

BY: Senator BROOKS

COMMENDING Roger Harwood upon the occasion of his retirement after 54 years of distinguished service to the Wantagh Fire District

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and honor those distinguished citizens who would devote themselves to public service, demonstrating great courage and diligence in providing for the care and welfare of the citizens of their communities and this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Within every community of the State of New York there are certain individuals who, by virtue of their commitment and dedication, command the respect and admiration of their community for their exemplary contributions and service on behalf of others; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Roger Harwood upon the occasion of his retirement after 54 years of distinguished service to the Wantagh Fire District; and

WHEREAS, For over five decades, Roger Harwood rendered faithful, conscientious and valuable service to the people of Wantagh, New York, earning the admiration, esteem and affection of his colleagues; in 54 years, he proudly worked with 28 different Fire Chiefs; and

WHEREAS, A resident of Seaford, New York, Roger Harwood grew up in Wantagh; he joined the fire department in 1959, shortly before he graduated from Wantagh High School; six years later, he met his future wife, Fran; together, the couple purchased a home in Seaford, two blocks away from his childhood home; and

WHEREAS, Following in his father's footsteps, Roger Harwood became a dispatcher with the Wantagh Fire District on May 1, 1962; for 16 years, he proudly worked alongside his father at the dispatcher's desk answering calls from the public for a fire or emergency, and gathering as much information as possible and relaying it to the appropriate fire and emergency medical service units; and

WHEREAS, Roger Harwood was also responsible for monitoring all radio transmissions, calling for additional resources as needed and listening to other radios for more information while coordinating a response as well as recording the times that firefighters leave and return to their stations; and

WHEREAS, Known as the voice of Wantagh, Roger Harwood has heard it all, from cats stuck in trees to power lines knocked down by hurricane-force winds and fierce fires; throughout his meritorious career, he has fielded thousands of calls from people in distress in the district, which includes all of Wantagh; parts of Seaford, Levittown, East Meadow and Bellmore; and Jones Beach State Park and Tobay Beach;

and

WHEREAS, One of the most challenging events that Roger Harwood worked through was Hurricane Sandy in 2012; he was one of four Wantagh dispatchers on call during the storm, answering seemingly endless calls for help; and

WHEREAS, Roger Harwood controlled the flow of radio traffic with precision and maintained calm in the midst of some of the most stressful situations; through any incident, he had a special way of communicating with department members; he often employed various quips such as "we have a duet" when more than one unit had to be transmitted to an incident, for many different types of situations, which tipped members off to the fact that he was on duty; and

WHEREAS, Through his long and distinguished career, Roger Harwood had to adapt to new technologies while on the job, as the district now uses computer-aided dispatching with GPS, route mapping, and other texting and alerting procedures; always eager for a challenge, he was responsible for training all of Wantagh's dispatchers; and

WHEREAS, Rare indeed is the occurrence of such a compassionate blending of strength, leadership, intellect, and commitment as that demonstrated by Roger Harwood over a lifetime of sacrifice and dedication to others; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body that those dedicated public servants who unselfishly devote their lives to the preservation of order and the protection of others are worthy and due full praise for their commitment and noble endeavors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Roger Harwood upon the occasion of his retirement after 54 years of distinguished service to the Wantagh Fire District; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Roger Harwood.