

First Responders Honored For Efforts At Upper Brookville Accident Site



(l-r) Russell Fuller, Deputy Secretary and Public Information Officer of the East Norwich FD; Firefighter Craig Bezman, and Upper Brookville Mayor Elliot Conway.

On Thursday, Feb. 13, first responders were honored for their efforts at the Jan. 28, 2020 afternoon worksite pit collapse at 1275 Wolver Hollow Road in Upper Brookville. This collapse led to the deaths of two private contractors and a recovery operation which continued into the evening and was not completed until the following day.

The Feb. 13th ceremony was held at the 1255 New Bridge Road Nassau County Highway Patrol Station. Citations were there awarded by County Executive Laura Curran and Nassau County Police Commissioner Patrick Ryder, to those who had assisted in significant rescue and recovery operation.

Those honored included the following: Old Brookville Police Department Sergeant Robert Porcelli, Officer William Dodd, Officer Patrick Sheridan, Officer Dennis O'Connell, Officer Jake Hirx, and Officer Joseph Desimone, who was not able to personally attend the ceremo-

ny. All of these officers had immediately entered the excavation site when the risk of further collapse remained evident and dug by hand to uncover the victims. Unfortunately despite their rescue efforts, the first of the trapped contractors was pronounced dead upon their retrieval of him from the pit.

Additionally honored were OBPD Chief of Police Christopher J. Walsh, Lieutenant Michael Clarke, who was on duty at the

accident site; and East Norwich Fire Fighter Craig Bezman, who had joined the officers in the pit digging for the first victim. Once it was determined that neither of the trapped individuals could have survived, the rescue effort was delayed due to the dangerous conditions of the collapsed pit. An excavator was used to pull back loose dirt and concrete cesspool rings and mitigate the dangers and the recovery operation was not completed until the following morning.

These efforts in this recovery required, in addition to Old Brookville personnel, numerous Nassau County PD Emergency Service Unit officers. These included Officers Michael Iannarelli, Paul Spedaleri, Kenneth Tymecki, Kevin Probst, Ronald Russo, Scott Gregory, Dennis Sheehan, and Brett Roslow, as well as Sergeants Vincent Papa and Keith Favre. Lashaun Carr also dug in the pit in the initial rescue stage of the operation.



Upper Brookville Mayor Conway is flanked on both his right and left by Old Brookville Police Officers honored for their efforts at 1275 Wolver Hollow Road.