



*New Castle County Fire Chiefs Association  
New Castle County Fire and Ambulance Advisory Board  
New Castle County Firefighters Association*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**January 27, 2024**

THE ANNOUNCEMENT FRIDAY OF THE CONVICTION OF A FORMER BELVEDERE FIRE COMPANY DEPUTY CHIEF FOR THE RAPE OF A 15-YEAR-OLD GIRL IS A DISGUSTING REMINDER OF THE EVIL THAT EXISTS IN OUR SOCIETY. THE FACT THAT THE PERPETRATOR IN THIS CASE WAS IN A POSITION OF PUBLIC TRUST, A DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF AT THE TIME OF THE CRIMES, ELEVATES THE IMMORALITY TO AN EVEN HIGHER LEVEL.

WE, THE LEADERSHIP OF THE NEW CASTLE COUNTY FIRE SERVICE, CONDEMN THIS MISCONDUCT IN THE STRONGEST TERMS POSSIBLE. THE CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR OF THIS INDIVIDUAL REFLECTS POORLY ON OUR NOBLE PROFESSION AND IT IS INCUMBENT UPON US TO REASSURE THE PUBLIC OF OUR COMMITMENT TO DECENCY AND RESPECT FOR ALL PEOPLE. THERE IS NO ROOM IN THE FIRE/RESCUE/EMS COMMUNITY FOR ANY UNETHICAL OR CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR, ESPECIALLY BEHAVIOR THAT TAKES ADVANTAGE OF A CHILD.

INDIVIDUAL FIRE COMPANIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS INVOLVING MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES. AS THE LEADERS OF THE GROUPS THAT REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF ALL 21 NEW CASTLE COUNTY FIRE COMPANIES, WE PLEDGE TO RENEW OUR EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT ONLY THOSE WITH THE CHARACTER WORTHY OF PUBLIC SERVICE BECOME AND REMAIN ASSOCIATED WITH OUR FIRE COMPANIES.

WE ARE ANNOUNCING THAT WE ARE ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP THAT WILL CONSIST OF FIRE SERVICE PERSONNEL AND PUBLIC/SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS DEDICATED TO JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY. THIS WORKING GROUP WILL REVIEW POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND LAWS GOVERNING MISCONDUCT BY FIRE SERVICE MEMBERS, REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP/EMPLOYMENT, AND BEST PRACTICES RELATED TO ACTS THAT COULD BRING OUR DEPARTMENTS INTO DISREPUTE.

WE WANT TO ASSURE THE PUBLIC THAT THE DOMINANT CONVERSATIONS TAKING PLACE IN OUR STATIONS TONIGHT IS THE REVULSION THAT OUR FIREFIGHTERS AND EMT'S FEEL TOWARDS THE ACTIONS OF THIS INDIVIDUAL, AND THE SYMPATHY WE HOLD FOR THE VICTIM AND HER FAMILY. THIS CRIMINAL DOES NOT REFLECT WHO WE ARE.

*Kevin C. Cowperthwait*  
*President*  
*New Castle County*  
*Fire Chiefs Association*

*Dennis E. Godek*  
*Chairman*  
*New Castle County*  
*Fire and Ambulance*  
*Advisory Board*

*Eric J. Haley*  
*President*  
*New Castle County*  
*Firefighters Association*

QUESTIONS MAY BE DIRECTED TO Dennis E. Godek at 302-530-2878.