



From the Valley Cottage Fire Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Valley Cottage FD Open House Highlights Challenging Conditions
Firehouse in major need of upgrades and repairs

On Sunday, February 9th, the Valley Cottage Fire Department (VCFD) and Fire District held an Open House to provide the community with an opportunity to examine conditions at the VCFD's almost 50 year-old firehouse located at 20 Lake Road in Valley Cottage.

The VCFD has served its community since 1914, providing critical 24/7 emergency service to residents. Currently, the volunteers operate from a firehouse that has been minimally updated since its construction in the early 1970s. The firehouse lacks much of the space and equipment needed for a modern and functional fire department operation.

Some of the challenges operating in this facility, which was designed in the late 1960s and built a few years later, include:

- Limited space in the current firehouse leaves gear and apparatus overcrowded and not in compliance with modern standards for fire stations.
- There is no designated area for decontamination after an emergency response. In recent years, the need for decontamination spaces and showers has become urgent as cancer in firefighters rises across the country.
- From a physical infrastructure perspective, there are major leaks, cracks, and crumbling concrete in several areas of the building. The building's back-up generation system is also insufficient to fully support the department's operations during a prolonged power outage.
- Due to the age and vintage of both the building and its infrastructure, lighting, heating and cooling the building are all very inefficient.
- The firehouse lacks a fire suppression system, which is required in most modern structures. A recent Christmas morning fire in a volunteer firehouse on Long Island destroyed three pieces of fire apparatus valued at millions of dollars and took the apparatus room portion of the firehouse out of service. The facility was of similar vintage as the VCFD's firehouse and as a result lacked modern fire suppression systems such as sprinklers.
- Limited bathroom facilities and other insufficient infrastructure to support the fire department's operations both day-to-day, during extended stand-by operations - such as severe weather events, and during public events including the annual Fire Prevention Day, the community Easter Egg Hunt, public meetings and others. The almost 50 year-old facility also lacks handicapped-accessible toilets and has overall accessibility issues.

“Serving the community is the number one priority of the department, and our outdated facilities make the jobs of the volunteer firefighters of Valley Cottage increasingly difficult,” said VCFD Chief Dennis Borrelli.

The Board of Fire Commissioners of the Valley Cottage Fire District has been monitoring building conditions and issues for several years. These efforts have included bringing in a facility design consultant to review the current facility and present the District with options for improving operating conditions and safety for the volunteer firefighters as they respond to their neighbors’ calls for assistance.

“All of the members of the Board of Fire Commissioners are both longtime residents of Valley Cottage and members of the fire department, so we understand the challenges our current firehouse presents from both perspectives,” said Commissioner Kenneth Dillon, who is also a past Captain of the VCFD. “A team of independent experts have reviewed our firehouse and found it is not serving the needs of our dedicated volunteers and our community. Unfortunately, the current firehouse is also not in a condition to be renovated to meet those needs.”

In the coming weeks, the Fire District and the Fire Department will be sharing a plan to provide Valley Cottage’s volunteer firefighters and the citizens they protect with an appropriate firehouse facility to serve the community for the next 50 years. For more information, please visit www.valleycottagefd.org



Cracks and Water Intrusion in the floor



Crowding in Bay of the Firehouse