

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Boroughs of North Plainfield and Watchung - North Plainfield and Watchung Fire Department joint press release:**

#### ***New Shared Services Aerial/Ladder Truck***

Mayor Lawrence La Ronde of North Plainfield and Mayor Ronald Jubin of Watchung, along with their respective borough council members, are proud to announce the arrival of their brand new E-One aerial/ladder truck. This Quint style fire service apparatus is a vital piece of equipment that will significantly enhance both department's firefighting and rescue capabilities.

The acquisition of this vehicle was made possible through a state funded, shared services grant opportunity, whereby both municipalities and fire departments have further enhanced their mutual aid and automatic aid agreements.

In 2023, the State of New Jersey's Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) had offered an implementation grant through their Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP). New shared services agreements fell into the Implementation category and our fire service leaders and municipal governing bodies felt it was in the best interest of both towns to apply for this grant. We recognized that it would be cost-prohibitive for either department to independently purchase a new ladder truck and therefore our grant application was submitted last year.

The grant is intended to help local governments pursue shared services initiatives to reduce taxpayer costs and enhance services. According to the State, "Shared services are a great solution for municipalities, enabling them to provide important services while also alleviating the financial burden on local taxpayers. More and more local entities are realizing how beneficial shared services can be and how by working collaboratively to pursue shared services, they can operate more efficiently and ensure better delivery of services for their residents."

At the time of the original grant award announcement, of the 24 grants that were awarded to various municipalities and counties throughout the entire state, ours was the highest amount awarded, in the amount of \$400,000.00.

The funding greatly assisted us in purchasing a state-of-the-art Truck that boasts an aerial ladder reaching 100 feet, allowing firefighters to better access buildings in our collective response area and effectively combat fires at elevated locations.

Without this opportunity, we also would have had to delay the acquisition of this type of vehicle by 24-36 months due to the lead time that many fire and ambulance manufacturers are citing.

Our communities are incredibly thankful for the support of the State of New Jersey DCA and DLGS for their consideration of approving the grant award which truly helped fund this project.

