



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 16, 2020

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Mayor Jacobs to Honor Local Firefighters for Heroic Rescue

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.— During Commission Regular Session tonight, Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs will honor two Rural Metro firefighters for running into a burning house and saving a local woman’s life this past spring.

“We have never asked more of first responders than we do now,” said Mayor Jacobs. “Night after night, they put everything on the line to help ensure their neighbors don’t have to. These are everyday heroes and they deserve all the gratitude and recognition we can offer.”

On the night of May 20, a fire started inside a home on the 100 block of Suburban Road in West Knoxville where Debra Vekasi and her mother lived. The two quickly left the house, but Vekasi’s mother ran back inside to save her dog and did not return.

Emergency crews arrived soon after to home engulfed in flames. Captain Alex Kennedy and Master Firefighter Matt Kinney ran inside and rescued the mother. She was quickly taken to the hospital where she recovered from her injuries from the fire and was released several days later.

Mayor Jacobs and the Rural Metro Fire Department plan to honor both men during the Nov. 16 Knox County Commission meeting. Debra Vekasi also will be in attendance.

Matthew Kinney has been with the department since August 2000 and spent most of his career in West Knox County working at either Station 10 on Parkside Drive or Station 41 on Campbell Station Road. He’s an Advanced EMT and a Master Firefighter. He is married with one son and the family lives in West Knox County.

Alex Kennedy has been with the department since January 2007 and was promoted to Captain in February 2014. He’s worked in a number of locations across the county, including Halls, Powell, Carter and now Farragut. He is also a Paramedic and Captain/Firefighter as well. He and his wife live in the Powell community.

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