

Testimony – Dennis Beard, President

MD Fire-Rescue Services Memorial Foundation

- On behalf of The Foundation, I want to thank the State of MD for allowing us to lease land in Annapolis where we could build and maintain a memorial that remembers and honors fire, rescue and emergency medical services personnel from throughout our State who have given their lives in the line of duty – that number currently stands at 452 individuals.
- We are proud of this Memorial on that State land that greets thousands of visitors to our State Capitol each and every day.
- The upkeep of the Memorial is ongoing and expensive. In 2023 alone that figure was \$23,365 to cover utilities, grass mowings, spring and fall plantings, tree maintenance, snow removal, fountain maintenance and managing other unforeseen emergencies that arise.
- To raise those funds, the Foundation sells items like t-shirts, challenge coins, paver bricks and holds an annual silent auction. To say it's a STRUGGLE for this all-volunteer organization to cover the annual maintenance fees is an understatement.
- When, in 2009 we had to begin paying sales tax to the State, that struggle was compounded. To date, while maintaining the property located on state land, we have paid \$7,245 in sales tax.
- We are asking that the sales tax be waived – not just for our Foundation – but for any non-profit organization that uses the proceeds of sale items to maintain a memorial located on property that is owned by the State of Maryland.