CITY OF WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT
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Jim Cable
Acting State Fire Administrator
Office of Fire Prevention and Control
1220 Washington Avenue
Building 7A, Floor 2
Albany, NY 12226

July 26th, 2021

A/SFA Cable,

As you are of course aware, on March 3rd, 2021, an employee of the City of Watertown Fire Department, Firefighter Peyton Morse, went into cardiac arrest during a training evolution while attending the Recruit Firefighter Training Program at the New York State Fire Academy. Firefighter Morse was resuscitated at Schuyler Hospital, then airlifted to Robert Packer Hospital in Sayre, Pennsylvania where he succumbed to his injuries nine days later.

The ensuing months have been very difficult on the Morse family and the City of Watertown Fire Department. We have been waiting patiently for answers from OFPC but have received no information whatsoever since the afternoon of March 3rd. Recently, the department was notified by NIOSH that Firefighter Morse's self-contained breathing apparatus was in good mechanical condition and "did not contribute to the fatality". Also, the Bradford County Coroner's Office has released the coroner's report on Peyton's death. Peyton died of an anoxic brain injury secondary to the cardiac arrest he suffered while in the training prop. There were no pre-existing medical conditions or congenital cardiac defects. These revelations beg the question – what happened to cause Peyton to go into cardiac arrest that day?

In light of these reports and given the concerning reports from other recruits in Peyton's class; I, as the Fire Chief of the City of Watertown Fire Department am formally asking the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control to immediately begin an internal investigation into the events leading up to Firefighter Morse's death. I also ask that you allow OFPC personnel to speak with investigators from the New York State Police (NYSP), New York State Public Employee Safety and Health Bureau (PESH), and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). I further ask that OFPC be fully transparent with the results of the investigation.

The City of Watertown Fire Department's overarching goal is to ensure no other family or department has to endure the loss of their firefighter while training at the NYS Fire Academy. I hope that you share that same goal. To reach that goal, we must know what happened. The nearly five months of stonewalling from OFPC cannot continue. Please show your commitment to the safety of New York State's firefighters by acceding to these requests.

Respectfully,

Matthew Timerman
Fire Chief
City of Watertown Fire Department

Cc: Patrick Murphy, DHSES Commissioner
Andrew Cuomo, Governor