

WHEREAS: At Two O'clock in the afternoon, June Thirtieth, emergency calls flooded the Emergency Communications and Citizen Services Center [ECCS/911] that a "swimmer was in distress";

WHEREAS: What was about to unfold became the most daring and dramatic water related rescue in recent memory. ECCS/911 immediately dispatched the EMS Marine Rescue Team and Divers, Police Marine Units and Divers and the Fire Boat to the scene more than two hundred yards off-shore in the Chesapeake Bay near the Great Neck Road area;

WHEREAS: When the Fire Boat arrived, there were frantic screams for help from a twelve year old girl, who was in the water, and others on a private boat. The victim's leg had been caught in the propeller and she was having a difficult time staying afloat. Seeing the desperate situation, personnel jumped overboard and quickly positioned extra flotation devices that helped support the young girl's head above water. Due to the complications of the accident, it was not possible to free the young girl immediately;

WHEREAS: The speedy and efficient action of ECCS/911 and the initial responders from EMS, Police and Fire forming a Unified Command, resulted in additional rescue units combining their efforts to assess the situation and developing a plan to free the young girl from the boat's propeller. The Fire Department's Technical Team, Squad 10, became involved as the minutes ticked and the water became choppy. Divers provided a snorkel tube and under-water breathing device to assist the girl to breathe as the Team continued to free the girl's leg;

WHEREAS: Several underwater specialists from Crofton Divers, working at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, were contacted and responded to the scene. At the same time, Ryan Pritchard, the City's boat mechanic, heard about the harrowing case and called his father, John, an experienced boat mechanic, and owner of Blue Marlin Marine, who, along with his co-worker, Craig Thompson, grabbed a few tools and joined the Team's efforts to free the little girl. After several intense minutes they were able to remove the propeller which allowed the Team to see the girl free from her entanglement. The critically injured girl was brought out of the Bay to the waiting Ocean Park Volunteer Rescue Squad ambulance which transported her to the Nightingale Air Ambulance for delivery to the Sentara Norfolk General Trauma Center; and,

WHEREAS: This case tested the capacity and strength of the City's Emergency Response System (ERS), but because of their years of training, professionalism, quick action and unified effort, the little girl's leg and life were spared.

NOW, THEREFORE, That the Virginia Beach City Council pauses in its deliberations to recognize each and all those who responded and are dedicated to "serving others" at the risk of injury and life themselves by delivering a copy to the Teams and individuals involved.

BE IT PROCLAIMED: That, I, William D. Sessoms, Jr., Mayor of the City of Virginia Beach, do hereby proclaim the ninth day of August, Two Thousand and Eleven, shall be now and hereafter known as: EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM RECOGNITION DAY in the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia.

*William D. "Will" Sessoms, Jr.
Mayor*