

TO: BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER

Your Committee is in receipt of a communication from the County Executive recommending adoption of “A LOCAL LAW amending the Laws of Westchester County with respect to a Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Services Members.”

Your Committee recognizes that volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers provide a significant benefit to residents and taxpayers through their countless hours of service protecting our communities. Accordingly, in conformance with New York State Real Property Tax Law (“Real Property Tax Law”) Section 466-a, the County enacted Chapter 475 of the Laws of Westchester County (“Chapter 475”) authorizing a ten (10) percent tax exemption for volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance service members with two (2) or more years of service. In order to qualify for the exemption under Section 466-a/Chapter 475, a volunteer had to serve in an organization that provided services where the volunteer lived.

Your Committee is informed that, The Real Property Tax Law was amended to add a new Section 466-l. This Section allows local jurisdictions to expand the tax exemption where the property owner serves in a neighboring municipality.

Your Committee has been advised that, if adopted, the attached Local Law would amend Chapter 475 to expand the County’s existing exemption to cover individuals who volunteer anywhere in the County. By expanding the opportunity to provide this critical tax exemption, it will help improve recruitment and retention of our volunteer fire and ambulance services.

Your Committee is advised that the proposed Local Law does not meet the definition of an action under New York State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA") and its implementing regulations 6 NYCRR Part 617. Please refer to the memorandum from the Department of Planning, dated January 12, 2023, which is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Legislators. Your Committee concurs in this conclusion.

Based on the foregoing, your Committee recommends the passage of this Local Law.

Dated 2025
White Plains, New York


Vedat Fasli
Benjamin Boykin II
Margaret A. Cyio

Vedat Fasli


Legislation
2/3/25

COMMITTEE ON

Public Safety
2/4/25

Dated: February 3, 2025
White Plains, New York

The following members attended the meeting remotely and approved this item out of Committee with an affirmative vote. Their electronic signature was authorized and is below.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colin J. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a stylized "S" at the end.

COMMITTEE ON

Legislation

Dated: February 4, 2025
White Plains, New York

The following members attended the meeting remotely and approved this item out of Committee with an affirmative vote. Their electronic signature was authorized and is below.

Margaret A. Cunzio

COMMITTEE ON

Public Safety

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

SUBJECT: Tax Exemption-Volunteer Firefighters ☒ NO FISCAL IMPACT PROJECTED

OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT

To Be Completed by Submitting Department and Reviewed by Budget

SECTION A - FUND

☒ GENERAL FUND

☐ AIRPORT FUND

☒ SPECIAL DISTRICTS FUND

SECTION B - EXPENSES AND REVENUES

Total Current Year Expense \$ -

Total Current Year Revenue \$ -

Source of Funds (check one): ☐ Current Appropriations ☐ Transfer of Existing Appropriations

☐ Additional Appropriations ☐ Other (explain)

Identify Accounts: N/A

Potential Related Operating Budget Expenses: Annual Amount N/A

Describe: A Local Law amending the Laws of Westchester County with respect to a Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Services Members.

Potential Related Operating Budget Revenues: Annual Amount N/A

Describe: _____

Anticipated Savings to County and/or Impact on Department Operations:

Current Year: N/A

Next Four Years: N/A

Prepared by: Patricia Haggerty

Title: Sr. Budget Analyst

Department: Budget

Date: January 17, 2025

Reviewed By: *[Signature]*

PH

Budget Director

Date: 1/17/25

LOCAL LAW NO. -2025

A LOCAL LAW amending the Laws of Westchester with respect to a Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Service Members.

BE IT ENACTED by the County Board of the County of Westchester as follows:

Section 1. Section 475.01 of the Laws of Westchester County is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 475.01. Purpose

The purpose of this Chapter is to provide volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance service members, who are qualified real property owners, with the tax exemption authorized by Section 466-a of the Real Property Tax Law, and to continue this exemption in the case of certain un-remarried spouses of deceased volunteers pursuant to that law. The exemptions authorized by this Chapter are subject to all the qualifications and limitations set forth in Sections 466-a and 466-l of the Real Property Tax Law.

Section 2. Section 475.21 of the Laws of Westchester County is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 475.21. Qualifications and Limitations upon Exemption.

Such exemption shall not be granted to an enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, or incorporated voluntary ambulance service residing in the County of Westchester unless:

- (a) ~~the applicant resides in the city, town, or village which is served by such~~ incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, or incorporated voluntary ambulance service for which the applicant serves is located within the County of Westchester;

- (b) the property is the primary residence of the applicant;
- (c) the property is used exclusively for residential purposes; provided however, that in the event any portion of such property is not used exclusively for the applicant's residence but is used for other purposes, such portion shall be subject to taxation and the remaining portion only shall be entitled to the exemption provided by this Chapter;
- (d) the applicant has been certified by the authority having jurisdiction for the incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, or voluntary ambulance service as an enrolled member of such incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, or voluntary ambulance service for at least two years. It shall be the duty of each incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, and incorporated voluntary ambulance service to file an affidavit of a responsible officer annually, prior to the applicable taxable status date, with the assessor or other appropriate agency, department, or office of each assessing unit served by such incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, or incorporated voluntary ambulance service listing its enrolled members with two or more years of service. Each incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, and incorporated voluntary ambulance service shall also file such an affidavit with any other jurisdiction within the County of Westchester, upon request of an enrolled member or the assessor of that jurisdiction.

Section 3. This Local Law shall take effect immediately and shall apply to assessment rolls prepared on the basis of taxable status dates occurring on or after such date.