

RESOLUTION HONORING WILLIAM “TREY” MAYO AND THE WINSTON-SALEM FIRE DEPARTMENT

WHEREAS, on the evening of January 31, 2022, fire broke out at the Winston Weaver Company fertilizer plant in Winston-Salem. Some ninety-two firefighters with the Winston-Salem Fire Department responded to the fire but despite their best efforts the fire quickly grew out of control; and

WHEREAS, while battling the blaze, Winston-Salem Fire Chief William “Trey” Mayo learned that the fertilizer plant contained 600 tons of ammonium nitrate, a highly explosive and unstable chemical; and

WHEREAS, when it became apparent that the firefighters could not control the blaze and that the fire was threatening to set off an explosion that would have brought a great loss of life and damage in a large area surrounding the plant, Chief Mayo prudently withdrew the firefighters and called for an emergency evacuation of all homes and businesses within a one-mile radius of the plant and sent fire personnel through every residential street within the danger area to inform residents of the need to evacuate; and

WHEREAS, before withdrawing the Fire Department took measures to reduce the threat of an explosion and mobilized around-the-clock surveillance of the fire with the assistance of drones operated by the Winston-Salem Police Department, the Forsyth County Sheriff’s Office, as well as public safety agencies from Greensboro, Lewisville, Durham and Alamance and Harnett counties; and

WHEREAS, with the assistance of the Winston-Salem /Forsyth County Office of Emergency Management, the Fire Department established a command post just outside the one-mile limit to monitor the situation non-stop for more than 96 hours, providing regular briefings

to the public and the media to keep them informed of the continuing danger and how to protect themselves; and

***WHEREAS,** despite the strain on personnel and resources, the Fire Department continued to staff all fire stations and respond to all calls, providing fire protection and emergency medical services to the residents of Winston-Salem throughout this ordeal; and*

***WHEREAS,** once conditions allowed, firefighters returned to the scene and brought the situation under control without any loss of life or damage to property beyond the fertilizer plant, and for their textbook handling of this protracted emergency the Winston-Salem Fire Department and Fire Chief Mayo have drawn praise from first responders and firefighting experts across the United States.*

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that the Mayor and the Winston-Salem City Council declare, for themselves and on behalf of the residents of Winston-Salem, their profound admiration and gratitude to Fire Chief William “Trey” Mayo for his acumen and leadership throughout this critical situation, to the men and women of the Winston-Salem Fire Department for their ceaseless efforts to protect the lives and property of the residents of Winston-Salem, and to the many agencies that assisted in averting what could have been a disaster of historic proportions.*