Letter: MVAC Wants McKevitt to Finish State Budget

Friday, 04 June 2010 00:00

In response to Assemblyman McKevitt’s article in the May 12 issue of the Mineola American, I was surprised to read that he considered himself to be doing a great deal to pass legislation that allows our volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers access to health-care benefits. According to the bill summary, the Assemblyman was neither a sponsor nor a co-sponsor of this legislation; his accomplishment consisted of voting with the other 136 yay votes. As a volunteer firefighter for 15 years and a member of our volunteer ambulance corps for 10 years, I was grateful to see this critical piece of legislation finally signed by the governor. I have been working extensively with various departments and local organizations to ensure that current members make the most of this legislation and that it be utilized as a recruitment tool for future volunteers. If the assemblyman wants to show his support of volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers, I suggest he attempt to sponsor and pass a piece of legislation that will benefit us. However, in the six years he has been in office, the only single piece of legislation he sponsored that was actually signed into law by the governor had nothing to do with volunteer firefighters or EMTs.

As Assemblyman McKevitt may well be unaware, the current conduct in Albany is actually harming the work of local EMTs. For example, MVAC is the recipient of a N.Y.S. grant for the purchase of a new ambulance for the residents of Mineola. Unfortunately, MVAC cannot take delivery of that vehicle until the state budget is approved. The new ambulance sits in the dealer’s parking lot in Plainview, awaiting McKevitt’s action on the state budget. If McKevitt wants to seriously help the local medics to do their job for the community, he should return to Albany and finish the state budget that is currently over 50 days late. By finishing the budget, he will allow the deserved and ready-approved grant funding to return to fire departments and ambulance corps so that we may perform our missions.

Thomas J. Devaney
Past president, Mineola Volunteer Ambulance Corps
Lieutenant, East Williston Fire Department