



## City of Beacon, New York

Office of the Mayor

Lee Kyriacou, Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Beacon Hires Laid-Off Firefighter

*BEACON, NY:* In October 2019, the City of Beacon announced it was awarded a SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response) Grant to hire three new Firefighters. In December, the City Council used that grant to save someone's job.

Just six days after being laid off by the Newburgh Fire Department, Christopher Baum, a three-year firefighting veteran, began his first day with the Beacon Fire Department.

"This hire was a home run," newly-elected Mayor Kyriacou said, "by bringing on a trained, veteran firefighter, we saved Beacon's tax payers thousands of dollars. It's unfortunate, but the drastic decline in the number of volunteer firefighters in our region is forcing us to think differently about the highly-localized organization of our emergency services. Thankfully, Beacon has a well-staffed career and volunteer Fire Department"

"As the first of three new additions, Chris's hiring is an historic event here in Beacon," said Fire Chief Gary VanVoorhis, "the SAFER Grant has allowed for the most impactful staffing expansion of our department in decades."

#### **About the City of Beacon:**

Beacon, New York is located on the eastern shore of the Hudson River 60 miles north of New York City, with a population of 15,000. Originally a Native American settlement, the area was purchased from the Wappinger Tribe in 1683 and settled by Dutch and other Europeans, leading to the riverfront community of Fishkill Landing on the Hudson, and the mill community of Matteawan on Fishkill Creek. The two communities were incorporated together as the City of Beacon in 1913, named for the Revolutionary War signal fires on Mount Beacon. Beacon thrived as a 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century factory city, but as factories closed after WWII and the local economy declined, the city went through a period of hard times. Today, Beacon has successfully reinvented itself as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century river community centered around tourism, the arts and access to the scenic Hudson River heritage area. A diverse and thriving small city, it is now home to DIA:Beacon (one of the largest exhibition spaces for modern and contemporary art), a network of Hudson River parks connecting to Fishkill Creek and Mount Beacon trails, and a vibrant historic Main Street of art galleries, shops, cultural venues and restaurants.

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