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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flagler County FireFlight pilots successfully complete FAA testing for air ambulance services

February 23, 2024 – Flagler County FireFlight Flight Operations Chief Todd Whaley and Chief Pilot Neil Egerton were evaluated by the Federal Aviation Administration to ensure standards are met to provide air ambulance transport services to the community.

“We are required to undergo specific training and to be evaluated annually by the FAA’s Orlando Flight Standards District Office,” Whaley said. “These check rides (evaluations) were successfully completed to recertify both of us for another year.”

Both pilots were required to take a three-hour oral exam to test their knowledge of FAA regulations, operations specifications, and general operations manual specific to Flagler County, as well as FireFlight helicopter specific questions about its systems, performance, and emergency procedures.

“After this oral examination was completed, we then had to successfully complete an inflight competency check,” Whaley said. “We did a route check to determine knowledge of the local flying area and flight locating procedures.”

Maneuvers Whaley and Egerton were required to perform included the following: normal and steep approaches; hydraulics failure shallow approach and landing; hover auto-rotations; forced landing auto-rotations with a powered recovery; max performance and limited performance takeoffs; settling with power recovery; pinnacle landings; and, confined areas and slope landings.

“We were also required to wear a view-limiting device and perform recoveries from unusual attitudes, recovery from inadvertent entry into instrument meteorological conditions – including declared emergencies and flying an instrument approach into an approved airport facility,” Whaley said. “It is definitely a very thorough evaluation.”

Additionally, Egerton completed the necessary training and documentation to be placed on Flagler County’s operating certificate as a “Part 135 Company Flight Instructor” for Flagler County Fire and Rescue.

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