



New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association, Inc.

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MEMORANDUM

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TO: All Local Presidents
NYS Professional Fire Fighters Association, Inc. AFL-CIO

FROM: Charles J. Morello – President
Michael T. McManus – Secretary//Treasurer
Sam Fresina – Health and Safety Committee Chairman

RE: NYS Memorial Committee

DATE: May 5, 2009

As discussed at the Legislative Conference, attached is the letter sent by Bill Romaka to Chief Madison in regards to the NYS Memorial Committee. As stated, the NYSPFFA is contemplating a possible withdrawal from the NYS Memorial Committee due to their decisions on who belongs on the memorial wall. We are asking for you to bring your input to this year's annual convention held on July 7-9th, hosted by Utica.

CJM/MTM: km

enclosure

Greetings Chief Madison;

It was a bit of a disappointment not to see you at the last meeting, and I hope all is well with you.

It is with regret that I wish to inform you that we seem to be at an impasse that can no longer be rectified. It seems that following our previous meeting when our issues "seemed" to be addressed and headway was being made, that last week's meeting took an abrupt turn back to an area we thought we had consensus to move forward from.

The insistence that elderly fire police have a place on the wall flies against logic when professional firefighters have mandatory retirement ages and the vast majority of these fire police related deaths have such pre-existing conditions such as stents and cancers that no professional firefighter would be allowed to go forward in the fire service with.

The philosophical gap has widened. Where at the previous meeting we were moving toward the necessity of annotating the "interior structural firefighter" (where allowances were being made to include volunteer Chauffeurs due to their contributions at fire emergencies), our counterparts seem to have totally abandoned the previously agreed to "in principal" topic and wish to now expand it to include training.

If you asked a citizen in the street what they believe the NYS Fallen Firefighters Memorial Wall means, it is extremely doubtful that they would envision an 82 year old man as worthy for directing traffic. Firefighting is for the young who have the strength and proper training to put themselves in harm's way to protect and serve others. Why this wall has become a Community Service award or years of service award is beyond me and something I can no longer support. I have long advocated that proper recognition for these types of tragic deaths be taken up at the local fire department where the service meant so much to the community and fire department.

We were also informed at the last meeting by NYS legal that our opinions do not really count anyway, furthering our disdain with the situation. We no longer wish to be part of this facade and respectfully request your guidance in working toward two separate committees and two separate Memorial Days and possibly two separate Memorial Walls, as it seems clear that we have lost our ability to work toward compromise and will never find agreement with any member who believes the NYS Fallen Firefighters Memorial Wall was meant for all firefighters who pass away regardless of age or circumstance.

I would like to point out acknowledge and thank the new members of the Committee who seem to possess the quality of compromise and common sense that others seem not to want to grasp.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Romaka, UFA Health and Safety Officer/Sgt-at-Arms, Local 94 Cell
917-903-4220