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MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

05/24/2023

Local Ambulance Awarded Workforce Development Funds

Part of Monroe County's ARPA dollars to fund the recruitment and development of new EMTs and Paramedics

PITTSFORD, NY: Pittsford Volunteer Ambulance has been selected to receive a \$4.2 million ARPA Grant from Monroe County to fund an initiative that would pay new emergency medical technician (EMT) candidates to attend an EMT course and cover the associated educational costs in an effort to shore up the local workforce. The funds would also be used similarly for current EMTs who wish to advance their education and become Paramedics. Importantly, the funds will be used to fund and enhance education through existing EMS educational infrastructure within Monroe County through Monroe Community College. The college, which encompasses the Public Safety Training Facility on Scottsville Road, has trained numerous qualified EMTs since its doors opened in 1974 and has a nationally-accredited and well-respected paramedic program. "Utilizing and enhancing the existing educational infrastructure will help ensure that the funds will be used effectively to remove barriers to the profession, diversify the workforce and assure quality in care delivery for our communities," says Dr. Maia Dorsett, Medical Director for the Public Safety Training Facility's EMT and Paramedic programs.

"Historically, the EMT class has been offered in formats that do not align well with recruitment and development of new EMTs," says Pittsford Volunteer Ambulance Chief, Jonathan Smith. "These dollars will help us attract candidates that may have previously overlooked a career in EMS because the educational requirements conflicted with other work or family commitments." By paying candidates to attend an EMT course and covering their educational costs, Chief Smith hopes to help potential candidates balance their personal lives with their career aspirations. "This funding is an investment in the existing EMS system that empowers us to break down barriers and partner with people throughout Monroe County who want to care for their communities."

With numbers of volunteers dwindling at local EMS organizations and demand at all-time highs, most area ambulance companies are relying on career staff to provide reliable ambulance service. Recruiting new career EMTs has been difficult, however, due to the cost associated with becoming an EMT, the time needed to complete the course and historically low pay. "The already high EMS industry annual turnover rate was compounded by the COVID-19

pandemic with many underpaid and underappreciated EMTs and Paramedics leaving the EMS workforce for other higher-paying or safer jobs” says Dr. Jeremy Cushman, Medical Director for the Monroe-Livingston Regional EMS Council and Chief of the Division of Prehospital Medicine at the University of Rochester. “It is nearly impossible to expect someone to obtain the necessary training at their own expense to enter this challenging profession. These funds are critical in establishing sustainable programs to attract, train, and most importantly, retain EMTs and Paramedics to provide these essential services to our community.”

“These funds will help us refuel our local ambulance providers with competent healthcare professionals that our communities demand when they call 9-1-1 for an ambulance,” says Neil Mathews, Deputy Chief of Pittsford Volunteer Ambulance. “Our communities expect competent public safety professionals in Law Enforcement, Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services alike. While Fire and Police both have academies that pay candidates while they participate, EMS has long envied the ability to do the same. These dollars will help us accomplish that vision, and ensure that the people that come when you dial 9-1-1 are the competent, compassionate professionals you expect.”

Chief Smith also serves as the Chairman of the Monroe County EMS Chiefs Association, which represents 11 of Monroe County’s ambulance companies. The association works to identify shared needs and opportunities to collaborate on solutions that benefit the community at large. While Pittsford Volunteer Ambulance is the sole recipient of the award, the proposed program was developed on behalf of the collective Monroe County EMS community and is designed to benefit all of the local EMS services in Monroe County. This grant was secured as a result of the support and collaboration of American Medical Response - Rochester, Brighton Volunteer Ambulance, CHS Mobile Integrated Healthcare, Gates Volunteer Ambulance, Hamlin Volunteer Ambulance, Honeoye Falls-Mendon Ambulance, Irondequoit Ambulance, Monroe Ambulance, Penfield Volunteer Emergency Ambulance, Perinton Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Monroe Community College and Dr. Maia Dorsett.

About Pittsford Volunteer Ambulance: [Pittsford Volunteer Ambulance](#) is a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit ambulance service based in Pittsford, NY. Founded in 1971, Pittsford Volunteer Ambulance has provided emergency medical care to the Town of Pittsford and surrounding communities for over 50 years. Pittsford Volunteer Ambulance was named Agency of the Year for 2021 by the Monroe-Livingston Regional Emergency Medical Services Council and offers CPR/First Aid Training to the public and to private groups alike.

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