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Thomas J. Leese
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Official Statement Regarding Trentonian Media Inquiry of Rope in the Firehouse

There are many sets of practice ropes in the engine bays of the Prospect Heights Fire Co. used by firefighters. The rope pictured was one of these and was wrapped and stored in a firefighter gear rack. Yesterday, all firematic ropes were removed from gear racks and the engine bays and stored so that any future misperceptions will be avoided.

The Prospect Heights Fire Company has been proactive in its approach to the diversity issues confronting America today. As a membership, we train on it and have open communications and discussions about it. This has happened as recently as this past Monday evening. Circumstances locally and nationally, including this media inquiry, dictate that this will continue to be a part of our upcoming training and discussions with our membership.

To imply that this rope was to communicate an offensive message is insulting to all of us at the Prospect Heights Fire Co. Our membership is diverse with multiple race, gender and religious backgrounds. We take pride in that. We celebrate that. We are a family. Our membership and those that know us can attest to that. Our Ewing community will confirm that.

Furthermore, for someone to enter our firehouse and take a picture, call it offensive and send it to the media without bringing it to the attention of the firehouse leadership only has the intent to slander and inflame. And to do this at a time when emotions are high is especially egregious and shocking. For the media to not recognize this makes them complicit.

Douglas Brower
President/Deputy Chief
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