

Members of Police and Fire departments honored for their valor in responding to January fire

Members of the New Bedford Police Department and New Bedford Fire Department were honored in a ceremony at City Hall today for their valor in responding to a January 17 fire that ultimately claimed the life of one city resident.

New Bedford Police Officer Nathan Pimentel, and New Bedford Fire Department Lt. Kurt Houghton and Firefighters Kevin Sweet and Peter Katsoules, were honored with official resolutions from Mayor Jon Mitchell on behalf of the City of New Bedford.

Officer Pimentel, who was assigned to Unit 33, was the first police officer on the scene. He advised responding units that there was indeed a working fire on the second floor of this location. Officer Pimentel was able to clear three males from the second floor residence and three females from the first floor residence, despite heavy smoke throughout the building.

NBFD Unit 2 and Engine 8 were the first Fire Department responders on scene and members of Engine 8 were directed to the second story by Officer Pimentel, as there was a report of a female trapped inside to whom he was unable to attend due to the conditions of the building given the fire.

Lt. Houghton, and Firefighters Sweet and Katsoules, conducted a search and rescue mission for the woman. Within minutes, they forced open the door of the second-floor bedroom and located the victim on the floor behind the door and carried her out of the building. Unfortunately, the victim, Agnes Leite, succumbed to her injuries and later died at Rhode Island Hospital.

For their valor, Fire Chief Michael Gomes presented Lt. Houghton and Firefighters Sweet and Katsoules with Special Commendations. Police Chief Joseph Cordeiro presented Officer Pimentel with the department's Life Saving Award.

Fire District Chief Scott Kruger was also recognized for his role in ensuring that emergency response vehicles in New Bedford kits stocked with the drug hydroxocobalamin, known as a "cyano-kit," which aids in the treatment of severe smoke inhalation. The January 17 fire was its first deployment in New Bedford.