all of
sudden go, that's why I was supposed to meet that
person, and some of those people are in this room
today. I found this in his room. I didn't go
into it for a year, and it touched me and made me
motivated to do those trips. That bottom one is
probably hard to see, it says when I grow up,
I'll be a fireman. I didn't get to pin that

1
2 badge on him, but I know he's a company officer
3 somewhere in heaven, and when somebody is in
4 trouble, and they pray to just anybody up there,
5 and you're a firefighter, that's one of the
6 people that's going to respond. That's one of
7 the people on the other end. That's one of the
8 people that keeps me going that I believe is
9 still very, very much alive just in some place
10 that I can't see, but when I try real hard, I can
11 hear him.

12 So now we're travelling around the country,
13 all over different places. Chief Alan Brunacini
14 heard this talk when it was so ugly -- I was
15 embarrassed when I look back of what was in that
16 power point, he's like you need to take this on
17 the road and teach as many people as you can. So
18 we were making headway. Seventy-five percent of
19 the audience we're like you see the light bulb go
20 on. Okay, I used to think that was somebody
21 weak. I used to think that that was the stigma.
22 Now I don't believe it anymore, but 25 percent
23 just felt more empathetic -- or empathy to me I
24 should say -- They felt bad for me, which was

25 nice, but not the message I was looking for. So

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1
2 we sat at the kitchen table, and I said, we have
3 to figure out how are we going to get to these
4 people. So we decided we needed to put one slide
5 in that compared mental illness with a physical
6 illness, so which one did I pick? Brain cancer.
7 Okay, people can wrap the arms around the brain
8 is diseased so that causes behavioral problems,
9 it causes people to do things they wouldn't
10 normally do. Let's try this. So we put this
11 slide up. Cancer in the fire service, exposure
12 to dangerous -- Are we a whole lot better today
13 than we were in 1982 when I started? Absolutely.
14 Are our men and women still up against the gun
15 when it comes to that, yes. On the mental health
16 when you're in a little volunteer fire department
17 or the City of Chicago, you're going to be
18 exposed to stressful situations that are going to
19 impact you. Remember, the people we recruit, we
20 look for people who care. We can train anything
21 else. We can't train them. That's why you are
22 all here because you care, and then we expose

23 them to the worst situations we can, and we are
24 shocked when it bothers them. That's an easy or
25 foreseeable outcome. There's a possible

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1
2 predisposition for cancer. We have saved so many
3 firefighters who go for annual physicals. If you
4 don't have annual physicals in your
5 organizations, God, I just beg you, find a way to
6 do it. A lot of doctors at the hospitals will
7 even work with you, because that saved lives.
8 Because of my Dad's stomach cancer, I have had
9 more colonoscopies than anybody I know. Every
10 nurse in the state of Illinois knows what my ass
11 looks like.

12 (Laughter.)

13 CHIEF KENNY: And it has not gotten any
14 better over 68 years, right, but that saved more
15 times than once I've had polyps that were found
16 because they did it for me in my 30's on.
17 Possible predisposition on the mental health
18 side, yes. It's not clinically proven that if
19 you have depression in one generation it will go

20 on and on and on, but I didn't know until I was
21 35 my grandfather, my Dad's Dad in Ireland hung
22 himself in the barn, and Dad had to cut him down,
23 and the worst sin you could commit in Ireland is
24 suicide. My Dad was 18 years old. He never got
25 into counseling. He had to live with it, but

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1
2 what I remember is when he was with my Mom, I
3 never saw him hold her hand. I never saw him
4 tell her he loved her or me either. He would
5 punch me and do things, but it was always arm's
6 length, and I never knew why until she told me
7 that story.

8 Deny the condition. Yeah, it's just a
9 little lump on my back. That's nothing. It will
10 go away. People have that. I'm getting old.
11 They show up, and they don't go get it checked.
12 Same thing with mental health, well, yeah, I'm
13 drinking a little bit more. I kind of lost of
14 lost my appetite. Yeah, my wife and I are
15 fighting a little bit more than usual, but
16 everybody's got a cross to bear. So they deny
17 it. You can get the cancer diagnosis on that

18 annual physical. There's no real annual
19 evaluation that used across the country about
20 evaluating if somebody is struggling from a
21 mental health perspective. Loads of interviews,
22 questionnaires. Watching your people is what I
23 always tell people. Watch your people. You know
24 your people better than anybody. If they're
25 doing something outside the norm of what they

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1
2 normally do, whether it's eat, drink, sleep,
3 whatever it is, ask them a question, but don't
4 put it this way. Don't say are you okay, because
5 whatever language, whatever country you're in,
6 the answer 100 percent of the time is going to
7 be, I'm fine. Right? Instead ask them is there
8 anything I can do for you. Now what you're doing
9 there is they may lie to you and say, no, I'm
10 fine. I don't need anything, but you open the
11 door to them for communication by saying, I
12 notice there's something different with you. I
13 care. I'm here for you. If you tell me you've
14 got a problem, we'll talk you to the resources

15 where you need to go. It might be four months.
16 It might be six months later when they go, I'm
17 ready to talk, and the only person I want to talk
18 to is John because he talked to me about that.

19 Medications that are good can also expedite
20 your death. The number one side effect of Sean's
21 medications were suicidal ideations. How many
22 people die from cancer before of the chemo?

23 Hope one day is despair the next. The
24 difference is on a terminal diagnosis the
25 firefighter in the cancer state the family is

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1
2 embraced. People thought because they understand
3 the disease and the devastation. They don't
4 understand the disease and the devastation on
5 somebody who takes their life, and they are in
6 that moment standing in front of that casket 100
7 percent exactly the same, and I'll tell you why.
8 You wouldn't accuse a cancer patient of taking
9 their -- We wouldn't accuse someone with
10 Alzheimer's or dementia of lying when they can't
11 remember their name, but we accuse people with
12 mental illness of faking not being able to get

13 out of bed. I did that to Sean. I called him
14 out on it. You only got to go 20 feet to go in
15 there and brush your teeth. Dad, I can't get out
16 of bed. The day after he died, I couldn't get
17 out of bed, and I remember looking to heaven and
18 going, buddy, I'm sorry. I didn't even know that
19 was a real thing. You're right. I can't do it.
20 Instead of going those people have a problem, we
21 have to make it our people. All of us have to
22 work together in order to make this work.

23 Chief Buckmann from Indiana, that I'm sure
24 many of you know -- verses cancer is not as easy
25 as washing your gear. That's a big step for us,

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1
2 something concrete we all can do. Mental health
3 is not that simple, and it takes even more work.

4 So what does terminal look like? That's my
5 son. Obviously Sean on the left. That's my
6 wife, Eileen, on the right. Remember I told you
7 which disease I picked to be the one that we were
8 going to compare was brain cancer. This was
9 before cancer in Ireland in September of 2016 --

10 I mean January of 2016 -- she was diagnosed with
11 glioblastoma. No symptoms up until three weeks
12 before. All of sudden she couldn't write. Nine
13 brain tumors, and I stood there in our room and I
14 sobbed, and I said, this is my fault. I jinxed
15 you. Why did I pick that disease? Why? We had
16 a son that was getting married in November. The
17 fight was on. There's no cure. We're going to
18 treat her. She's going to get better. We get
19 her to the wedding, and then you're going to need
20 to say goodbye. So I watched the same fight Sean
21 fought with the same tenacity. You could tell
22 that was his Mom, except this one was viewed very
23 differently. I told everybody. Everybody came
24 by and visited. Everybody shared stories with
25 her. Everybody supported my kids and supported

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1
2 me. My fire department had my back all the way
3 around. I never told anybody about Sean. We
4 didn't want him to be picked on or ridiculed. I
5 missed the opportunity to educate my people that
6 it's just an illness. My second department I
7 picked it up, but I wasn't doing it then.

8 So in the old days how do we really deal
9 with tragedy, and we all agree that children
10 dying is the biggest strategy, so I just use our
11 Lady of Angels fire from Chicago. Ninety-five
12 people killed, 93 of them were children, and when
13 you read the accounts of what happened
14 afterwards, people were coming out, carrying
15 bodies out of there. They said it was so quiet.
16 All you could hear was people sobbing and praying
17 that the one child that was carried out was there
18 child. So do you think they had any type of
19 formal counseling back then? No. So what did
20 they probably do?

21 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Drink.

22 CHIEF KENNY: Probably went drinking. Did
23 they go with their family?

24 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: No.

25 CHIEF KENNY: No. Did they go with friends

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1
2 who weren't firefighters?

3 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: No, they went by
4 themselves.

5 CHIEF KENNY: They wanted to go with their
6 own, and they might not have even talked about
7 the call, but they needed to be. They knew they
8 needed to be, but they didn't know what to do.
9 They didn't know the resources. What I see today
10 travelling around the country with firefighters,
11 I don't see hardly any illegal drugs. I really
12 don't. What I do see is with prescription drugs.
13 You get a legitimate injury. You hurt your back,
14 so they put you on pain killers, muscle relaxers,
15 but it makes you feel better than you've ever
16 felt in your life, because it changes the
17 chemistry in your body, the chemistry you need,
18 the psychotic medication to help you with, but
19 that medication is doing the same thing for that
20 woman, and so all of a sudden they don't want to
21 come off it, they start writing prescriptions,
22 they start doing things they shouldn't do.

23 Alcohol, I would be the biggest hypocrite
24 if I stood up here in front of you and said that
25 the way we can save mental illness is everybody

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2 stop drinking. I like my Guinness. I like my

3 Jameson, but I will tell you, when Sean died and
4 again when my wife died, I ended up where I
5 almost lost it, because of that, and I have to
6 watch. If I'm depressed and things are bad, I
7 need to stay away from it. Smoking, when I came
8 in the fire service, smoking was going out.
9 Smoking now is coming back. You might call it
10 vaping instead of smoking, but it's coming back
11 in. Talked to young people, why? Well, it's
12 very stressful. So that's what I do. I'm like,
13 can you find something more creative and better
14 for your health than doing the smoking? Or
15 eating, I always had board meetings for both
16 departments on a Monday night. And Tuesday
17 morning if Eileen looked in the garbage can and I
18 had in there an empty party size bag of Ruffles,
19 a big onion dip container, and a small chocolate
20 Haagen Dazs container, if they were all empty, I
21 got my ass kicked at the board meeting. However,
22 if she looked in there and it was empty, I hired
23 three guys, bought a ladder truck, and built a
24 station, and I named it after myself, because
25 when I'm on the roll, I don't need to eat

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1

2 anything. I could go for days, and I'm fine.

3 When I'm struggling, I'm going to eat your lunch,

4 and your dinner, and his breakfast, and that's my

5 red flag for knowing that I'm in trouble.

6 So now back to the movie. You're going to

7 go, okay, you promised us, and now you're just

8 ranting and raving. So Roy Hobbs in the movie, a

9 retired New York uniform, he's in the hospital

10 later in this movie. I had never noticed some of

11 the things that I'm about to tell you. I

12 probably had watched that scene a hundred times.

13 My wife died November 5, 2016. Christmas Day

14 2016 I had vowed I would never teach again,

15 because every time I taught, she sat in that back

16 corner of the room. When I started to lose it,

17 she would stand, and it was her signal to go,

18 Pat, he's right behind you. I can see him. You

19 got it. Keep going. And now I wasn't going to

20 have that anymore. I was just going to picture

21 her, I go I'm done. So I'm going through

22 Christmas movies. I don't want to see a

23 Christmas movie -- all this is -- believe me, and

24 that scene comes on. Well there he is if you

25 watch in the very beginning that entire crowd is

1
2 all against him. They've all judged him. You're
3 a loser, and they're booing the hell out of him,
4 and they want to see him fail. And all of a
5 sudden one person has the courage to stand up,
6 and when she stands up people ream her, sit down,
7 get out of the way, what are you doing. I had
8 never noticed she was wearing all white, never.
9 I had never noticed that there was a ray of
10 sunshine that came behind her, and you see him
11 get out, and he's like disheveled, he doesn't
12 even know really what's going on, but all of a
13 sudden he emptied that swing -- I was a baseball
14 player -- I recognized that first swing. I did
15 it many times. All of a sudden he gets back in
16 the batter's box, and he's like, yeah, I can do
17 this, I've done this before, and all of sudden,
18 as Hollywood, he hits a home run, but not only is
19 it a home run, it smashes the clock as he's
20 running around the bases, and I'm sitting on the
21 couch going, he smashed the clock, he smashed the
22 stigma. I'm supposed to smash the stigma. I
23 swear to you, I felt my wife sitting on the couch
24 next to me. I wish I could tell you it was

25 lovingly, but I picture her sitting there going,

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1
2 it only took you a hundred times to figure out
3 what this scene was, right? This is your
4 mission. You can't quit. You need to keep
5 going. It's up to you to smash the stigma.
6 Don't let go of this. Sometimes you have to take
7 your cape off, and I didn't know that. Every one
8 of my losses was a failure to me, a personal
9 failure. Let my dad down. Let me son down. I
10 let my wife down. Not true. Not true. But it
11 took me a long time to be okay with that. It
12 doesn't mean I'm not horribly sad about all of
13 them. I miss them, but I don't now look that it
14 was my fault, because that thing wasn't going to
15 be able to help me. It's not God. It couldn't
16 fix it. So sometimes you have to let other
17 people wear your cape. And for that day for him
18 she wore his cape. So she gave him the courage
19 to move on. Offer to wear the cape for somebody
20 can become your why, your mission for that day.
21 It gives a person the chance to rest and heal.

22 So if somebody doesn't believe you. You
23 said, yeah, I heard this raving Irishman when I
24 went to the FASNY conference, and I don't believe
25 that, that's all bullshit, it's still a weakness.

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2 Just compare it to a back injury. All of us when
3 somebody comes in the academy, this is the
4 perfect way to lift. Wonderful. Until you have
5 somebody trapped between the commode and the
6 bathtub in full arrest, you're not doing the
7 great lift. You may hurt your back. You're
8 probably going to. What do we do? May sure you
9 tell someone. We then send you to a physician
10 that knows what operations are like for a
11 firefighter. They evaluate you. You might get
12 some physical therapy. You might get some
13 medication. And then we return you a 100 percent
14 to your family and your vocation. Why are we not
15 doing that with mental health? Same thing. I'm
16 having a problem, I ask for help. We send you to
17 a professional who knows what a firefighter does,
18 because that's critical, and then they bring you
19 back through the process so you come back a 100

20 percent to your family and to your fire
21 department. Tell them to talk their way through
22 that.

23 I left this slide in only because my wife
24 said I look like an idiot in it.

25 (Laughter.)

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2 CHIEF KENNY: So be okay with your human
3 side. There's a time to go back in your personal
4 phone booth. Those of you who have to Google,
5 Superman used to come out of a phone booth.

6 (Laughter.)

7 CHIEF KENNY: You may not know what a phone
8 booth is, but he used to come out of one, right?
9 So you've got to go back in, and you have to
10 figure out, put your cape back on. You can't
11 stop moving forward. You want to. Trust me, I
12 wanted to lay down and die again, but you have to
13 keep moving. Those people you bring with you,
14 they support you, they keep you going in your
15 worst moments.

16 Now we're flipping this back over again.

17 So how do we figure out what our mission is, it's
18 your whys? What is your why? Why do you exist?
19 Not just for the fire service, for your family,
20 for your friends, you have to think about it.
21 Not just let it go on, yeah, I'm around, but --
22 No, what's your why? Your why that day may be I
23 need to cut the grass. That's my why, and that
24 feels pretty good, I got it done. And you may be
25 on a bigger scale. For me, I'm wearing my cape

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2 for my granddaughters, Caroline Eileen
3 and Maeve -- because Caroline has told me more
4 than a couple of times she wants to be a
5 firefighter. If she's blessed enough to do that,
6 I don't want her to deal with the stigma, not
7 only of being a woman in the fire service, if she
8 has any of the mental health challenges that were
9 in our family, I want her to be able to say, hey,
10 Pop, I need a little bit of help. I want her to
11 show that true courage that I talked about
12 earlier. I also wear it for my grandson. This
13 is his christening a week ago. Do you think he
14 could catch and play middle linebacker?

15 (Laughter.)

16 CHIEF KENNY: I think so. That's what
17 we're going to work on anyway.

18 Now, I added a slide in here and changed
19 the order of this based on Chief Leeb, and I was
20 going to say this great statement to you like,
21 I'm in New York state, so you obviously all know
22 who Chief Leeb is, but when I travel around the
23 country, I might have to say it's from FDNY, and
24 he's retired. So before you make any judgments
25 about whether you think this statement is really

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2 good or not, he sitting in the front row, so.

3 (Laughter.)

4 CHIEF KENNY: Now, let's talk about what
5 statement, we need to preload coping mechanisms
6 into all our firefighters dressed like you reload
7 firefighting tactics. Do we prepare people for
8 what they're going -- We don't have people hose
9 for the first time on their first working fire.
10 How the hell do you pull this thing out? What do
11 you do? We've done it hundreds of times, and you

12 might only have three structure fires in a year,
13 but you do it over and over and over again. So
14 you know what to do when that's an emergency
15 you're in the response method. Do we do that for
16 mental health? Do we do that in our academies?
17 Do we start right away early about telling people
18 about this is the wonderful things about this
19 job, and here's some of the other realities, but
20 here are the resources we have to treat you with,
21 to take care of you and your family. All
22 inclusive. Exactly what FASNY is doing. Do we
23 do that or not? So self-examine your own
24 organization. When does mental health get
25 introduced and how? And shouldn't it be at least

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2 within that first year, and you have to include
3 the families. The biggest thing I got when I
4 left my second department was volunteer that
5 people loved was I had a spouse's drill. So our
6 drills were on Monday night. One Monday out of
7 the year, the guys and gals stayed home, and the
8 significant others came to the firehouse. They
9 got paid for staying home. You should have seen

10 the bills manager when we had this discussion.
11 They got paid for staying home, and we went in,
12 and we taught them a class about what their
13 firefighters did, and then they had pizza
14 together. You'd have thought I created some
15 unbelievable thing. When I was leaving, tell the
16 new Chief they better have spouse's drill,
17 because this is really good. And why was it
18 good? Because they felt like a part of the team,
19 and they are. So don't leave them out. When
20 you're doing your preloading, they need to be a
21 part of it. Chief, did I do okay with that?

22 CHIEF LEEB: Yes.

23 (Laughter.)

24 CHIEF KENNY: He really is a lot smarter
25 than me, so I'm more nervous with him in the

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2 front row than I am with you.

3 Some questions as you leave out of here.

4 Is the concept of mental health in your academies

5 at the entry level? Are recognitions of signs

6 and symptoms part of our company officer

7 training? Do you go through scenarios with your
8 people like you just had a lieutenant walk in,
9 close the door, and go, Chief, I just found out
10 my five year old daughter has brain cancer. Do
11 we go through those tactical trainings, those
12 human being preloads, so it's like how do you
13 handle that? What are the resources? What are
14 available? What would I do, because it's not a
15 matter of if, it's a matter of when.

16 Do we human preplan? We do assessments
17 centers with all these wild tacticals. You have
18 four people on duty, I'm four blocks from the
19 railroad tracks, a bus hits a train at 2:00 in
20 the morning, that train has got nothing but
21 hazmat on it, the bus has 40 orphans, but don't
22 worry, because there's six nuns on there, but did
23 I tell you that were blind? You have two minutes
24 to make a decision.

25 (Laughter.)

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2 CHIEF KENNY: And you know what we do, we
3 do, because we sat around the coffee table and
4 we've gone, what's the worst case scenario? 9/11

5 made us do that. What is the worst thing that
6 can happen? And we're right, but we don't do
7 that for the human condition. What do volunteer
8 departments do if you don't have an EAP? I
9 learned this. My own state is 80 percent
10 volunteer. The first time they brought up EAP, I
11 was so stupid, because one chief said, I don't
12 even know what that is. So what do they do,
13 going to use counselors in their community, high
14 school counselors, whoever you could get who's
15 trained, but you have to train them in your
16 culture, because you just can't throw them cold
17 into a room, because what helps one person is not
18 going to help us. They need to know what we do.
19 If you do have an EAP, you need to ask what's
20 your training in the fire service. I want that
21 wife who calls to be talking to somebody who
22 understands what her husband does and vice versa,
23 and you are in charge, they're not.

24 So now, use the cape as it's designed. I
25 want you to use your cape, because it's not about

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2 not doing it. This is about just understanding,
3 but once you put it on and you're called to help
4 and serve others, that's your why in that moment.
5 That's what you're there for. You're meant to be
6 in that moment.

7 Take it off when it's time for self care.
8 Self care is not selfishness. You heard the
9 reverend talk about this morning. Sometimes you
10 just need to take a rest, and it's okay to do
11 that, to refuel yourself to do what you do.

12 The key to successful leadership is to know
13 your whys and know the whens about your cape. So
14 who does your S stand for? Does it stand for
15 your family, your friends, or for you? So now,
16 you're now a part of Sean and Eileen's team. I
17 won't know if anything I told you during this
18 presentation you're going to do anything about
19 it. I won't, but they will. They'll know. So
20 my S stands for Sean, and my someone is Eileen.
21 I want you to identify who that S is for you, and
22 then I want you to probably put your cape back
23 on.

24 So I made a promise. My wife was almost
25 comatose, but she sharp enough to go, I got five

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things I want you to make sure, make me promise.

One was, I want you to write a book. I said,

Hun, you used to write the Christmas cards. It's

how we know that you had a problem. I can't

write. She goes, I want you to write the book.

I said, what about? She said, write the book

about Sean's journey. Write a book about the

signs and what you believe and that there are

people on the other side are trying to help, that

there is a plan. I want you to write the book.

I'd been married for 35 years and four months. I

pulled this one, I said, I promise I'll try.

(Laughter.)

CHIEF KENNY: How far do you think that

went? She just looked at me and went, again --

All right. All right. I promise I'll do it.

Thinking full well that in heaven she would be

forgiving and when I got up there that she

wouldn't care, but I ended up doing it anyway,

and it came out a couple of years ago. It says

international best seller at the top, because

this is the best part, I have 12 first cousins in

Ireland, and I made every one of them buy it.

(Laughter.)

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(Applause.)

CHIEF KENNY: And a big deal, it has gone over much more than I thought. People use it. I had three people come up to me, and I was in tears for stuff that they said. That's not me. That's Sean that taught me, and Eileen that taught me. All I'm doing is repeating what they did. I didn't promise to do the audio version. I got stuck doing that, so if you don't like the book, you can go to Amazon and you can get the audible book, and it's me. So if you just listened to 90 minutes, you're already sick, you'll have a hard time with the audio version of the book.

(Laughter.)

CHIEF KENNY: That's my website. That's my email. If you go to the website, you'll go to all the social media. I'm not a big social media person, so it automatically goes there, but I will answer your emails. So if you have a problem personally with your family, with your department, please reach out. I will respond.

24 Sometimes it takes me a little while, but I
25 promise you I will. You're now part of my teams.

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2 People go, what do you miss the most about being
3 retired? I don't get to walk into a firehouse
4 and have a bunch of people like this go, good
5 morning, Chief. I miss that. When I do this
6 presentation, I actually have a team again, and
7 so you are now part of that, and so really, if I
8 can help you in any way, please do it.

9 I'm always amazed that the color of that
10 ribbon is green. The green that I grew up with.
11 I think it was all kind of meant to be.

12 So next September 17th, say a little prayer
13 for that young man --

14 (Standing ovation.)

15 CHIEF KENNY: I'm finishing my sentence --
16 who motivates me to keep going.

17 Okay, I'm done.

18 (Laughter.)

19 CHIEF KENNY: Thank you, all.

20 MR. PERRY: When I first saw Chief Kenny
21 present in Clearwater, Florida, I knew that this

22 is the person I wanted here to do my keynote
23 address. It's a powerful story. Mental health
24 is real. Mental health is important, and make
25 sure that you realize when you have a problem

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2 there is somewhere there for you, and you need to
3 talk to people, and I thank Chief Kenny. Would
4 you come up here, please.

5 Chief Kenny, I want to give you one of
6 caring coins. This is a little gift from FASNY
7 from our store out here you can do, and I have a
8 proclamation honoring Chief Patrick Kenny.
9 "Whereas, Chief Patrick Kenny, is an invited
10 guest and a keynote speaker of the 153rd FASNY
11 Annual Meeting and Convention. Whereas, Chief
12 Kenny has highlighted and advocated for focusing
13 and addressing the important issues of behavioral
14 health and mental wellness. Now, therefore be it
15 resolved, that the Firefighters Association of
16 the State of New York extends its thanks and
17 appreciation to Patrick Kenny for his commitment
18 and for the ideals of the volunteer fire service

19 and for the men and women who protect their
20 communities."

21 Presented this day, the 7th of August,
22 2025; and it's signed my myself and our
23 Secretary, John D'Alessandro.

24 (Standing ovation.)

25 CHIEF KENNY: Thank you very much.

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2 MR. PERRY: I want to thank Chief Kenny for
3 a very inspirational speech. He will be out in
4 the hallway with his book, "Taking off the Cape."
5 He'll be signing copies of it if you wish.
6 Please if you feel, go out there and talk to him
7 and buy the book.

8 Before we begin the business part of this
9 session, I would like to thank our staff members
10 for their hard work throughout the year for
11 making our Annual Meeting and Convention a
12 memorable and productive event.

13 FASNY's Director of Operations, Andrew
14 Doyle.

15 Deputy Director of Operations, Dylan Reece.

16 Director of Events and Special Projects,

17 the person that does it all for us, April Rounds.
18 Our Director of Information and Technology,
19 Chris Roberson.
20 Our Director of Human Resources, Colleen
21 Simo.
22 Events and Special Projects Coordinator,
23 the one who makes all of our room reservations
24 and takes care of everything for us, Erica Mason.
25 Our Executive Assistant, Lisa Michael.

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2 Our Marketing and Communications Manager,
3 Zoe Raffo.
4 Our Membership Coordinator, Kaylena
5 Maynard.
6 Our Project Coordinator, who the door prize
7 that is outside in the hallway, the three
8 firefighters, painted that, is an excellent
9 artist; and that's Joe Schaefer.
10 Our Accounting Manager, Dan Ryan.
11 Our Recruitment Coordinator, Kayleigh
12 Marron.
13 Our arrangements committee, the people that

14 run around getting everything together and make
15 sure everything is ready for when we're ready to
16 start, and that's Gerald Mehan, Bruce Stockman,
17 Matthew Mehan, Michael Norwood, Patrick Perry,
18 Larry Rieben, and Natalie Rieben.

19 Please give all of our staff a big round of
20 applause. They are the individuals who do the
21 hard work to put this event together.

22 (Applause.)

23 (Whereupon, a video was played.)

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. PERRY: At this time, I will entertain

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2 a motion to accept the convention agenda as
3 printed.

4 MR. EWING: Motion.

5 MR. PERRY: Motion by Scott Ewing.

6 Could I have a second?

7 MR. MCKINNEY: Second.

8 MR. PERRY: Second by Tom McKinney.

9 Are there any questions?

10 (No response.)

11 MR. PERRY: All in favor?

12 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.
13 MR. PERRY: Opposed?
14 (No response.)
15 MR. PERRY: Carried.
16 At this time, I will entertain a motion to
17 accept the minutes of the 2024 annual meeting.
18 MR. FRITCHE: Motion.
19 MR. PERRY: Motion by Robert Fritche.
20 MR. WITH: Second.
21 MR. PERRY: Second by Tom With.
22 Any questions?
23 (No response.)
24 MR. PERRY: All in favor?
25 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

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2 MR. PERRY: Opposed?
3 (No response.)
4 MR. PERRY: Carried.
5 I'm going to go in now to the address of
6 the President.
7 Good afternoon. I cannot believe that's it
8 been a year since I was elected president of this

9 amazing association. It has been a year that has
10 been busy and challenging for your leadership and
11 Board of Directors. We have always strived to
12 represent all the men and women of the volunteer
13 fire service.

14 The most important asset that FASNY has is
15 you, our membership. Without our members
16 supporting, advocating, and attending events such
17 as this convention, FASNY would not be the
18 premiere fire service organization that it is
19 today.

20 In fact, I am happy to announce that in
21 addition to FASNY recently winning a national
22 award for our recruitment video, we were just
23 notified of another honor. City and State
24 magazine is the premiere outlet dedicated to
25 covering New York's local and state politics and

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2 policy. Their in depth, nonpartisan coverage
3 serves New York's leaders and decision makers
4 every day as a trusted guide to the issues
5 impacting New York. I am proud to inform our
6 membership that FASNY has been chosen as a top

7 trade association in New York State and will be
8 recognized in a special issue of their weekly
9 magazine. The TOP Trade Associations designation
10 is given to organizations that represent the
11 interests of their members through advocacy,
12 industry standards, networking, and education.

13 I would like to thank the FASNY membership
14 committee and our membership staff, Dylan Reece,
15 Marti VanDeBogart, and Kaylena Maynard, for all
16 their diligence in rebooting our membership
17 process and continuing to improve our outreach
18 across New York State.

19 We have accomplished many things along with
20 our fire service partners. We were able to
21 secure a five year extension to 2031 for the EMS
22 Cost Recovery legislation, as well as a phase out
23 of firefighter PPE containing PFAS. Both were
24 included in the fiscal year 2026 final budget
25 language. I want to thank our legislative team

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2 at Albany Strategic Advisors to get this passed.
3 Legislation such as this highlights FASNY's

4 commitment to the physical and financial health
5 of volunteer fire and EMS organizations.

6 The upcoming legislative conference will
7 look a little different in November this year.

8 The state legislature has a two year legislative
9 session. All bills that were introduced this
10 year carry over to the session beginning in 2026.

11 The new format for our legislative conference,
12 inclusive of the "off year" weekend, will better
13 align with the New York State legislative cycle.

14 New bills can still be introduced and the FASNY
15 scorecard can be adjusted as needed by the Board
16 of Directors and the legislative committee as has
17 been done in the past.

18 Another issue which FASNY worked on was the
19 changes in the fire prevention and building code,
20 more specifically the adoption of a requirement
21 to have sprinkler systems installed in new
22 construction of one and two family houses and
23 townhouses. Hearings were conducted by the New
24 York State Codes Council where testimony was
25 given by the FASNY Standards and Code Committee

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2 for the adoption of the new code as proposed.

3 Although the results is not totally what we
4 wanted, it is an important step in the right
5 direction that New York is now added to the
6 growing number of states that are requiring
7 sprinkler systems in townhouses.

8 With townhouses having an increasing share
9 of New York's housing stock over the last decade,
10 FASNY looks forward to tracking the performance
11 of these systems in reducing fire injuries and
12 fatalities. This will enable us to provide
13 education on the benefits of these systems for
14 other types of new construction.

15 As I said in my acceptance speech last
16 year, the theme for my presidency is first
17 responder behavioral and mental health. I have
18 read and heard about too many accounts of first
19 responders suffering from mental health issues.
20 I have established a FASNY committee to
21 specifically address these very issues that cause
22 hospitalization, family challenges, and sometimes
23 suicide. My first charge to the committee was to
24 design a "caring coin." This coin is a symbol of
25 connection and support within the firefighting

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2 community. It serves as a reminder that someone
3 cares, offering comfort and hope to those who
4 need it. The coin is not meant to be collected
5 or traded. It is to be distributed in meaningful
6 and thoughtful ways to maximize their impact and
7 reinforce their purpose as symbols of support and
8 connection. The coin comes with a QR code that
9 will take you directly to the health and wellness
10 section on the FASNY website where you will find
11 mental health information and resources. The
12 coin is available from any member of our mental
13 and behavioral health committee. I am immensely
14 proud of this project, and I thank the committee
15 for accomplishing my mission that we are stronger
16 together. In addition, FASNY has partnered with
17 the Mental Health Association of New York State
18 (MHANYS) to improve the lives of individuals,
19 families, and all communities in New York State
20 by raising mental health awareness, ending stigma
21 and discrimination, and promoting wellness and
22 recovery.

23 Two weeks ago, Association Secretary John
24 D'Alessandro and I traveled to Washington, by
25 invitation from Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, to

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2 attend a First Responders Summit. Topics
3 included first responder employee and family
4 wellness, an update on the World Trade Center
5 Health Plan, and creating community partnerships.

6 It was also my honor to be asked to moderate a
7 panel on grants for firefighters, EMTs, and
8 emergency management. The panel discussed
9 different grant opportunities and how to write an
10 effective grant application. Although the
11 session lasted only an hour, excellent
12 information was shared. The summit also afforded
13 us the opportunity to network with the Senator's
14 staff on current issues faced by the volunteer
15 fire service in New York State.

16 The OSHA 1910.156 Emergency Response
17 Standard has been a priority for FASNY.
18 Testimony by several FASNY representatives,
19 including post hearing comments, were delivered
20 directly to OSHA. The rule originally proposed
21 by OSHA in December of 2023 remains unchanged at
22 this time. The evidentiary record closed on
23 January 17, 2025, and the rulemaking process is

24 in its final stage. Comments made after that
25 date are outside the record, and OSHA is

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2 prohibited from considering anything after that
3 date. OSHA is currently evaluating the
4 evidentiary record and there is no set timetable
5 for OSHA to issue a final rule. From the
6 beginning of the rulemaking process, FASNY's
7 position has been steadfast and consistent. We
8 urge OSHA to exempt the volunteer fire service
9 from the proposed rule as it's currently written.
10 If this occurs, we have pledged to work with OSHA
11 to create a rule that is technically and
12 economically feasible for the volunteer fire
13 service. Should a new rule be suggested, we
14 believe that this must be done through a new,
15 fully negotiated rulemaking process that allows
16 everyone the opportunity to review the rule and
17 offer comments as to how it would impact their
18 agency. If anyone would like a copy of FASNY's
19 OSHA testimony and post hearing comments, copies
20 are available in the secretary's office.

21 Turning to another element of our core
22 mission, the training and education committee did
23 an outstanding job putting together FASNY's First
24 Annual Training Symposium in Lake George. We
25 have received nothing but positive responses to

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2 the symposium and received many questions as to
3 when it will be next year. The committee is
4 currently working on the 2026 symposium, which
5 will again be in Lake George. It is our hope to
6 bring this program to different areas of the
7 state in the coming years. My thanks to the
8 committee for all their work on this and all the
9 other training and webinars which are conducted
10 by FASNY throughout the entire year. Your work
11 does not go unnoticed.

12 In closing, there are many more activities
13 that FASNY is undertaking which are too numerous
14 to mention here. Your officers and board of
15 directors are working tirelessly to ensure that
16 the boots on the ground firefighters, who are the
17 backbone of the volunteer fire service, are
18 protected. From legislation to training to

19 benefits for our members, this association stands
20 ready to assist in any way it can.

21 Thank you for your service to your
22 respective communities. Thank you for attending,
23 and enjoy the rest of the convention.

24 (Standing ovation.)

25 MR. FARRELL: Thank you, President Perry.

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2 For the purposes of a motion, the Chair
3 recognizes Patrick Perry and Christopher Perry.

4 MR. PERRY: Mr. Chairman, I, Patrick E.
5 Perry, proudly makes the motion to accept
6 President Perry's report. And I'll correct
7 myself, it's Patrick J. Perry.

8 (Laughter.)

9 MR. FARRELL: Motion made by Patrick J.
10 Perry.

11 MR. PERRY: Mr. Chairman, I, Christopher E.
12 Perry, proudly seconds the motion to accept
13 President Perry's report.

14 MR. FARRELL: Seconded by Christopher E.
15 Perry to accept the motion.

16 On a question?
17 (No response.)
18 MR. FARRELL: Hearing none.
19 All in favor?
20 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.
21 MR. FARRELL: Opposed?
22 (No response.)
23 MR. FARRELL: So carried.
24 MR. PERRY: I now call on Association
25 Secretary John D'Alessandro for the annual report

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2 of the secretary.
3 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: So if you've come to the
4 last several FASNY conventions, you probably
5 remember that I try to start my report off with
6 some kind of relevant quote. So here I go.
7 Costello: What's the guy's name on first
8 base?
9 Abbott: No, what is on second.
10 Costello: I'm not asking you who's on
11 second.
12 Abbott: Who's on first.
13 Costello: I don't know.

14 Abbott: He's on third. We're not talking
15 about him.

16 For those of us old enough to remember,
17 this is part of a signature comedy routine done
18 by Bud Abbott and Lou Costello. While the
19 routine is intended to be funny in its own right,
20 it also highlights a more serious challenge.
21 Simply put, that challenge is the age old need to
22 communicate frequently and to communicate
23 effectively. One might even argue that the
24 necessity to do this is more important today than
25 ever before.

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2 When communication is infrequent or
3 inconsistent, it is easy to make assumptions,
4 fill in the blanks, and ultimately come to
5 believe an incorrect conclusion. The need to
6 communicate often and effectively is as true for
7 organizations as it is for individuals. Whether
8 it is communicating to its membership or to other
9 groups, effective organizations strive to make
10 their positions clearly understood and encourage

11 healthy dialog. It would be naive to believe
12 that disagreement will never occur. After all,
13 we are human and humans have different
14 perspectives and goals. In the end, people or
15 organizations don't always agree, but that lack
16 of agreement must be based on one body of factual
17 information. If disagreement is based on the
18 same body of information supported by the facts,
19 rational people can respectfully agree to
20 disagree. Again, this is as true for
21 organizations as it for individuals.

22 As association secretary, I am pleased to
23 represent FASNY in several state and national
24 organizations dealing with issues of importance
25 to volunteer first responders. As a result, I

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2 can say with great confidence that FASNY
3 continues to be viewed as one of the premier
4 first responder organizations on both the state
5 and national levels. From the proposed changes
6 to the OSHA fire brigade standard to the national
7 recruitment and retention challenge, FASNY
8 continues to be a respected voice and a key

9 advocate.

10 Since the 152nd Annual Meeting of the
11 organization, the Board of Directors has met 13
12 times. Copies of the meeting minutes are
13 distributed and are available for review at FASNY
14 headquarters. The secretary's office also
15 retains transcripts of previous annual meetings,
16 nominating petitions, contact information of all
17 elected officers, listings of appointed committee
18 members, and copies of current corporate
19 documents.

20 In addition to the recordkeeping duties of
21 the office, the bylaws of the organization state
22 that "the secretary shall assume responsibility
23 for supervising the registration of members
24 entitled to vote and issuing voting cards,
25 ballots, or other like documents should a vote or

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2 election be called at any meeting of the
3 membership." There are five offices up for
4 election this year: Three seats on the Board of
5 Directors and two seats on the Firefighters' Home

6 Board of Trustees. Two of FASNY Board of
7 Directors' positions are being contested. The
8 membership will also vote with proposed changes
9 to the organization's bylaws.

10 As of August 1st, FASNY has 36,571 members;
11 34,886 individuals and 1,685 organizations. This
12 is the dividend generated by the hard work of our
13 elected officers, staff, and committee members.

14 We need you to be involved if we are to continue
15 to advocate for and protect the interest of New
16 York's volunteer first responders. Join a
17 committee, attend one of our many trainings and
18 seminars, and above all, make your voices heard
19 on issues that directly affect our health and
20 wellbeing. We need you to reach out to your
21 brother and sister first responders who are not
22 currently members of FASNY. In order to continue
23 our fight for resources and protections, strength
24 in numbers is the order of the day.

25 Since its founding, FASNY's mission is to

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2 educate, train, and inform volunteer first
3 responders. This mission has been, and will

4 continue to be, built on a foundation of
5 communication and open dialog with our
6 membership. Yet this is only half of the
7 equation. Involvement of our membership is the
8 source of strength of this organization. It is
9 the reason that FASNY leads the charge on all
10 issues of importance to the volunteer fire and
11 EMS services.

12 I am honored to be the secretary of our
13 association, and I am proud to be in the company
14 of the good men and women who stand between the
15 water and --

16 I'll leave you with these words that apply
17 beautifully on the fire ground as they do in the
18 FASNY meeting room, be strong when you are tired,
19 be brave when you are challenged, be humble when
20 you are victorious, be bad ass every day.

21 (Laughter.)

22 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Thank you.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. PERRY: Thank you, John.

25 I now call upon the Treasurer of our

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association, Sean Kerwin, for the Annual Report of the Treasurer and the Annual 519 report.

MR. KERWIN: It's not fair that I have to go after that with boring numbers and all that.

(Laughter.)

MR. KERWIN: That was wonderful, John.

MR. D'ALESSANDRO: But you got money.

MR. KERWIN: Good point. Okay.

Thank you, everyone, for being here today.

As you pointed out, it is my responsibility in accordance with the Firefighters Association of the State of New York's constitution and bylaws, to report the state of our finances.

Our most recent year ending September 30, 2024 has been audited by our CPA firm, Battaglia and Associates, CPA, LLC, under the direction of Mr. Joseph Battaglia. And based upon their review and their audit, our financial statements were prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principals, as outlined --

A copy of our audit, if you're so inclined to want to read one, shows our revenues and expenses for this year and for the prior year; and if you could like a copy of that, along with

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2 the auditor's comments, send me an email, drop by
3 the office, bring some coffee, and we can go over
4 it.

5 Our investment portfolio, the majority of
6 which is currently being held by the FASNY
7 foundation, continues to grow, thankfully because
8 of these markets conditions and the higher
9 interest rates.

10 The funds to operate FASNY basically come
11 from the office receipts, but a significant
12 portion of it comes from grants, which we will
13 apply for from the FASNY Foundation. The grant
14 request naturally must be fully documented.

15 Supporting documentation has to be approved by
16 the foundation's grant committee and the
17 foundation's executive board. Upon their
18 approval, the funds are transferred from the
19 foundation to the association. The general funds
20 that we do receive also help to offset some of
21 the expenses incurred at the home that are
22 greater than the two percent funds that they
23 receive and the recoveries that they receive.

24 Our investment portfolio for both the
25 foundation and for FASNY is managed by Lesko

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Advisors, and they've been doing that for us for the last 12 or so years.

In addition, I have some numbers for you.

The 519 annual report from the Board of Directors of the Firefighters Association of the State of New York for the 12 months ending June 30, 2025 has the following numbers for you:

Our total assets were \$51,791,370.00, and our liabilities, our debts, were \$7,178,075.00.

The revenues for the same period of time, 12 month period ending June 30, 2025. Unrestricted revenues of \$23,380,462.00, and then restricted revenues, earmarked for particular purpose, of \$41,322.00. Expenses for that 12 month period were \$20,928,034.00, and then restricted expenditures, approved as expenditures, were \$27,478.00.

Based upon the numbers I've received, the membership as of June 30, 2025 was 36,524 members. This represents an increase of 5,360 additional members above and beyond what we had

23 last year. So nice job at 107 staff for the
24 increase.

25 The names for residences of the current

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2 membership can found on the books of the
3 corporation found at the FASNY offices located at
4 107 Washington Avenue in Albany, New York.

5 In closing, I would like to thank the
6 presidents, the entire board, the trustees, the
7 staff at 107, the accounting staff at the home
8 for all their help and assistance throughout the
9 year.

10 I want to say thank you for allowing me to
11 serve as your treasurer. It really is a blessing
12 for me.

13 Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. PERRY: Thank you, Sean.

16 I now call upon Secretary John D'Alessandro
17 for the purposes of explaining the election
18 guidelines and the introduction of candidates
19 running for contested positions.

20 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: As you can tell, he

21 gives me all the fun jobs.

22 (Laughter.)

23 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Okay. So elections will
24 be held tomorrow from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in
25 the Fischer Island room, which is off the main

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2 lobby. If you go passed where the bar is and you
3 hit that first hallway, you make a left and quick
4 right, and the election room will be down there,
5 midway down there.

6 As I mentioned a few minutes ago, we have a
7 couple of seats, a couple of contested seats.

8 Running for the seat currently held by Director
9 Pfersick, we have three candidates: Stuart Bell,
10 Marvin Trion, and Eric Orr. Running for the seat
11 currently held by Director Rieben, we have Paul
12 Rieben and David Glenn.

13 There are also a couple of unopposed seats,
14 one for a Director's seat currently held by Andy
15 Pilecki, and two trustee seats running unopposed,
16 Walter Frame and Marsha Holland. When you
17 registered, you should have been given an

18 election card. So we will have people there. We
19 will have election inspectors. You will approach
20 the table, hand in your election card, and you'll
21 be given four ballots. You should get four
22 different ballots. One each for the two
23 directors' races and one each for the two bylaws
24 amendments. There will be clearly marked ballot
25 boxes once you're in the room. So just try your

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2 best to get the right one in the right box. It
3 makes it easy on us when we just counting.
4 That's kind of it. It's pretty straight forward.

5 At the point, I'd ask the individuals who
6 are going to speak on behave of the various
7 candidates to come to the dais.

8 MR. KARASHAY: Good afternoon, everyone.
9 My name is Michael Karashay. I am a past
10 president of the Hudson Valley Volunteer
11 Firefighters Association. On behalf of the
12 Hudson Valley Volunteer Firefighters Association,
13 I am proud to introduce Eric Orr for the position
14 of Director for the Firefighters Association of
15 the State of New York. Eric has served the

16 association as Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms for the
17 last three years. Prior to the appointed board
18 position, Eric served on the training and
19 education committee. He has actively
20 participated in his role and always working
21 towards improving the association and supporting
22 FASNY's mission.

23 Eric is a past president of Hudson Valley
24 Volunteer Firefighters Association. Prior to
25 going to the chairs as president, Eric held the

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2 position of director for seven years prior to the
3 vice presidency. Over this period, he has
4 attended hundreds of meetings, seminars, and
5 fundraisers. Eric continues to remain very
6 active and traveling into various counties and
7 sectional meetings, supporting and advocating for
8 the volunteer fire service, and I can attest to
9 that, because he's one of my windshield buddies.
10 Eric has served as president of Walkhill Hook
11 Ladder and Hose Company for 14 years, stepping
12 down this year to allow younger members to

13 advance and become active in molding the future
14 of the fire company. He is still a very active
15 first responder, doing the job of chauffeur and
16 pump operator. Eric is the past president of the
17 Ulster County Volunteer Firemen's Association and
18 continues to serve as treasurer. Eric is the
19 chairman of the steering committee, scholarship
20 committee, training committee, and recruitment
21 committee for the Ulster County Volunteer
22 Firefighters Association. Eric was the chairman
23 for the past president's dinner and a committee
24 member for fundraising committee in 2013. Eric
25 also is a member of the Red Vest currently

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2 holding the position of secretary. Eric is also
3 a charter member of the Red Knights Motorcycle
4 Club NY37 and has served as quartermaster.

5 Eric comes with a strong background in
6 management with roughly 30 years of leadership
7 roles working in the transportation industry.
8 Eric's work experience includes management of
9 repair facilities, operating budgets of 2.5
10 million dollars to drivers, mechanics, and

11 customer relations and facilities upkeep. Eric
12 is accountable for the cost control line in the
13 budget and meeting key performance initiatives.
14 Eric also was assigned to mentor and assist other
15 managers in MAPAMB.

16 He has participated in several strategic
17 projects and committees to improve employment,
18 engagement, and reduce cost. Eric was appointed
19 to the corporate team that rewrote the internal
20 audit and maintenance manual which outlines shop
21 procedures. Eric has worked hard for this great
22 association and his career will continue to do so
23 as director.

24 Thank you.

25 (Applause.)

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2 MR. PILECKI: David Pilecki from Niagara
3 County. Good afternoon, President Perry, Vice
4 President Farrell, Second Vice President Holmes,
5 FASNY officers, LAFASNY officers, delegates, and
6 distinguished guests.

7 I am proud to stand before you to introduce

8 Andrew Pilecki looking to be reelected for a
9 second five year term as director. Andy began
10 his fire service career at Columbia Hook and
11 Ladder Number One in January of 1981. At
12 Columbia, he served as president, trustee,
13 recording secretary, and lieutenant. At that
14 time, he also served as director and auditor of
15 the North Tonawanda Volunteer Firemen's
16 Association. Andy was also a member of the
17 Niagara County Fire Advisory Board from 1999 to
18 2007, 2010 to 2018, and was elected Vice Chairman
19 2016 to 2018.

20 In 1996, Andy was a graduate of the Niagara
21 County Volunteer Firemen's Association where he
22 also served on the audit, nominations,
23 legislative, and steering committees. Andy is a
24 past president and past recording secretary of
25 the Western New York Volunteer Firemen's

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2 Association and also served on the bylaws and
3 Firefighter of the Year committees.

4 Currently, Andy has been a director for
5 FASNY since 2018, current treasurer of the FASNY

6 foundation, and has served on various committees.

7 Andy is also a 21 year active responder with the

8 Wendelville Volunteer Fire Company, currently

9 serving as Chief and as past First Assistant,

10 Second Assistant, Third Assistant, Captain, and

11 Lieutenant.

12 Andy also served on the Wendelville

13 Benevolent's Association as a trustee from 2016

14 to 2021 and is the current elected president in

15 2022. Andy has been a board member of the FASNY

16 Federal Credit Union since 2005, appointed acting

17 secretary in 2009, and has been the chairperson

18 from 2014 to 2019 and vice chair person from 2011

19 to 2013 and from 2019 currently.

20 These are only a few of the many positions

21 Andy has held to make him the right candidate for

22 director.

23 Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 MS. PFERSICK: Good afternoon. I'm Diana

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3 somebody, but I will address to President Perry,
4 First Vice President Farrell, and Second Vice
5 President Holmes, our esteemed people to the
6 right, our secretary, our attorneys, Tim and
7 Terry Hannigan; our treasurer, Sean Kerwin; my
8 fellow directors, fellow trustees, fellow members
9 of this organization, I am standing here before
10 you to introduce Marvin Trion, who is the
11 candidate for Northern Central for the position
12 of Board of Directors, and he was chosen by
13 Northern Central to replace me.

14 Marvin lives in Walcott with his wife,
15 Valerie, and has two stepchildren, three great
16 grandchildren. He graduated from high school
17 from the North Rose Walcott Central School
18 District, and then went to work. In his junior
19 year, continued working for 48 years there until
20 retirement. Marvin joined the Lake Shore
21 Volunteer Ambulance Corps formerly known as the
22 Walcott Volunteer Ambulance in 1973. He served
23 as an ambulance driver and attendant, an AMTI for
24 32 years, taking every training and class
25 available. He served as vice president for

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2 several years and still serves on the Board of
3 Directors. Marvin joined the Walcott Volunteer
4 Fire Department in 1974 and has been an active
5 member ever since. He has taken many classes and
6 training, some twice. There he has served on the
7 board of directors for several terms. He now
8 serves as the secretary, a position that he has
9 held for the last 15 years.

10 Marvin has served on multiple committees,
11 giving a lot of time, especially to fundraising
12 activities, where he personally gained nearly
13 \$100,000.00 for the department.

14 Marvin has also served in the Wayne County
15 Volunteer Firemen's Association for over 30 years
16 as a member and board member. He has gone
17 through the officers' chairs twice, and currently
18 serves as their president. Marvin has been a
19 member of the Northern Central Volunteer
20 Firemen's Association for over 30 years, also
21 serving on the Board of Directors and has been
22 through the chairs and now serving as their
23 president. It is important and matters where a
24 FASNY director comes from. We must assure that
25 there is representation from across the entire

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state of New York.

Marvin believes that he is ready to step up and serve FASNY as a director, and he promises to serve in that role faithfully and with diligence and integrity and respectfully requests your vote.

Thank you.
(Applause.)

MR. MCQUEEN: Good afternoon, members of the dais to my left and to my right. Unfortunately, past president of FASNY and past president of the Central New York Firemen's Association, Dave Jacobowitz, was actually supposed to stand here along with me, but due to an unfortunate medical incident that he had this past Sunday, he's unable to be here, and I hope you all keep him in your thoughts and prayers as well. He wanted to be here for David, for sure. So as I'm reading this, I'm reading it as really two people doing it. First of all, as FASNY Past President Dave Jacobowitz, along with past FASNY Director Brian McQueen from the central New York Firefighters Association and Whitesboro Volunteer

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2 today to share this message of why we believe

3 David Glenn is a qualified candidate for the

4 position of director of FASNY.

5 We, along with the Whitesboro Volunteer

6 Fire Department, enthusiastically and

7 professionally nominate David Glenn for the

8 consideration to serve on the Firefighters

9 Association of the State of New York's Board of

10 Directors. We have worked closely with David for

11 24 years in his capacity as a firefighter, line

12 officer, and currently as our deputy chief and

13 recruitment and retention coordinator. During

14 this time, we have been consistently impressed by

15 his positive traits and his leadership, strategic

16 thinking, dedication, planning, and

17 implementation with programs that he either had

18 created or was assigned by one of us when we were

19 his chief. Dave's fiscal responsibility,

20 mentoring, and his commitment to the volunteer

21 fire department management have been duly

22 recognized by our department, members, and our

23 elected officials.

24 David Glenn has a deep understanding of the
25 pending changes in our fire service and has

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2 proven a track record of success in building
3 mentor programs from the ground up, while meeting
4 the rigorous demands placed upon our volunteers
5 through our department's policies. This type of
6 dedication can be seen in his leadership with
7 FASNY's recruitment and retention committee.
8 Proven through that and provided through the
9 increased numbers that you just heard actually --
10 recruitment program, a program that has been near
11 and dear to the vision of FASNY.

12 David's ability to foster collaboration,
13 drive innovation, navigate complex challenges,
14 serving this association as a committee chair,
15 aligns perfectly with the current strategic goals
16 of FASNY and the qualities sought in the board
17 members viewed through our tenures as both
18 president of FASNY and a past director, assisting
19 and molding FASNY into becoming the premiere

20 firematic association across this state and this
21 nation as you heard from President Perry.

22 Furthermore, Dave embodies key needed
23 personal attributes, like integrity, ethics, and
24 strong communication skills, and demonstrates a
25 genuine passion for FASNY's mission, vision, and

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2 values. These skills -- of trustee of Whitesboro
3 for the past seven years. He was a councilman
4 for the Town of Whitestown, where he assisted in
5 the management of 8.1 million budget.

6 It is our hope here this morning, within a
7 two minute timeframe that we have, to share with
8 you why Dave Glenn would be natural leader for
9 this position. He has collaborative spirit,
10 insights, and perspectives that would invaluable
11 to the Board's decision and discussion making
12 process as we meet the demands of our membership
13 across this great state, as well as the issues
14 that we face through the diligent work being done
15 by board on OSHA requirements.

16 We hope that you truly consider the facts
17 shared as you cast your ballot for Dave Glenn, a

18 leader for each and every one of you, and not
19 only you, but as Chief Kenny said, your families
20 as well.

21 Thank you for your time. Do good. Be
22 good. God bless and go Bill's.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. RIEBEN: Good afternoon, ladies and
25 gentlemen. My name is Larry Rieben. I'm a

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2 member of the Oriskany Fire Department and have
3 been duly elected as the second vice president of
4 the Central New York Firemen's Association, but
5 mostly I'm proud that I'm Paul's brother. Paul
6 Rieben was appointed to FASNY's Board of
7 Directors last year when Ken Holmes was elected
8 second vice president of FASNY. Paul was
9 endorsed by the Oriskany Fire Department and the
10 Central New York Firefighters Association and is
11 ready to continue to work with the leadership,
12 the Board of Directors, and the Board of
13 Trustees, for the members of FASNY and the
14 80,000 volunteer firefighters across the state

15 of New York.
16 Paul also serves on the FASNY Scholarship
17 committee and capital projects. Paul has spent
18 the last year travelling to meetings, travelling
19 to the FASNY Home, presenting certificates to our
20 seasoned firefighters, as well as scholarship
21 winners thanking them for all they do, as well as
22 promoting FASNY and the volunteer fire service.
23 Paul is a 32 year member of the Oriskany Fire
24 Department where he continues to remain an active
25 firefighter and is still an interior firefighter.

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2 He has served as trustee, chief trustee, vice
3 president, president, and is currently chairman
4 of the bylaws, insurance, and scholarship
5 committee for our department. He is also
6 president of the Oriskany Firemen's Exempt
7 Benevolent Association. Paul is a member of the
8 Central New York Firefighters Association where
9 he has served as sergeant-at-arms, first vice
10 president, and president, and currently serves on
11 several committees. He is also a current
12 director of the Oneida County Volunteer

13 Firefighters Association. Paul also finds time
14 to serve in our village as a member of the
15 village board, which he has been a member of for
16 the past 34 years, where he has served not only
17 as a fire commissioner, but the last 12 years as
18 our deputy mayor. He still has time to own and
19 operate, along with our older brother, David,
20 Lawrence Rieben and Sons Roofing and Sheetrock, a
21 third generation commercial roofing company
22 serving as estimator and treasurer. Paul has
23 been married to his wife, Becky, who have just
24 celebrated their 30 anniversary this June. They
25 have three children; Marlana, Katie, and Derek,

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2 who have been travelling to the FASNY conventions
3 for the last 19 years together as a family.

4 The Oriskany Fire Department and the
5 Central New York Firefighters Association are
6 proud to support Paul Rieben to the FASNY Board
7 of Directors.

8 In closing, I know that if Paul is elected
9 to the board of directors he will continue to

10 serve the members of the volunteer fire service
11 with the same passion that he has shown the
12 Oriskany Fire Department and the Central New York
13 Firefighters Association for the past 32 years.

14 To the members of the board, thank you for
15 allowing me to speak today.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. DAROCHA: My name is Jose DaRocha. I'm
18 a past trustee to the firemen's home and a past
19 director of FASNY. I'm here to support for a
20 second five year term Walter Frame from the
21 Albertson Fire Company, past president of the
22 Nassau County Firemen's Association, past
23 president of the North Shore Firemen's --
24 Society, and past trustee of the Albertson Fire
25 Department.

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2 At this time, I would like to recommend
3 Walter Frame to put his second five year term in
4 as a trustee for the firemen's home.

5 Good luck, and God bless.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. LAPINSKI: My name is Mike Lapinski.

8 I'm a trustee for the firemen's home and also a
9 past president of the Monroe County Volunteer
10 Firemen's Association. Today I'd like to
11 introduce Stu Bell for position on the board of
12 directors for FASNY. The seat is being vacated
13 by Diana Pfersick, who after a very successful 10
14 year term in office is retiring, and hopefully
15 seeking a higher office in the future.

16 Stu is the past president of Northern
17 Central Firefighters Association and the current
18 president of St. Paul Boulevard Fire District.
19 Stu has achieved the position of deputy chief
20 with 18 years experience, and is currently
21 finishing his CPR instructor's certificate. Stu
22 has a lovely wife named Sue, and two children,
23 Shannon and Eric, and Eric is following in his
24 footsteps as a paid firefighter acting lieutenant
25 with the St. Paul Boulevard Fire District.

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2 Stu has been involved in every aspect of
3 the fire service and industry. He has been a
4 master carpenter since the age of 12, and

5 currently works for Scott's Miracle Grow -- New
6 York, as a lead maintenance tech. Stu is a
7 member of the Western New York Volunteer
8 Firefighters Association, Monroe County, Northern
9 Central, and FASNY. Stu is looking to advance
10 his service to the members of FASNY and the
11 citizens of New York state. If we lose this
12 position from Western New York, it will one
13 representative from Western New York, Andy
14 Pilecki, and I request you consider this when you
15 vote to help retain the seat on the west side of
16 the state.

17 Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. VAN ETTEN: Mr. President, Doug Van
20 Etten, president of the Board of Trustees. I
21 don't believe there is anybody here to introduce
22 this person who needs no introduction. I believe
23 trustee Marsha Holland is up for her second five
24 year term as well this year. Again, she's done
25 an amazing job as trustee and as our board

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3 her seeing as nobody was asked to do that.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. PERRY: Thank you. I would now ask
6 Michael Caron, Chair of the Bylaws committee, to
7 come to the podium to explain the proposed
8 amendments to the FASNY bylaws.

9 MR. CARON: Good afternoon, everyone.

10 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good afternoon.

11 MR. CARON: So as bylaws chairman, it's my
12 job to go over the bylaw proposals. We have two
13 of them. The first one is Article Two. It's on
14 page five of the current bylaws, 6.3,
15 nominations. "All nominations for elected
16 officers, directors, or trustees, shall be
17 submitted on a completed official nominating
18 petition. Official nominating petitions can be
19 requested beginning on January 1st. The
20 completed petitions must be received by the FASNY
21 secretary at the corporation office no earlier
22 than February 1st and no later than May 1st.
23 They shall contain no less than -- and this is
24 where the change is -- currently it's 25
25 signatures. We would like to see it go to 100

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2 signatures, and membership numbers of regular
3 numbers of the corporation in good standing.

4 Such forms shall be available from the
5 corporation's office and shall be returned to the
6 corporation office addressed to the FASNY
7 secretary. It shall be returned in person or by
8 US mail. No electronic mail, faxes, or other non
9 original submissions will be considered valid."

10 Also in that particular section, there's a part
11 that also stated and marked nominations on the
12 lower left of the face of the envelope. We feel
13 that that no longer needs to be necessary to have
14 that in there. And the reason for the hundred
15 signatures, I know myself as a candidate, I've
16 spoken to a lot of people throughout New York
17 state, and a lot of times it was mentioned to me,
18 why is it only 25 signatures, and they felt that
19 that was kind of lenient. So when the bylaws
20 committee got together, we talked about a couple
21 of different ideas, and we settled with the 100,
22 hoping that that would stir the candidates to not
23 just get maybe signatures at their own fire
24 department, but maybe take the opportunity to get
25 out, maybe go to a sectional, maybe another fire

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department in the area and obtain the 100 signatures.

Proposal number two, page seven of the current bylaws article three. While section three is fine the way it is written, we are proposing 3.1, and in that it reads, "the qualifications for president, first vice president, and second vice president in addition to the qualifications set forth in section three above in order to be eligible to serve as president, first vice president, or second vice president of the corporation, a person must have completed at least two consecutive years of service as a director of the corporation or as a trustee of the firefighters home or have been appointed by the board of directors to fill a vacancy in the office of the president, first vice president, or second vice president or a portion of any term of such office." So the reason for this is we've been looking -- the bylaws committee has been looking at this for the last couple of years, and we have a huge organization, multimillion dollar operation, and

25 you look at some of the other associations that

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2 have stipulations in order to run for a
3 particular office. For instance, your own
4 department, you probably have something in there
5 that if they want to be car two, maybe you've got
6 to be a captain or a lieutenant in order to run
7 for that position. You want to be car one or car
8 two -- I'm sorry, I said car two -- If you want
9 to be car two, you've got to be car three first.
10 If you want to be car one, you've got to be car
11 two first, and so on. And the reason why we do
12 that as an organization is we want to make sure
13 that people that are going to be in those
14 positions know what they're doing, right.
15 They've been with the department for some time,
16 have a very good idea how the department is run,
17 and can actually run the department. While an
18 organization as large ours, we need to make sure
19 we have good quality people at the top, okay.
20 And for somebody to just come in off the street,
21 doesn't know what FASNY is all about, it could

22 lead to the downfall of FASNY if you have
23 individuals that don't even know what FASNY is,
24 they may have been members for five, six years,
25 or whatever, but never actually understand how

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2 the organization is run. So this is why we were
3 considering this proposal so hopefully we get
4 people that have been on the board of either the
5 trustees or the directors or an appointed
6 position and so then they can look to move
7 forward and run for one of those positions. That
8 was the logic behind that. So the bylaws
9 committee has been looking at these two proposals
10 for some time.

11 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Thanks, Mike. I
12 neglected when I was explaining the election
13 procedure, when people run for FASNY office it's
14 simple majority. The bylaws, according to the
15 current bylaws, needs two thirds of the votes
16 cast for passes. So everybody understands, two
17 thirds for the bylaws, simple majority for the
18 two contested seats.

19 Does anybody have any questions about the

20 election process or the bylaws?

21 If you could come to the microphone and
22 identify yourself.

23 MR. SMITH: Brian Smith from -- Fire
24 Department. A question I do have. You're
25 limiting yourself by the bylaw, if I read this

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2 what you're saying is you either have to be a
3 board of director or somebody's that's been
4 appointed. So somebody on a committee -- I'm
5 just going to throw my name -- I'm a member of
6 FASNY for 25 years -- got to be at least, about
7 30, on a committee, but if I don't go through the
8 chairs or somewhere or appointed for election to
9 there, I can't run for one of those positions up
10 there? I don't think that's a fair
11 consideration, and that's just my opinion.

12 MR. HARTWICK: I have one first request,
13 are copies of the current bylaw with the
14 amendments available for closer review prior to
15 tomorrow's election?

16 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: There is a one page

17 sheet on the registration table that essentially
18 is what Mike Caron read -- that's essentially the
19 sheet right there -- that explains the sections
20 that are shown with cross outs or if there's any
21 changes like going from 25 to 100, you'll see 25
22 crossed out and 100 put in. If you'd like a copy
23 of the existing bylaws, certainly see me, and
24 we'll run it off. It's probably about 12 pages,
25 but those are the only two sections that are

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2 affected.

3 MR. HARTWICK: I'm glad to know that that's
4 available, and I think that most people -- you
5 explained initially -- but those two articles
6 with the amendments. Second, to echo, the idea
7 that to hold a position of presidents you have to
8 be at least two years in the board of directors
9 or board of trustees, there are many members who
10 have served years as very active on committees
11 who've never had the propensity to want to become
12 a director or a trustee or even if they did
13 through the politics of the organization they may
14 never have been able to obtain the position of

15 director or trustee, and since very few positions
16 become available, a guy who's a very active
17 member is aging and he gets to the point where
18 maybe now is the opportunity, but he says
19 sometimes, I'm getting a little bit too old.
20 However, those individuals who served with
21 distinction with leadership with the ability to
22 understand operating costs, budgets, who are
23 community leaders, who have the incentive to be
24 progressive within the organization should not be
25 denied the opportunity only because they have

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2 never been a director or a trustee. It is
3 exclusionary, and I think that this is going to
4 require, as you said, two thirds vote to be
5 approved, but I think it's exclusionary and a lot
6 of guys have talked about this, and it may have
7 to be reviewed at great lengths so that those
8 people who are active and a benefit to this
9 organization are not discouraged. I would just
10 like to express that on behalf of many of the
11 members who have spoken to me individually about

12 it.

13 Thank you very much.

14 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Anyone else have any
15 questions about the elections or the bylaws?

16 (No response.)

17 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Going once. Going
18 twice. Done.

19 If you do have any questions, see me around
20 in the hallway or in the secretary's office.

21 MR. PERRY: Thank you, John.

22 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Secretary D'Alessandro,
23 is there have any unfinished business from the
24 2024 Annual Meeting?

25 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: President Perry, there

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2 is no unfinished business from the 2024 Annual
3 Meeting.

4 MR. PERRY: Thank you.

5 Secretary D'Alessandro, is there any new
6 business to be conducted today?

7 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: There is some new
8 business to be conducted today.

9 For the purpose of several presentations, I

10 would ask First Vice President Farrell, Second
11 Vice President Holmes, Elizabeth Murphy, Tony
12 Cruz, and Ron Barz to come to the podium.

13 MR. FARRELL: Good afternoon, again. The
14 Tunnel to Towers Foundation is a charitable
15 organization that honors the sacrifice of New
16 York City firefighter Stephen Siller, who died on
17 September 11, 2001, while responding to the
18 attacks on the World Trade Center. The
19 foundation's mission is to support first
20 responders, military heroes, and their families,
21 and to ensure that the events of 9/11 are never
22 forgotten.

23 They do this through various programs,
24 including providing mortgage free homes to
25 families of fallen first responders and

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2 catastrophically injured service members and
3 building smart homes for injured veterans and
4 first responders.

5 In 2025, FASNY and the Tunnel to Towers
6 Foundation established a partnership to support

7 their important mission. It gives me great
8 pleasure to present this check in the amount of
9 \$10,000.00 to help them expand their activities.

10 (Standing ovation.)

11 MR. FARRELL: It gives me great pleasure to
12 introduce Elizabeth Murphy.

13 MS. MURPHY: Thank you all the members of
14 FASNY for participating in this incredibly
15 generous gift. I just want to extend the thanks
16 on behalf of the foundation. Please just know
17 that you and your families, and your fellow first
18 responders, we're behind you to support you with
19 whatever you need.

20 So I just want to thank you for your
21 support today in the way you advanced our mission
22 to never forget America's heroes and to never
23 forget 9/11 and to do good always.

24 Thank you.

25 (Applause.)

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2 MR. HOLMES: Good afternoon.

3 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good afternoon.

4 MR. HOLMES: Firefighters face an increased

5 risk of developing cancer compared to the general
6 population, with some studies indicating a nine
7 percent increase in cancer diagnoses and a
8 fourteen percent increase in cancer related
9 deaths. Our organization is committed to help
10 lowering these statistics and to eliminate them
11 all together.

12 Founded in 2025, the Firefighter Cancer
13 Awareness and Mentoring of New York State was
14 established to provide education, assistance, and
15 mentoring to our hero brothers and sisters and
16 their family members diagnosed with cancer in
17 both the fire and EMS services in the state of
18 New York.

19 First Vice President Farrell, please
20 present the check to Tony Cruz.

21 (Whereupon, a monetary gift was presented
22 to Tony Cruz by First Vice President Donald
23 Farrell.)

24 (Standing ovation.)

25 MR. MCCONVILLE: Good afternoon. It's

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2 great to be back to the microphone. A little
3 history, in 1999 the convention was held here in
4 this room, and President Carpenter was put into
5 office at that convention. We came back in 2010,
6 and at that convention it was first time that the
7 word cancer and volunteer firefighter was stated
8 in the same sentence. At that time, President
9 Jacobowitz, Vice President Joseph Kelly, and
10 newly elected Bob McConville introduced Tony Cruz
11 to the membership. At that time, FASNY was the
12 first organization to partner with what was then
13 known as the Cancer Network. They've been in
14 business since 2010, and I know they changed the
15 name, but they're still the same players. Seven
16 years later, with the help of all of you in the
17 room, and every fire organization in the state,
18 we were able to pass a statewide cancer
19 prevention bill and change the culture of the
20 volunteer fire service. We thank President Cruz,
21 Ronnie Barz, and the other gentlemen and ladies
22 that have done this work for the last 15 years.
23 We are proud of them for their continued support
24 of volunteers suffering with cancer and their
25 effort to eliminate cancer in the volunteer fire

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service. They do God's work fighting cancer,
without a doubt. Past Presidents of the
association would like to donate a check to
Firefighters Cancer Awareness and Mentoring
Association of New York State.

We thank you for your support and the past
presidents thank the cancer network for their
support also. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CRUZ: President Perry and brothers and
sisters, I would like to thank you for your
support. The Cancer Network has undergone a
couple of bumps and scratches in the last couple
of months, but the people who we mentor and gave
you support are still with us. Jerry Owenburg,
Bob Sutton, Charlie Murphy, those are the core
group that mentored and gave us support. Each
and every one of you are important to us, and
with the donations, we're going to take the money
and do for you while you're with us as opposed to
when you're gone. We're going to try to educate
you to help yourself and prevent yourself from
getting cancer. We're not going to guarantee you
that you won't, but we're going to help you fight

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2 against it. I have a brother firefighter now
3 that is in hospice from cancer. One too many are
4 taken. We got to stop it. We're not going to
5 stop what we do as far firefighting and saving
6 lives, but we have to fight and save our own
7 lives in the future.

8 Thank you once again, and may God bless
9 you.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: One more time, elections
12 tomorrow from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the
13 Fischer Island room.

14 Two thirds vote on the bylaws. Simple
15 majority for the two contested races.

16 Is there any other new business from the
17 floor?

18 (No response.)

19 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Any other new business
20 from the floor?

21 (No response.)

22 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Any other new business
23 from floor?

24 (No response.)

25 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Thank you.

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2 MR. HOLMES: Just a reminder that all of
3 our scheduled events are listed in the convention
4 program.

5 This evening from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. there
6 will be an exhibitor mixer in the grand ballroom.
7 I would ask that everyone please take the time to
8 stop by and visit our vendors that are here
9 supporting us this week.

10 Our business session tomorrow morning will
11 begin at 9:00 a.m. here in the Grand Ballroom.

12 MR. PERRY: Our Annual Two Percent forum
13 will be held tomorrow afternoon from 1:30 p.m. to
14 3:00 p.m. here in the Grand Ballroom.

15 Please take a moment to look at all of the
16 gift baskets that will be raffled off at our
17 scholarship event tomorrow night. Tickets are on
18 sale now.

19 I would ask Trustee President Van Etten to
20 take the podium, please.

21 MR. VAN ETTEN: How many have been to the

22 firemen's home at the Hudson? I'm speaking to
23 the good and faithful, but I bet back home there
24 are firefighters you know that have not been
25 there. I would encourage you to take the flier

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2 that you received in your registration
3 information or take extras that are out on the
4 table. Take them home with you, and invite
5 somebody to come to our second annual open house
6 on September 27, 2025 at the firefighter's home.
7 It gives us an opportunity to invite firefighters
8 to the greater Hudson in Columbia County
9 community. Others are outreaching to come and
10 take a day and see what a wonderful place our
11 firefighter's home is. If you've been there and
12 you know, it's a wonderful, amazing opportunity
13 for volunteers who have a need for a home because
14 circumstances have changed as their life as gone
15 on. We'll have an opportunity to allow you to
16 tour the home, join some fellowship with members,
17 our annual chili cook off hosted by the members,
18 a corn hole tournament that the trustees will

19 run, as well some other fun activities. So I
20 hope, even if you've seen the home, you have the
21 opportunity to share the information on the open
22 house and encourage others to attend as well.

23 Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: I just have one more

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2 announcement/reminder, 7:00 to 8:30 tonight in
3 this room, the Hannigan Law Firm, Tim and Terry
4 Hannigan, and our treasurer, Sean Kerwin, are
5 going to do a roundtable discussion seminar on
6 fire company management. So please spend some
7 time with them. I know a lot of us have been
8 doing this for a long time, but things change,
9 requirements change, and you don't want to get
10 yourself caught in that loop where you think
11 you're doing the right thing, but you really
12 aren't. These gentlemen will put you on the
13 right track and give their counsel.

14 MR. PERRY: At this time -- Thank you,
15 John. At this time, I will entertain a motion to
16 recess our business meeting until 9:00 a.m.

17 tomorrow morning.
18 MR. PILECKI: Motion.
19 MR. PERRY: Motion by Andy Pilecki.
20 MR. HASELEY: Second, Neil Haseley, Niagara
21 County.
22 MR. PERRY: I have a motion and a second.
23 Are there any questions on this?
24 (No response.)
25 MR. PERRY: Hearing none. All in favor?

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2 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.
3 MR. PERRY: Opposed?
4 (No response.)
5 MR. PERRY: So carried. We will reconvene
6 at 9:00 a.m. to continue addressing association
7 business.
8 (Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned to
9 August 8, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.)
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OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE 153RD ANNUAL
MEETING OF THE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF THE
STATE OF NEW YORK, HELD FROM THE 7TH DAY OF
AUGUST THROUGH THE 9TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2025, AT
HYATT REGENCY, HAUPPAUGE, NEW YORK.

August 8, 2025

B E F O R E: EUGENE PERRY, JR., President

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2 MR. PERRY: Good morning, everyone. Please

3 be seated.

4 The fire exits are located in the rear of

5 the ballroom. If there is an emergency, you will

6 be notified from the dais. Please leave the

7 ballroom in an orderly manner.

8 I would also ask that you put your

9 cellphones and pagers on silent.

10 I will now ask our Chaplain Barrie-Lyn

11 Foster for the invocation.

12 (Whereupon, invocation by Chaplain

13 Barrie-Lyn Foster.)

14 MR. PERRY: I now call upon Assistant

15 Sergeant-at-Arms, Eric Orr, to lead us in the

16 Pledge of Allegiance.

17 (Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was

18 recited by Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Eric Orr

19 and the audience members.)

20 MR. PERRY: At this time -- I don't see

21 Toni in the room. Is she here? Okay, when the

22 ladies get here, we'll come back to that.

23 At this time, we are going to have several
24 presentations to update the membership on current
25 FASNY activities.

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2 I now would ask our Deputy Director of
3 Operations, Dylan Reece, to give a presentation
4 on our membership activities.

5 Dylan?

6 AUDIENCE MEMBER: He's at registration.

7 MR. PERRY: Hang on. Andrew will go get
8 him. Doing well this morning.

9 MR. REECE: Hello, everybody. Good
10 morning.

11 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

12 MR. REECE: I'm sure you're dying to know
13 what I have to say. So once again, I've been
14 given the opportunity to speak here at FASNY's
15 Annual Convention. I'm very grateful for the
16 opportunity. For those that are meeting me for
17 the first time, my name is Dylan Reece. I'm the
18 Assistant Director of Operations at FASNY
19 headquarters. I started as the membership

20 manager, so I still handle FASNY's membership. I
21 spearhead all of that. My presentation should be
22 up here. So I'll just get right into it,
23 assuming this works.

24 So first off, I'd just like to give you
25 guys a quick rundown on our membership makeup.

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2 Overall, our membership is overwhelming with
3 individuals who are signed up and paid for by a
4 parent affiliation. This is something that isn't
5 knew, but this is something that I brought up
6 before, and we are still -- as you can see --
7 still hitting those numbers. Right now we're at
8 a solid 87 percent of that. Overall, this is
9 fantastic for us. This is showing us that our
10 full company membership offer is increasingly
11 successful, and internally, this gives us a
12 pretty easy way of tracking our membership and
13 lowers down our communication issues and
14 logistical issues and also helps with retention.

15 This here is a graph kind of showing where
16 we've been the past couple of years, and you can
17 see our massive jump here in May of 2025. That

18 is actually giving you guys a good understanding
19 of all the changes that we've made recently have
20 made a huge impact in our overall retention.

21 So I call this area our membership survival
22 period. This is mainly due to just having one
23 person on staff, and we've made a lot of changes
24 since then, and with all that, those changes are
25 we implemented our company manager program. We

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2 prepared communications with our membership.
3 We've overall educated our membership on our
4 actual benefits so that way people are more
5 likely to renew because they see the value and
6 they're are excited about the value, and you can
7 see that simply literally off of the data.

8 And there's also a lot of other awesome
9 stuff that we've done that I could not fit onto
10 the slide.

11 So moving forward from 2025, the overall
12 result of our renewals this year we are over 90
13 percent in our retention. So the majority of our
14 membership did renew. That is absolutely

15 fantastic. Anything over an 80 percent retention
16 rate for a membership organization is
17 outstanding.

18 We were able to increase our membership by
19 nine percent. That was not done in any kind of
20 small feet. That was over several different
21 projects, lots of communication, and a lot of
22 hard work from our team.

23 We've corrected and updated thousands of
24 membership records. We've taken a lot of time
25 out, and we try to talk with our members and try

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2 to say, hey, can we get your updated information,
3 because a lot of our history before were really
4 just issues with communication due to the full
5 companies. Since the full companies are pushing
6 90 percent of our membership, we knew that we had
7 to start our communication fixes there.

8 And we actually have a really good plan on
9 moving forward, which I will get into. So
10 growing wise, we're actually going to try to
11 focus specifically on taking on the state county
12 by county. That's something that we're doing

13 locally, and we're seeing absolutely fantastic
14 success. We've done that in Albany County and
15 Rensslear County. I choose those counties mainly
16 to start with, because I can physically drive to
17 those departments and I can talk to people.
18 We've had a couple of full companies sign up just
19 simply because I had met with them, and I've been
20 able to explain the value that FASNY has to
21 offer. So it's a fantastic way that we're
22 actually starting to close some deals moving
23 forward.

24 So I'll give you guys some cool awesome
25 updates on what we're actually doing in the

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2 future, some current updates. I'll show you
3 about our membership card. A lot of people have
4 taken advantage of that. This membership card is
5 able to show you your primary affiliation, your
6 FASNY ID, your member through date, and how long
7 you've actually been a member. So you can kind
8 of get to see, get a good sense of your legacy
9 there, and it's also just fantastic to know

10 actually who is responsible for your renewal.
11 That seems to be something that we brought into
12 when we talked to people saying they just don't
13 know, so this is great way for them to do it.

14 We're also happy to say that we are getting
15 into a digital community space. That overall
16 industry is expected to grown exponentially over
17 the next few years, probably by 2030 it's
18 expected to hit, I believe it's two billion
19 dollars in value. We know that giving membership
20 organizations some kind of community to express
21 themselves, as well as connect with other
22 members, also leads to higher retention
23 percentages.

24 The new FASNY app something that we're also
25 happy to talk about her. I'll give you guys a

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2 quick glimpse of that. That's something we've
3 talked about internally for a while, and we're
4 very happy to show you guys and give you guys a
5 quick QR code so you guys can actually download
6 it and take a peek at it, and let us know what
7 you think.

8 And I'm also happy to announce that we have
9 a new FASNY benefit. This is a fantastic benefit
10 that I was back and forth with working out the
11 details, and it was approved, and we got it
12 rocking and rolling for you guys.

13 Speaking of, so a new FASNY benefit here is
14 a partnership that we did with Expert Voice.
15 This gives you guys over 60 percent off -- up to
16 60 percent off -- on a bunch of different
17 products. A lot of those products are fire
18 service related. As a FASNY member, you have
19 access to these things. Without your FASNY
20 membership, you could not access these things
21 otherwise without other route or another
22 organization, some kind of red tape.

23 So with that, there's QR code here. Go
24 ahead and snap that, and I've nothing but great
25 things about it. Everybody really likes it, so

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2 we're happy to give that to you guys.

3 Just as another quick overview of our
4 current benefits on top of it, this is something

5 that I want to make sure everybody's aware of.
6 We've actually kind of worked on this, and we've
7 been able to organize it here. I'm not going to
8 read it off for you, because it's all there. You
9 guys probably don't need me to do that.

10 This is the actual photo of our FASNY
11 digital membership cards. Like I said, this
12 shows everything that you should know about your
13 membership. It's all on there, ready to rock and
14 roll. We've had a couple of people bring them
15 here to the convention. It's great to see people
16 use. I've heard nothing but good things about
17 them, and we spent a long time developing these
18 with developers, and we're really happy with how
19 they came out. So huge shout out to our team for
20 what they achieved here.

21 Going back on this FASNY's communities,
22 this is also something that's been in the works
23 since late 2024. We've been back and forth with
24 our developers on this, trying to make sure that
25 this ready to actually show you guys for today

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2 more than anything. It is something that,

3 believe it or not, has a ridiculous amount of
4 details that we're still trying to work out, and
5 we're hoping to kind of get this launched
6 hopefully within the rest of the year.

7 Here's a quick demonstration on how to
8 actually download a FASNY app. If you do have
9 issues with that, I'm happy to say that our own
10 communications manager, Joe Schaefer, is here to
11 help you guys out with that. He would love to
12 get you guys on board so you guys can see
13 everything we have to offer for you.

14 Here's a quick step by step here. Again,
15 if guys have any issues, we are here. I cannot
16 push the FASNY app enough. Feel free to take a
17 photo of these instructions if you'd like. Super
18 easy. I did it on my phone. It takes less a
19 minute, but we'll get you going so you don't have
20 to go through the sign-on all the time.

21 And to make it even easier for you, I even
22 have a QR code for you. Very quick and to the
23 point here. And so I'm going to go ahead.
24 That's the majority of the updates that I have
25 for you. Feel free to reach to me internally.

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2 Shoot me an email. Give the office a call. I'm
3 happy to talk anything membership related with
4 you guys.

5 Thank you guys so much for your time.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. PERRY: Thank you, Dylan.

8 I now ask our recruitment coordinator,
9 Kayleigh Marron, to update us on our recruitment
10 and retention activities.

11 MS. MARRON: Hi, everybody.

12 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

13 MS. MARRON: Can everybody hear me okay?

14 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Yes.

15 MS. MARRON: You know, that's the first
16 time I ever heard that, so I appreciate it.

17 Thank you. So hi, my name is Kayleigh
18 Marron. I'm a recruitment coordinator at the 107
19 office. I have been a firefighter for 13 years,
20 past captain of my department, so I am very
21 passionate about the recruitment and retention
22 crisis that's happening throughout New York but
23 throughout everywhere. So I am really excited to
24 be in this position, and I'm really looking
25 forward to working with all of you and increasing

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the number of firefighters throughout the state.

So the first thing I'm going to talk about today is Recruit New York. We have been doing this for a number of years. We're coming up on two decades. We're a few years short of that. So it has proven itself to be invaluable to the recruitment of firefighters throughout New York state. So with your continued support, we're really excited to continue growing, and we're really excited for a successful Recruit New York 2026. So the dates for the next Recruit New York are going to be April 18th and 19th, and registration will be begin early 2026. Hopefully in January, and it will shortly follow -- Kickoff initiatives will shortly follow initial registration.

So we also have our FASNY Help, which is available to all New York state volunteers who are pursuing a higher education. They are eligible to receive up to \$1,500.00 tuition reimbursement for each semester, spring and fall, that they are attending. So each year we help up to 200 students receive financial support for

25 their education. Applications and information

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2 for help can be found on the FASNY website. You
3 can also email help@FASNY.com to get some more
4 information.

5 Then we have our fireinyou.org. So for
6 whose of you who don't know, this is our
7 statewide recruitment website that helps connect
8 potential volunteers with their local fire
9 departments. We average 75 contact form
10 submissions each month, and I am really proud to
11 say that this site has helped to connect many
12 people with local fire departments. So we have
13 helped to connect multiple people, many people
14 into becoming a firefighter. So when you're out
15 and about and you're chatting with people who
16 want to look into volunteering, don't forget to
17 recommend the fireinme.org.

18 We are putting together recruitment and
19 retention packages to access departments
20 throughout the state. So we're collecting
21 information to make sure what we're sending out

22 is actually something that is important and you
23 guys want to use. So if you wouldn't mind, we
24 have a QR code up there that will link you
25 directly to a survey. So if you could help us

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2 put together something that's actually useful.
3 If you're having a hard time connecting to it
4 now, because I know the service is a little
5 funky, you can send me an email. My contact
6 information will be on that last slide, and I'd
7 be more than happy to send you a survey directly.

8 We are also currently in the middle of
9 collecting census data for 2024. So to comply
10 with our Safer Grant reporting requirements, we
11 are currently compiling a statewide department
12 census. So this census is the only personnel
13 measurement tool that we have for reporting and
14 planning purposes. So this is required when
15 applying for additional grant funding. So it's
16 really critical that all of your departments
17 participate in this census. So if that is
18 something that your department has not done,
19 please do it. The QR code is up there. We have

20 paper census, and we also have a digital census.
21 So if you're not sure if your department filled
22 it out or not, you can send me an email. Again,
23 contact information on the last slide, and I can
24 help you figure out if your department sent it in
25 or not.

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2 And then finally, FASNY is in partnership
3 with the New York State Sheriff's Institute, the
4 New York State Sheriff's Association, and the
5 Mental Health Association in New York state, and
6 they are conducting a statewide mapping
7 initiative to gather information on first
8 responder peer support teams and wellness units.
9 This survey will collect details on team
10 structure, training, service areas, and available
11 wellness support. This information will help
12 identify gaps, strengthen coordination, and
13 expand access to peer support and mental health
14 resources for first responders across New York
15 state. As we know, mental health is big when
16 being a first responder. So it's really

17 beneficial if you guys take some time to fill
18 this out and help us help our brothers and
19 sisters.

20 That is it.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. PERRY: Thank you, Kaleigh. Our
23 partnership with the Mental Health Association of
24 New York State and the Sheriff's Association,
25 we're working on a camp that's up in upstate New

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2 York that will be a summer camp for people that
3 are struggling with mental health issues. So
4 it's stuff FASNY really wants to get involved in.

5 At this time, I will call upon the
6 President of the Ladies Auxiliary of the
7 Firefighters Association of the State of New
8 York, Toni Casey, to introduce her officers and
9 guests.

10 MS. CASEY: Good morning, everyone.

11 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

12 MS. CASEY: It's so nice to be here. The
13 convention is wonderful and seeing all you
14 people, all my friends out here, I love you all.

15 It's so much fun to be with you all. This is my
16 family out here now.

17 Jean and I are going to be working on a
18 project that -- We're going to do a cookbook, and
19 we've mentioned it a couple of times. It starts
20 as soon as the convention is over, so we both
21 have a convention under our belt, and we're
22 encouraging everyone to send a recipe. You're
23 going to see fliers out. 107 is going to send us
24 a flier, and we'll put it on the website, and
25 we'll have a good time doing this. We're going

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2 to ask the residents in the home if they would
3 like to participate and send in old recipes of
4 their family. So it will a fun time together.

5 And you see, you guys, I'm standing on the
6 floor. I did bring my little stool, and I was
7 told I really didn't need it this morning so.

8 (Laughter.)

9 MS. CASEY: And Ken told me if I brought
10 it, he would help me get up on it.

11 UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER: We can see you.

12 MS. CASEY: You can see me this morning,
13 yes. Thank you.

14 Let me introduce my First Vice President
15 Jane Trombley and my Second Vice President Chris
16 Sudol.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. TROMBLEY: Good morning. It's nice to
19 see everyone here. I hope you're having a great
20 convention. We're doing well with ours, and have
21 a safe trip home if I don't run across you again.

22 Thank you for having us.

23 (Applause.)

24 MS. SUDOL: Good morning. As Second Vice
25 President, I'm in charge of our journal. I would

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2 like to present to the Presidents one. And is
3 Doug Van Etten here? And I would also like to
4 present you two books.

5 Thank you. Thank you very much, and it's a
6 pleasure to be here.

7 (Applause.)

8 MS. CASEY: This is my President.

9 MR. PERRY: Thank you, Toni. I would like

10 to thank you and your officers for being here
11 this morning. We congratulate you on a job well
12 done, and we look forward to continue to work to
13 work close in the future relationships.

14 Chris, can you put up the slide for VFBL,
15 please?

16 While Chris is working on getting this
17 together, the FASNY Board is committed to
18 assuring VFBL parity to our volunteer
19 firefighters across the state. We're going to be
20 launching a program. It's actually going to be a
21 letter writing program. There will be a letter
22 that we drafted. It will be at various FASNY
23 events. We're going to be asking people to sign
24 on too so we can collect these and get them to
25 the legislature, make them realize that our

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2 volunteer firemen are the backbone of New York
3 state. Ninety percent; right, John? Ninety
4 percent of us are volunteers in this state, and
5 worker's compensation in the state of New York is
6 roughly \$1,400.00 a week if you get hurt on your

7 job at work, and a VFBL benefit for a volunteer
8 fireman is \$650.00. Recently the Governor passed
9 a law that will raise unemployment -- to collect
10 unemployment the maximum will be \$830.00 a week.
11 So we've spoken with different members of the
12 assembly and in the senate already, and we said,
13 if you could stay home and make \$830.00 a week
14 and a volunteer firefighter gets hurt on the fire
15 ground and you only get \$650.00, it just doesn't
16 add up. So again, like I said, we're going to be
17 doing a big campaign to work on this and make
18 sure that we ensure that we at least if we cannot
19 get VFBL parity, at least maybe we can get an
20 increase every year when workman's compensation
21 goes up then our VFBL benefits will go up, and
22 we'll try to keep pace with this, but look for
23 more information in the FASNY magazine, on the
24 FASNY website, and if you don't have your email
25 registered with us, please send your email

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2 information in to the FASNY office. It's an
3 excellent way for FASNY to be able to communicate
4 with our membership and be able to push out

5 information about events, not only this and
6 legislation, but other events that FASNY has that
7 we'll be doing.

8 I will now call on -- I would like to ask
9 the Chair of the Resolutions Committee,
10 Association Secretary John D'Alessandro to
11 deliver the report of the Resolutions Committee.

12 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Before I get to the
13 resolutions, Kayleigh didn't mention, there's
14 another program that we started a year or so ago,
15 it's called: Light up New York Red. In
16 conjunction with Recruit New York, we want fire
17 departments and municipal governments, and even
18 residents in your community, to put a red light
19 in front of their house during the week
20 proceeding Recruit New York. So we have a number
21 of posters, lawn signs, that we really don't want
22 to take back to the office. So go to the
23 registration desk if you're interested. We've
24 literally got a lot of them, and please take them
25 back to the community, hang on to them until next

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2 Recruit New York in April, but get them out. We
3 often get frustrated, because we feel people
4 don't understand what we do, that they don't
5 appreciate us when they call 911, but there's a
6 lot to run in a volunteer fire department.
7 There's a lot of fundraising involved in it, so
8 it's on us to educate them about what we do.

9 So the resolutions.

10 Resolution Number One, "WHEREAS, the 153rd
11 Annual Convention of the Firefighters Association
12 of the State of New York is being held in
13 Hauppauge, New York,

14 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the
15 thanks of the Association be extended to the
16 elected officials, convention speakers, invited
17 guests, forum presenters, and representatives of
18 other fire service organizations in attendance."

19 Mr. Chairman, I so move the adoption of
20 Resolution Number One.

21 MR. PERRY: You've heard Resolution Number
22 One; do I have a second?

23 MR. SCHMIDT: David Schmidt, Niagara
24 County, moves the second.

25 MR. PERRY: We have a motion and a second.

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All in favor?

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. PERRY: Opposed?

(No response.)

MR. PERRY: Carried.

Presented by the Resolutions Committee on behalf of the FASNY Board of Directors, the Board of Trustees of the Firefighters Home, and the membership of the association.

Resolution Number Two, "WHEREAS, Diana Pfersick is dedicated to FASNY's mission of educating, informing, and training the volunteer fire and EMS services,

AND WHEREAS, she has served as a Director of the association from 2015 to 2025,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the officers and members of the Firefighters Association of the State of New York offer their heartfelt gratitude to Director Diana Pfersick,

AND BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors commends her for her service and that the membership affords her a rising vote of thanks."

(Standing ovation.)

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MR. PERRY: I so move for the adoption of
Resolution Number Two.

Do I have a second?

MR. CARON: Mike Caron seconds that.

MR. SWEET: David Sweet, Diana's
predecessor on the board, fully recognizes her
and seconds the motion.

MR. PERRY: Thank you, David.

All in favor?

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. PERRY: Opposed?

(No response.)

MR. PERRY: Carried.

Presented by the FASNY Resolutions
Committee on behalf of the FASNY Board of
Directors, the Board of Trustees of the
Firefighters Home, and the membership of the
association.

Resolution Number Three, "WHEREAS, Royer
Pfersick was dedicated to FASNY's mission of
educating, informing, and training the volunteer
fire and EMS services,

24 AND WHEREAS, he served as a proud member of
25 the fire service and was a member of FASNY's EMS

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2 Committee,

3 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the
4 officers and members of the Firefighters
5 Association of the State of New York offer their
6 posthumous and heartfelt gratitude to our
7 deceased brother, Royer Pfersick,

8 AND BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Board
9 of Directors commends him for his service and
10 that the membership shall always remember his
11 contributions."

12 I so move the adoption of Resolution Number
13 Three.

14 Do I have a second?

15 MR. TASE: Past President Tase seconds that
16 motion.

17 MR. PERRY: I have a second.

18 Any questions?

19 (No response.)

20 MR. PERRY: All in favor?

21 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

22 MR. PERRY: Opposed?
23 (No response.)
24 MR. PERRY: Carried.
25 Diana, on behalf of the Board of Directors,

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2 the Board of Trustees, and this entire
3 membership, we offer our condolences to you. We
4 know he was the love of your life. He was a
5 great person, and he'll always be remembered by
6 all of us.

7 Thank you.

8 (Standing ovation.)

9 MR. VAN ETTEN: Good morning.

10 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

11 MR. VAN ETTEN: Resolution Number Four,
12 presented by the Resolutions Committee on behalf
13 of the FASNY Board of Directors, the Board of
14 Trustees of the Firefighters Home, and the
15 membership of the association.

16 "WHEREAS, Article II, Section 1.1, of the
17 By-Laws of the Association provides that the
18 membership shall have the opportunity to approve

19 or reject the annual budget for the Firefighters
20 Home at the annual meeting or convention,
21 AND WHEREAS, the Firefighters Association
22 of the State of New York Board of Directors has
23 submitted to this convention its budget for the
24 purpose of operating the Firefighters Home for
25 the fiscal year commencing October 1, 2025 and

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2 ending September 30, 2026, in the sum of fourteen
3 million, three hundred and fifty-four thousand,
4 two hundred and twenty eight dollars
5 (\$14,354,228.00),

6 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that there
7 be appropriated the sum of fourteen million,
8 three hundred and fifty-four thousand, two
9 hundred and twenty eight dollars (\$14,354,228.00)
10 for the purpose of operating the Firefighters
11 Home at Hudson, New York, for the period
12 commencing October 1, 2025 and ending September
13 30, 2026."

14 Mr. Chairman, I so move the adoption of
15 Resolution Number Four.

16 MR. PERRY: You've heard the reading of

17 Resolution Number Four.

18 Do I have a second?

19 MR. KISLACK: Michael Kislack, Trustee,

20 Niagara County, seconds the motion.

21 MR. PERRY: I have a motion and a second.

22 Are there any questions?

23 (No response.)

24 MR. PERRY: All those in favor?

25 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

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2 MR. PERRY: Opposed?

3 (No response.)

4 MR. PERRY: Carried.

5 MR. VAN ETTEN: Thank you.

6 Resolution Number Five, presented by the

7 FASNY Resolutions Committee on behalf of the

8 FASNY Board of Directors, the Board of Trustees

9 of the Firefighters Home, and the membership of

10 the association.

11 "WHEREAS, the Firefighters Home has

12 provided a "home away from home" for thousands of

13 firefighters who gave dedicated and committed

14 service to the citizens of New York,
15 AND WHEREAS, the staff of the Firefighters
16 Home exhibits extreme dedication and
17 professionalism on a daily basis,

18 AND WHEREAS, the staff of the Firefighters
19 Home provides unparalleled care for the residents
20 of the Home,

21 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the
22 officers and members of the Firefighters
23 Association of the State of New York offer their
24 heartfelt appreciation to the staff of the
25 Firefighters Home for all they do for the

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2 residents of the Firefighters Home and the
3 Association."

4 Mr. Chairman, I so move the adoption of
5 Resolution Number Five and would specifically
6 recognize Ed, Tammy, and Tori, our staff members
7 here with us at the convention this week.

8 MR. PERRY: You've heard the reading --
9 You've heard the motion for the adoption of
10 Resolution Number Five; do I have a second?

11 MR. DEMARCO: Yes, Anthony DeMarco,

12 Livingston County.

13 MR. PERRY: I have a motion and a second.

14 Are there any questions?

15 (No response.)

16 MR. PERRY: All those in favor?

17 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

18 MR. PERRY: Opposed?

19 (No response.)

20 MR. PERRY: Carried.

21 (Standing ovation.)

22 MR. PERRY: I just want to reiterate what

23 Doug said, we have an amazing staff, not only at

24 the 107 office, but at the firefighters home.

25 Ladies and gentlemen that interact with our

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2 members every day and care about them, it's a

3 calling for them, and they're just an amazing

4 bunch of individuals. Eddie, I've known you for

5 a long time, we've kidded together, we've hung

6 out together, but I can't think of a better

7 person that takes care of our members and brings

8 them wherever we have to go, no matter where it

9 is in the state. Eddie, thank you.

10 UNKNOWN AUDIENCE SPEAKER: You're very
11 welcome. Thank you.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. FARRELL: Presented by the Resolutions
14 Committee on behalf of the FASNY Board of
15 Directors, the Board of Trustees of the
16 Firefighters Home, and the membership of the
17 association.

18 Resolution Number Six, "WHEREAS, the
19 officers, committee members, and staff of the
20 Firefighters Association of the State of New York
21 exhibit dedication, commitment, and
22 professionalism on a daily basis,

23 AND WHEREAS, the officers, committee
24 members, and staff of the Firefighters
25 Association of the State of New York enable the

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2 association to fulfill its mission to train,
3 educate, and advocate for the volunteer first
4 responders across New York,

5 AND WHEREAS, the officers, committee
6 members, and staff of the association are a

7 primary reason that the Firefighters Association
8 of the State of New York is regarded as one of
9 the premiere volunteer first responder
10 organizations in the country,

11 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the
12 officers and the membership of the association
13 offer their heartfelt appreciation to the
14 officers, committee members, and staff of the
15 Firefighters Association of the State of New York
16 for all they do on a daily basis."

17 Mr. Chairman, I so move for the adoption of
18 Resolution Number Six.

19 MR. PERRY: You've heard the reading of
20 Resolution Number Six.

21 Do I have a second?

22 MR. MCELYNN: Kevin McElynn, Past President
23 of Nassau County, seconds that motion.

24 MR. PERRY: I have a motion, and I have a
25 second.

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2 Are there any questions?

3 (No response.)

4 MR. PERRY: All those in favor?

5 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

6 MR. PERRY: Opposed?

7 (No response.)

8 MR. PERRY: Carried.

9 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Resolution Number Seven,

10 "WHEREAS, events across the nation have

11 highlighted the danger and threats to the

12 personal safety of our brothers and sisters in

13 the volunteer and career fire service, volunteer

14 and career EMS service, and the law enforcement

15 community,

16 AND WHEREAS, individuals in these

17 professions in this state and throughout the

18 nation are routinely called upon to serve and

19 protect their fellow citizens by responding to

20 horrendous events and act heroically to save

21 property and the lives of others,

22 AND WHEREAS, they perform their duty while

23 frequently putting their own personal safety in

24 jeopardy,

25 AND WHEREAS, certain factions in society

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2 have called for the disbanding, de-funding,
3 impeding, or harming of emergency service
4 personnel,

5 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the
6 officers and members of the Firefighters
7 Association of the State of New York, that they
8 declare their support and solidarity with the men
9 and women who serve, or who have served, in the
10 volunteer and career fire service, the volunteer
11 and career EMS service, and the law enforcement
12 community and who have earned our respect and
13 deepest gratitude for their efforts to serve
14 their fellow citizens."

15 Mr. Chairman, so I move the adoption of
16 Resolution Number Seven.

17 MR. PERRY: You've heard the reading of
18 Resolution Number Seven.

19 Do we have a second?

20 MS. HOLLAND: Marsha Holland, Trustee,
21 Chautauqua County.

22 MR. PERRY: We have a motion and second.

23 Are there any questions?

24 (No response.)

25 MR. PERRY: All those in favor?

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AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. PERRY: Opposed?

(No response.)

MR. PERRY: Carried.

MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Resolution Number Eight,
"BE IT RESOLVED, that the officers and members of
the Firefighters Association of the State of New
York extend their sincere condolences to the
families of Roderick MacLeod, New Hackensack Fire
Department; George Snyder, Jr., Fire Department
of the City of New York; Nicholas Morosco,
Yorkville Fire Department; John Gaudet,
Binghamton Fire Department; and James Sitek, West
Colesville Fire Company on their passing,

AND FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that we extend
our eternal respect and gratitude to our brothers
who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line
of duty while protecting their communities."

Mr. Chairman, I so move the adoption of
Resolution Number Eight.

MR. PERRY: You've heard the reading of
Resolution Number Eight.

Do I have a second?

MR. CARON: Mike Caron, Onondaga County,

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seconds it.

MR. PERRY: We have a motion and a second.

Are there any questions?

(No response.)

MR. PERRY: All those in favor?

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. PERRY: Opposed?

(No response.)

MR. PERRY: Carried.

MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Mr. Chairman, that concludes the report of the Resolutions Committee.

MR. FARRELL: Good morning.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

MR. FARRELL: I do have a few announcements this morning.

The Two Percent forum is this afternoon here in the Grand Ballroom beginning at 1:30 p.m. We hope to see you all here.

Tonight is the Tailgate for Heroes and Scholarship Fundraiser from 7:00 p.m. to midnight in the small parking lot off the convention

24 level, outside the side doors here in the fenced
25 in area. Again, we hope to see you all there.

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The installation of our new officers and
3 their acceptance speeches will take place
4 tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. here in the Grand
5 Ballroom. We encourage everyone to attend this
6 important ceremony.

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Youth classroom training will be held
tomorrow starting at noon in the Fischer, Fire
and Gardiner's Island rooms on the lobby level
upstairs.

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Our Third Annual Testimonial and Past
Presidents' dinner will be held tomorrow evening
here in the Grand Ballroom beginning at 6:00 p.m.
Just a note for all FASNY officers -- We're all
right here -- jacket and tie, please, as we are
honoring our fellow officers for their years of
service to FASNY and LAFASNY.

Thank you.

MR. PERRY: Before we recess, I would like
to thank a few fire departments that have

21 contributed to making our convention a great
22 event: The Van Guard Hose Company Number One of
23 the Patchogue Fire Department for supplying the
24 color guard for the opening ceremonies.

25 The Nesconset Fire Department for hosting

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2 our golf tournament lunch.

3 The Ossining Fire Department for helping us
4 with the setup of various events this weekend.

5 The Central Islip Fire District and
6 department, the Smithtown Fire District and
7 department, the Nesconset Fire District and
8 department, and the Selden Fire District and
9 department for supplying buses for our various
10 events this week.

11 The Suffolk County Fire Academy for hosting
12 our HOT training.

13 All the departments and organizations who
14 are participating in our Tailgate for Heroes
15 event tonight.

16 At this time, I will entertain a motion to
17 recess until 3:00 p.m. to announce the results of
18 the election.

19 MR. AMMIRATI: Vincent Ammirati, President
20 of the Suffolk County Vollies, I'll make that
21 motion.

22 MR. PERRY: Motion by Vinnie Ammirati.

23 MR. OTTAVIANO: Robert Ottaviano, Nassau
24 County, seconds the motion.

25 MR. PERRY: Seconded by Robert Ottaviano.

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2 We have a motion and a second.

3 All in favor?

4 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

5 MR. PERRY: Opposed?

6 (No response.)

7 MR. PERRY: Carried. We will reconvene at
8 3:00 p.m. this afternoon.

9 Thank you.

10 (Whereupon, the convention was adjourned
11 until 3:00 p.m.)

12 MR. PERRY: Can everyone please take their
13 seats to the ballroom, please?

14 Mr. Sergeant-at-Arms, can you have everyone
15 come in the ballroom and be seated?

16 Good afternoon.

17 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good afternoon.

18 MR. PERRY: We are now back in session. I
19 will now ask Secretary D'Alessandro -- Excuse
20 me -- I will ask for a motion to ask Secretary
21 D'Alessandro to cast one vote for the unopposed
22 position of Director for Andrew Pilecki.

23 MR. TASE: Past President Tase makes that
24 motion.

25 MR. PERRY: Do I have a second?

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2 MR. EWING: I will second it.

3 MR. PERRY: Seconded by Scott Ewing.

4 We have a motion and a second.

5 Are there any questions?

6 (No response.)

7 MR. PERRY: All in favor?

8 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

9 MR. PERRY: Opposed?

10 (No response.)

11 MR. PERRY: Carried.

12 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Mr. President, I cast
13 one affirmative vote for Andy Pilecki to serve

14 his next five year term as Director.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. PERRY: I now need a motion to ask
17 Secretary D'Alessandro to cast one vote for the
18 uncontested office of Home Trustee for Walter
19 Frame.

20 MR. DAROCHA: Mr. President, I make that
21 motion to cast that one vote for Walter Frame.
22 My name is Jose DaRocha from Nassau County.

23 MR. PERRY: Motion by Jose DaRocha.

24 MR. OTTAVIANO: I'll second it.

25 MR. PERRY: Seconded by Robbie Ottaviano.

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2 Are there any questions?

3 (No response.)

4 MR. PERRY: All in favor?

5 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

6 MR. PERRY: Opposed?

7 (No response.)

8 MR. PERRY: Carried.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Mr. President, I cast

11 one affirmative vote on behalf of the membership
12 for Walter Frame, Trustee of the Firefighters
13 Home, for his next five year term.

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. PERRY: I need a motion to ask
16 Secretary D'Alessandro to cast one vote for the
17 position of Home Trustee for Marsha Holland.

18 MR. LAPINSKI: Mr. President, Mike
19 Lapinski. I request that one vote is cast for
20 Marsha.

21 MR. PERRY: Thank you.

22 Do I have a second?

23 MR. BUTTS: I second it.

24 MR. PERRY: On a second by Wayne Butts.

25 On a question?

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2 (No response.)

3 MR. PERRY: All in favor?

4 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

5 MR. PERRY: Opposed?

6 (No response.)

7 MR. PERRY: Carried.

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Mr. President, on behalf
10 of the membership, I cast one affirmative vote
11 for Marsha Holland, Trustee of the Firefighters
12 Home, for her next five year term.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. PERRY: At this time, I will call on
15 Secretary John D'Alessandro to announce the
16 contested election and the bylaw amendments
17 results.

18 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: So we had two contested
19 elections for director seats and two bylaws
20 amendments.

21 So for the first director seat, Eric Orr
22 was the winner.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: For the second contested
25 seat, Paul Rieben.

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2 (Applause.)

3 MR. D'ALESSANDRO: Bylaw amendment one was
4 defeated. Bylaw amendment two was defeated. And
5 that's the results of the elections.

6 MR. PERRY: At this time, I will entertain

7 a motion to destroy the ballots.

8 MR. KARASHAY: I'll make that motion.

9 MR. SCHRADER: Second.

10 MR. PERRY: Motion by Mike Karashay.

11 Second by Bob Schrader.

12 Any questions on the motion?

13 (No response.)

14 MR. PERRY: All in favor?

15 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

16 MR. PERRY: Opposed?

17 (No response.)

18 MR. PERRY: Carried.

19 At this time, I will entertain a motion to

20 recess until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

21 MR. GALVIN: Motion, Vinnie Galvin.

22 MR. PERRY: Motion by Vinnie Galvin.

23 MR. STREICHER: Second.

24 MR. PERRY: Seconded by Bill Streicher.

25 All in favor?

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2 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.

3 MR. PERRY: Opposed?

4 (No response.)

5 MR. PERRY: Carried.

6 See you all tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

7 (Whereupon, the convention was adjourned to

8 August 9, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.)

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OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE 153RD ANNUAL
MEETING OF THE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF THE
STATE OF NEW YORK, HELD FROM THE 7TH DAY OF
AUGUST THROUGH THE 9TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2025, HYATT
REGENCY, HAUPPAUGE, NEW YORK.

August 9, 2025

B E F O R E: EUGENE PERRY, JR., President

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2 MR. PERRY: Can everybody please take their

3 seats so we can get started, please?

4 Good morning.

5 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

6 MR. PERRY: I trust everybody had a good

7 time at our Tailgate for Heroes Party last night.

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. PERRY: I want to thank the committee,

10 especially Bob Fritsche, doing all his running

11 around and taking care of everything. Bobby,

12 thank you so much.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. PERRY: I would like to ask everyone to

15 please silence their cellphones and pagers. The

16 fire exits are at the rear of the convention

17 hall. If for some reason we must evacuate, you

18 will be notified from the dais.

19 I would like to welcome you to our final

20 session of the 153rd Annual Meeting and

21 Convention of the Firefighters Association of the

22 State of New York.

23 At this time, I would like to call upon our
24 Chaplain, Barrie-Lyn Foster, for the invocation.
25 (Invocation by Chaplain Barrie-Lyn Foster.)

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2 MR. PERRY: I now call upon
3 Sergeant-at-Arms Juan Batta to lead us in the
4 Pledge of Allegiance.

5 (Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was
6 recited by Sergeant-at-Arms Juan Batta and the
7 audience members.)

8 MR. PERRY: You may be seated.

9 I would like to thank everyone who
10 supported our tailgate and scholarship fundraiser
11 last night. We had a very successful evening.
12 We had lots of fun.

13 I would like to ask scholarship committee
14 Chairwoman Diana Pfersick to come to the dais to
15 accept the donations to the scholarship fund.

16 MR. MCCONVILLE: Good morning.

17 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

18 MR. MCCONVILLE: I'm here representing the
19 past presidents of FASNY. Gunner Nielson is not

20 able to travel as well as he used to and Jim
21 Williams is in Texas. Mr. Finnegan is upstate.
22 Dave Jacobowitz is home with a medical concern,
23 as is Ken Pienkowski. We have Steve Klein here
24 in the room.
25 MR. KLEIN: I'm here with a mental concern,

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2 but yes.
3 (Laughter.)
4 MR. MCCONVILLE: That was a great two
5 year --
6 (Laughter.)
7 MR. KLEIN: It really was.
8 MR. MCCONVILLE: Edward Tase, I saw Ed was
9 in the room. I think all of them -- I don't
10 quite remember. Standing here from Suffolk
11 County, I'm the senior living president from
12 Suffolk County. I'm the senior living president
13 from Southern New York, so I told the FASNY guys,
14 they better watch out.
15 (Laughter.)
16 MR. MCCONVILLE: Just a little history, in
17 1990 President Buckenmeyer was elected to the

18 Vice Presidency, and his first program, his first
19 idea, his first journey, was to form a
20 scholarship fund. As he moved through the two
21 chairs when he became president in 1994, he
22 formed the FASNY Scholarship Program. For the
23 folks that go back to 1994, the meetings that we
24 had last night outside, west of the hotel, we
25 used to have a little room. The sectionals would

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2 have a room and some of the counties they would
3 serve beverages and whatnot in one room, and we
4 had a band or DJ, whatever it was, and
5 Mr. Buckenmeyer would put out the booth on each
6 of those stands, and people would donate dollars,
7 coins, whatever it was. The local committees
8 back then would give gifts and they would raffle
9 them off, and whatever money they made from them
10 went to the scholarship fund, and Mr. Buckenmeyer
11 would put a white sheet out in the middle of the
12 floor and people around dancing and fooling
13 around out there, they would throw money into the
14 sheet, and the money would be collected, and

15 that's how Mr. Buckenmeyer started the money
16 trail for the scholarship fund. As it went on,
17 it just kept growing and growing, and today we're
18 giving out 15 and 20 scholarships a year. A
19 great program, and if there's any legacy that Mr.
20 Buckenmeyer had was certainly the formation of
21 this scholarship fund.

22 So on behalf of the past presidents, it's
23 an honor and a pleasure to donate this check to
24 the scholarship fund.

25 MS. PFERSICK: Thank you very much.

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2 (Applause.)

3 MR. FRAME: I'll make this brief. This is
4 simply from the Walter Frame campaign from my
5 folks in Nassau County, a little something to
6 help out.

7 MS. PFERSICK: Thank you very much.

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. DEMARCO: I have a little presentation
10 from the past presidents of Western New York.

11 MS. PFERSICK: Thank you.

12 (Applause.)

13 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Good morning. I'm
14 pleased to present the scholarship fund with
15 \$315.00 that was raised last night in the dunk
16 tank, most of which came when President Perry was
17 in there.

18 (Laughter.)

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. OTTAVIANO: Diana, I have a check from
21 the executive council of the Firematic
22 Association of Nassau County in memory of Artie
23 Rypka. Artie did that hospitality room --
24 Steve Klein tells me -- for over 50 years. He
25 was big supporter of FASNY. He was a big

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2 supporter of us. He's a great man, and this is
3 in his memory, and I gave mine yesterday.

4 MS. PFERSICK: Thank you very much.

5 (Applause.)

6 MS. PFERSICK: On behalf my committee, and
7 I think a lot of them are still out there delving
8 up the baskets out there. Our committee does a
9 tremendous amount of work when we do solicit the

10 scholarships getting the entries in, reading
11 them, rating them, and then getting everything
12 out and distributed. It takes a lot more work
13 then I think some people realize, but it's a very
14 hardworking committee, and from the beginning
15 when it was only a few scholarships given out,
16 we're now giving out 25 scholarships of \$1,500.00
17 to these deserving students, and I can't tell you
18 how much these students appreciate getting these
19 funds, so I appreciate all of you who did
20 contribute baskets, to you who bought tickets to
21 try to a win a basket and working, and the 50/50
22 this year made a big difference as well.

23 So on behalf of the entire committee, I
24 thank you all.

25 (Applause.)

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2 MR. PERRY: We are now ready to install our
3 new officers. Would all the newly elected
4 individuals come to the stage?

5 It is my pleasure to call on association
6 Counsel Timothy Hannigan to install our newly
7 elected trustees to the Firefighters Home and the

8 new members of the FASNY Board of Directors.

9 (Whereupon, the Oath of Office was
10 administered to the elected FASNY Officers by
11 Attorney Timothy Hannigan.)

12 MR. HANNIGAN: Congratulations.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. PERRY: I'll now ask each of the
15 candidates to come up and do their acceptance
16 speeches.

17 MR. PILECKI: Good morning, everybody.

18 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

19 MR. PILECKI: The ladies and gentlemen
20 behind me elected me to go first. I guess I'm
21 the guinea pig for this morning, but once again,
22 good morning everybody.

23 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

24 MR. PILECKI: President Perry, First Vice
25 President Farrell, Second Vice Present Holmes,

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2 all the FASNY Officers, the LAFASNY Officers, the
3 members of FASNY, the delegates, and
4 distinguished guests. Before I make a few

5 remarks, I would like to let everybody know and
6 take note of this morning's schedule. The
7 schedule runs this morning here in the room until
8 10:30, and I will promise I will take up all that
9 time until 10:30.

10 (Laughter.)

11 MR. PILECKI: Five years ago I stood before
12 all of you and took the oath. Today it's nice to
13 see many new faces here in the audience and many
14 familiar faces. To the familiar faces, many of
15 you have not changed. Some of you have grayed,
16 some of you have lost some hair, and some of you
17 changed in stature, but it has been a great honor
18 to serve on the board for the past five years.
19 It's been a tremendous learning experience.

20 Also, thank you for letting me be part of
21 the FASNY family. It's been said time and time
22 again that the officers and the board are like
23 family, and I can attest that is it true. We are
24 all brothers and sisters to each other. I must
25 start by thanking my wife, Mary, out in the

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2 audience there. She is my rock and love of my

3 life. She's always there to listen and express
4 guidance, and she's also there for stopping me
5 from doing crazy and stupid things.

6 (Laughter.)

7 MR. PILECKI: To my children, Andrew and
8 his wife, Kristen; Katie and her husband, Evan;
9 and David, thank you for all the encouragement,
10 support, and covering for me while I have dealt
11 with this organization's business. Thank you
12 very much.

13 If you notice, my youngest son, David, I
14 didn't mention a spouse. He is single and
15 available.

16 (Laughter.)

17 MR. PILECKI: He's the one blushing in the
18 back.

19 Also, David, thank you very much for
20 introducing me Thursday afternoon to the
21 membership and letting the membership know a
22 little bit about me. You did a fantastic job.

23 Also, thank you to our FASNY Secretary
24 D'Alessandro for casting the decisive vote
25 affirming my second five year term as Director,

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2 and he made it official. So in the future, if
3 anybody has any concerns like why the hell did we
4 elect Pilecki as Director, please contact John
5 D'Alessandro with all your concerns.

6 (Laughter.)

7 MR. PILECKI: You can blame him.

8 In addition to the support from my family,
9 I would like to thank the members of the
10 Wendelville Fire Company and Columbia Hook and
11 Ladder Company for all your support that you have
12 given me in the past. When attending meetings
13 and seminars, these two organizations have always
14 come up to me and asked me if I needed help.
15 Thank you very much.

16 Also to the Niagara County Volunteer
17 Firemen's Association and the Western New York
18 Volunteer Firemen's Association for sending in
19 letters of endorsement for me to continue in my
20 second five year term as Director.

21 A few minutes ago I took my oath of office.
22 That oath just seals the commitment I have
23 accepted for my second five year term as Director
24 of the Firefighters Association of the State of
25 New York, and as I stand before all of you, I

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2 promise that I will continue to serve this
3 organization to the best of my ability and
4 promote the volunteer fire service so we can all
5 protect the lives and the property in the
6 communities that we all serve.

7 I hope that God will provide me with the
8 wisdom, the ideas, the knowledge, and strength so
9 I continue to service this organization and the
10 80,000 plus brothers and sisters in the fire
11 service here in the state of New York.

12 Thank you very much.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. RIEBEN: I thought the Hannigans were
15 supposed to bring me a law book to stand on, but
16 we will get through it this way.

17 (Laughter.)

18 MR. RIEBEN: President Perry, Vice
19 President Farrell, Vice President Holmes, members
20 of the dais, Board of Directors, Board of
21 Trustees, FASNY family and friends, I am humbled
22 and honored to be standing before you today being
23 elected to the Board of Directors and excited to
24 continue working for you and the volunteer

25 firefighters across New York state.

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2 I would like to thank Dave Glenn, who
3 through all the events over the year we still
4 have remained friends. I want to thank my
5 friend, Ken Holmes, Sr., my friend and past
6 chief, Tom Rothdiener, who's the one who
7 encouraged me to travel outside of the boundaries
8 of the Oriskany Fire Department and invited me to
9 my first FASNY convention 19 years ago in
10 Liverpool.

11 I also want to thank my brother, Larry, for
12 introducing me yesterday. Thank you to the
13 Oriskany Fire Department President Ashley Rueger,
14 Chief Jeff Burkhart, and the membership for all
15 the support they gave me throughout this year and
16 the Central New York Firefighters Association.

17 Most important, I want to thank my wife,
18 Becky, for putting up with me going to meetings,
19 calls, details, and everything else I have had to
20 do. You have always been on my side for the 30
21 years, and even though it always seems like you

22 always come second, I wouldn't be here without
23 you. My daughters, Marlana and Kaitlin, who are
24 my personal secretaries, and everybody knows my
25 son, and my shadow, Derek.

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2 (Laughter.)

3 MR. RIEBEN: They are the ones when my life
4 is crazy keep my head on straight and my feet
5 planted on the ground.

6 It is now my duty to continue to gain your
7 confidence, work with the leadership and the
8 Board of Directors of FASNY, and for the members
9 of this association and the 80,000 volunteer
10 firefighters that continue to sacrifice and serve
11 their communities across New York State every
12 day.

13 Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. HOLLAND: I have one little page so.
16 First of all, if I dance around and stuff, it's
17 because that's what I do when I speak, because I
18 don't like this part of things.

19 President Perry, Vice Presidents Farrell

20 and Holmes, Board of Directors, Trustees, Home
21 Administer Henchey, LAFASNY, and convention
22 attendees, my decision to run for a second term
23 as a trustee of the Firefighters Home was really
24 a no-brainer, which was due to having such a
25 great five years that were filled with learning

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2 the day to day functions of the home, meeting
3 staff, and interacting with the members we are
4 charged with protecting, ensuring they get the
5 best of care.

6 I thank every one of the trustees who
7 helped in the learning process, especially
8 Marilyn Schrader, who really took me under her
9 wing to make sure I knew the hows and whys of the
10 position.

11 Thank you also to Dennis Eickoff, who
12 showed me the ropes for becoming secretary of the
13 board and kind of made it a little humorous too.

14 I am proud to represent FASNY, the trustees, and
15 the Firefighters Home when I'm out at various
16 functions and meetings in Chautauqua County, and

17 that is a lot of meetings, and my husband can
18 vouch for that. He told me to stop raising my
19 hand.

20 (Laughter.)

21 MS. HOLLAND: I look forward to serving as
22 trustee for the next five years, blossoming even
23 more --

24 (Laughter.)

25 MS. HOLLAND: (Continuing) -- than I have

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2 already. I want to thank my husband, Lyle, for
3 being a big supporter of everything I do and
4 going most places with me, but not coming to the
5 meetings, mostly because he would have nothing to
6 do so. I know there was more I was going to do
7 say, but I think that's enough.

8 Thank you, all.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. FRAME: No written speech. I intend to
11 keep this rather brief. Good morning to all of
12 you.

13 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

14 MR. FRAME: I find this quite incredible

15 that I stand here again to start another
16 adventure for another five years to the fabulous
17 Firemen's Home in the state of New York, and if
18 any of you have never been there, make it a point
19 to go. The place is absolutely incredible. The
20 staff that runs it, I can't say enough about
21 those people. They do an absolutely incredible
22 job.

23 Now I would like to thank a few people and
24 a couple of organizations. I would like to start
25 off by thanking the officers and members of

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2 Southern New York, the officers and members of
3 the Nassau County Firemen's Association, the
4 officers and members of the North Shore Fire
5 Council, my own fire company, the Albertson Hook
6 and Ladder Engine and Hose Company Number One,
7 and a few individuals I would like to thank,
8 Bobby O, Steven Klein, Joe DaRocha. Actually,
9 Joe is the one who started me on the journey kind
10 of moving up the ranks many moons ago, and last,
11 but certainly not least, my wife of 50 years,

12 Kathleen, who in all honesty --

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. FRAME: (Continuing) -- Thank you. I
15 wouldn't be standing here today if it wasn't for
16 her undying support, and that is about all I have
17 to say.

18 Thank you very much.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. ORR: Good morning.

21 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good morning.

22 MR. ORR: Officers, members, and guests,
23 I'm honored to stand here before you as a newly
24 elected director. I've worked tirelessly for
25 many years working as a director and president

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2 for the Hudson Valley, travelling thousands of
3 miles, attending hundreds of events. I will
4 attack this job with the same commitment and
5 enthusiasm. I look forward to working with the
6 presidents and board members to continue FASNY's
7 momentum. I'm excited to be supporting the
8 volunteer firefighters across this great state.
9 Many challenges face us. With hard work, open

10 dialog, and perseverance, we will succeed.

11 As I look out in this room, there's so many
12 people that have helped me and guided me forward.
13 This unexpected journey started a long time ago
14 when Joe Kelly, Dave DeGraff, Delbe Spath,
15 encouraged me to run for vice president of Ulster
16 County. This journey -- meeting new people and
17 created friendships across the state. Without a
18 support network, none of this would be possible
19 for me. There is so many individuals, John
20 Farrell, Chan Rivera, Bill Buckmaster in the
21 beginning, allowing candid discussions on what we
22 feel what's best.

23 The entire membership of the Hudson Valley,
24 more importantly the past presidents and
25 directors standing on the shoulders of giants so

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2 I wouldn't face the same challenges they did. My
3 very good friend, Michael Karashay, for always
4 being there for me. My wife, for the sacrifices,
5 encouragement, allowing me to travel most days of
6 the week, being my secretary, accountant,

7 sounding board, and number one supporters as I
8 travel all over God's creation to go to meetings,
9 fundraisers, and events. My surrounding counties
10 for their for support and assistance, the
11 Schraders, even Becky --

12 (Laughter.)

13 MR. ORR: The Sullivan County gang, which I
14 surely wish they could have made it here. We had
15 a lot of miles together and had very good times.
16 The folks around Southern New York, Ossining --
17 County, you guys welcomed me in with open arms,
18 and I'm so happy our paths have crossed. Ulster
19 County, where it all began, for the never ending
20 and overwhelming support, the Wallkill Fire and
21 Hose Company for putting up with me and
22 supporting me for all these years. There's so
23 many more as I work to improve the volunteer fire
24 service. God has truly blessed me by allowing me
25 to do this work that I love with all my heart and

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2 for all of you.

3 Thank you for this opportunity. I consider
4 it a privilege to be in this role and to support

5 and serve this mission. God bless all of you,
6 and thank you very much.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. PERRY: I would like to take this to
9 opportunity to extend the thanks of FASNY's
10 leadership to the convention attendees, our
11 committee people, and the staff for making FASNY
12 the great organization that it is.

13 We greatly appreciate your support of FASNY
14 and the Firefighters Home.

15 We look forward to seeing everyone this
16 evening at the Testimonial and Past Presidents
17 Dinner. Cocktail hour begins at 6:00 p.m.

18 I ask that Chaplain Barrie-Lyn Foster come
19 back to the dais for a closing prayer.

20 (Whereupon, closing prayer by Chaplain
21 Barrie-Lyn Foster.)

22 MR. PERRY: With everything being said, I
23 will entertain a motion to close the 153rd Annual
24 Meeting and Convention of the Firefighters
25 Association of the State of New York.

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2 MR. FARRELL: Motion to close.
3 MR. PERRY: Motion by First Vice President
4 Don Farrell.
5 MR. WICKS: Second.
6 MR. PERRY: Seconded by John Wicks.
7 Are there any questions on that motion?
8 (No response.)
9 MR. PERRY: All in favor?
10 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Aye.
11 MR. PERRY: Any opposed?
12 (No response.)
13 MR. PERRY: Motion is carried.
14 We'll see everybody tonight.
15 (Applause.)
16 (Whereupon, the convention was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATION

STATE OF NEW YORK)

) SS.:

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK)

I, JAMIE J. WOODARD, a Court Reporter and
Notary Public, for and within the State of New
York, do hereby certify:

THAT the above and foregoing contains a
true and correct transcription of the proceedings
held from August 7, 2025 through August 9, 2025,
at the Firefighters Association of the State of
New York Annual Meeting, Hauppauge, New York, and
were reported by me.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
hand this 20th day of March, 2026.

JAMIE J. WOODARD

Jamie J. Woodard - (631) 345-2386