

# City of Newburgh

## Press Release

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### City of Newburgh Hires Minority Firefighters



*(L-R) Fire Chief James Merritt with new firefighters Raymundo Mera, Anthony Dobbins, and Emerson Ramirez.*

Last Spring, for the first time in its history, the City of Newburgh offered a Civil Service exam for Spanish-Speaking Firefighters. Twelve applications were received, and from the short list of qualifiers, two successful candidates joined the ranks of Newburgh's Bravest on Thursday, November 17.

In addition to the Spanish-speaking firefighters, one African-American who took the regular Civil Service exam reported to duty on Thursday.

The new firefighters are Emerson Ramirez, Raymundo Mera, and Anthony Dobbins. “Not only do these new fire fighters reflect the diversity of the City of Newburgh, they are the best of the best,” said City Manager Jean-Ann McGrane. “In addition to written and oral exams, each passed a rigorous physical agility test. Each candidate brings unique skills and qualifications to the position.”

Emerson Ramirez, a life-long City resident, said he was looking forward to working with the Fire Department, and that it had been a dream of his for several years. “When you go home you feel like you have done something good,” he said.

Raymundo Mera has lived in the City of Newburgh for 28 years. He said he likes the challenge of the job, and that every day will bring something different. Having qualified as a firefighter gives him a sense of accomplishment, he said. “I am glad to be able to serve the City’s residents.”

Anthony Dobbins moved to Newburgh from the Schenectady area in 1997. He is a qualified paramedic. He is looking forward to combining his skills as a paramedic/firefighter. “It’s adding on to what I already do,” he commented. “It will be fulfilling work.”

“It is vital for personnel in our emergency services to be able to communicate with and relate to all segments of the community,” Ms. McGrane noted. “My goal as City Manager is to continue to attract and hire personnel for all City departments who reflect the diversity of the City we serve.”

McGrane recognized Michelle Mills, Civil Service Administrator, and the City of Newburgh Civil Service Commission for making the Spanish-speaking Firefighter exam a reality. “Everyone worked together to get the word out to find the best candidates.”

“We are very lucky to have attracted such highly-qualified applicants,” said Fire Chief James Merritt. He noted that the City hopes to hire another Spanish-speaking firefighter early next year. “This is a process the Fire Department and the City Manager are very much committed to. We want to increase the number of minority firefighters so we can better serve the community.”