

HOUSE OKs \$220,000 FOR WOODBRIDGE POLICE RADIO UPGRADES

WOODBRIDGE – Rep. Mike Ferguson, R-N.J., announced Monday that the House approved his request for \$220,000 to upgrade the Woodbridge Police Department’s communications capabilities.

If that funding level makes it through Congress this year, Woodbridge officials say the funds would help the township to expand its ongoing comprehensive first-responder communications upgrade.

The Woodbridge funding was included in the annual appropriations bill that finances the Justice Department and other federal agencies. That bill, which won House approval 281-142 last Thursday, must still be reconciled with the Senate’s version of the legislation before a final measure – not expected until this fall – could be sent to the White House.

“As we learned during the response to 9/11, it’s critically important that first responders in different agencies can communicate with each during emergencies,” Ferguson said during a news conference at the Police Department. “When police and fire officials and emergency service managers can coordinate their response to a crisis, our community will be safer and better protected. I’m pleased to have secured initial congressional approval of these important federal funds for Woodbridge. The funding isn’t a done deal yet, but House approval is a big first step. I will remain a strong advocate for the Woodbridge Police Department receiving the funding it needs and deserves to protect our community.”

Woodbridge Mayor John McCormac, who participated in the news conference with Ferguson, said the new funding would lead to increased public safety in the township, the largest in the 7th District.

“The most important and crucial responsibility of township government is protecting public safety during times of crises,” McCormac said. “To make certain we get the best system available, I have put together a team of police, emergency management and radio communications experts to assist in the development and implementation of an advanced police and emergency radio communications system. The funding advocated by Congressman Ferguson for the Woodbridge Township Police Department will go a long

way toward achieving our public safety goal and improving police/EMS communications in times of crisis or emergency.”

Police Chief William Trenerly said his department receives more than 100,000 calls by residents each for service and emergency responses.

“The key to effective police and emergency management response is a radio communications system capable of allowing police, fire, emergency management and local government agencies to effectively talk to each other at all times, particularly during an emergency or disaster-related event,” Trenerly said. “With the WPD handling more than 100,000 calls for service and emergency response each year, the need for improved communications is front and center. These federal dollars would be greatly appreciated and would allow the WPD to continue to implement updated public safety communications.”

Ferguson holds annual meetings with elected officials about funding, grants and other federal resources that may be available to local communities. At this year’s meeting, Woodbridge officials told Ferguson about the need to replace existing radios, and Ferguson made the request this spring to the House Appropriations Committee.