

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the West Valley Volunteer Hose Company

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to recognize and honor fire companies and their members that have exhibited great dedication, courage, and selflessness in protecting their neighbors from fire and other disasters in this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the West Valley Volunteer Hose Company; and

WHEREAS, Since the early days of the "teapot steamers," the volunteer firefighter has been the cornerstone of our great State's efforts to spare us from the ravages of fire; and

WHEREAS, West Valley Volunteer Hose Company became certified as a corporation in 1914; the charter members and the residents of the Hamlet known as West Valley owned only a two-wheeled hose cart housed in a private garage; the group called themselves the Fire Company, but they soon came to be known officially as a "Hose Company," named after their only piece of firefighting equipment, a hose cart; and

WHEREAS, West Valley's hose cart carried only a few hundred feet of canvas hose and a nozzle; water was supplied by a lengthy system of underground wooden pipes and cast-iron fire hydrants installed by a publicly owned company called the West Valley Crystal Water Company; fire protection was provided for the village by the "fire district" and the rest of the Town of Ashford by the "fire protection district"; and

WHEREAS, The first home of the West Valley Volunteer Hose Company was in the building now known as a portion of the West Valley Market; it housed two narrow truck bays, a small kitchen downstairs, a meeting room, storage closet, and a billiards table upstairs; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the hose cart and another truck, a 1930s "stewart" pumper/tanker, was eventually purchased; the 1930s "stewart" featured an open cab, leather seats, a hand-cranked siren, a 250-gallon water tank, 500 feet of 2 1/2-inch canvas hose, a mid-ship mounting centrifugal pump, a hand-cranked six-cylinder engine with manual ignition control, and a large amount of gold-leaf lettering; and

WHEREAS, A 1937 Chevrolet panel truck joined the fleet prior to World War II; it featured a 100-gallon water tank and space in the back for six firemen; it also served as an ambulance for accident victims; and

WHEREAS, Following World War II, two Army-surplus vehicles were purchased; the first was a dual-wheel 1940 Chevrolet truck chassis which was outfitted with a 500-gallon tank, pump, and hose compartments; the second was a military fire truck with a 500-gallon water tank and a front-mount centrifugal pump; they also added a four-wheel drive pickup in 1962 which included a water tank, pump, ladders, hose reel, and "Indian" pumps; and

WHEREAS, The West Valley Volunteer Hose Company then purchased the former Baptist Church and "Odd Fellows" hall in the middle of the village; a new three-bay truck room addition was built behind the hall; the new hall was completed in the late 1970s by volunteers who had drawn its plans on the back of two placemats from the West Valley Hotel; and

WHEREAS, In the early 1980s, a new 3,500-gallon tanker was added to the fleet through the generosity of A&D Engels, Inc.; fire protection and Emergency Medical Services for the new West Valley Fire District, which by then covered the entire Town of Ashford, was enhanced by a new 1986 Braun ambulance, a huge new AutoCar, a used ladder truck from Salamanca, and a snorkel from Ellicottville; the members also got involved

with fire truck restoration by refurbishing and placing back in local

service old equipment purchased from other Western New York fire departments; and

WHEREAS, During the 1990s, the local fire hall was sold to the Town of Ashford for its new Community Center; proceeds were used to buy land and build a new fire hall and a large storage building south of West Valley; at the same time, land was obtained for another fire hall on Route 219 in Ashford Hollow; both of these new facilities, built in 1995 and 1996 with local labor, feature the most up to date 911 fire alarm and communication technology available today; and

WHEREAS, Their active members, with a focus on community service, provide vital services to their beloved community; the volunteers who dedicate their time to the Hose Company are the first to respond to fires, accidents, storm damage, ambulance calls, and other emergencies; and

WHEREAS, It takes special people who are devoted to helping their fellow human beings in times of extreme need; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to publicly recognize distinguished fire companies that have achieved notable success in protecting lives and property over the course of their long histories in this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the West Valley Volunteer Hose Company; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to West Valley Volunteer Hose Company.