

STATE OF THE CITY MESSAGE

MAYOR SAM TERESI

JANUARY 28, 2019

Madam President, Members of the City Council, Department Heads, Guests and my fellow Jamestowners.

In accordance with Article IV, Chapter 31-C of the Jamestown City Charter, it is once again my pleasure to present to you this evening the annual “State of the City” report.

For your review and consideration, I have prepared and included the following items:

- A 23-page summary of 120 separate initiatives advanced during 2018 of which, each and every single item was crafted and implemented to provide our residents, businesses and tax payers the highest level of service at the least possible cost.
- An ambitious 14-page, 64-item overview of the of the Administration’s major goals and objectives for 2019.
- Various other supportive materials and documents pertaining to the subject matter of the 2018 and 2019 reports, as well as a written version of these remarks.

Please be advised that full copies of this comprehensive package may be found for public review and use at the following locations:

- Office of the Mayor, Fourth Floor, Municipal Building
- Office of the City Clerk, First Floor, Municipal Building
- James Prendergast Library, 508 Cherry Street
- The City of Jamestown’s official website. www.jamestownny.net .

In the interests of time, I am again going to forego the long and lengthy review of both 2018's accomplishments and the ambitious list of goals for 2019. I have the utmost confidence in the readers of these documents to comprehend and appreciate the significance and depth of the presented information... and to draw whatever conclusions and inspiration they deem appropriate.

As you are about to see, the items contained in the 2018 accomplishments report, represent but a mere sampling of the activities pursued and strides made through the collective efforts of the members of this City Council, the best municipal workforce in the nation and a broader community of resident volunteers, business operators, property owners and non-profit organization leaders, who truly care about and love this city, and sacrifice on a daily basis to make it all that it is capable of being.

Admittedly, in the past, I have been a bit negligent with providing deserved recognition to some very special people who, without their daily 24-7 efforts, much of what is in this report would have never happened, or will never occur. To these consummate professionals, it's not about power, personal gain or public recognition. But rather, it's about doing what is right for the City they love and the place they have chosen to make their home. Tonight, I'm going to rectify my past oversights, call out by name and publicly thank these hard working and special people. And, I am of course referring to the members of our outstanding administrative management team.

- City Comptroller, Joe Bellitto
- Director of Administrative Services/City Clerk, Todd Thomas
- Corporation Counsel, Marilyn Fiore-Lehman
- Director of Public Safety/Chief of Police, Harry Snellings
- Recently retired, Deputy Fire Chief, Chet Harvey
- Current Deputy Fire Chief, Sam Salemmme
- Director of Public Works, Jeff Lehman
- Director of Development, Vince DeJoy
- Board of Public Utilities General Manager, Dave Leathers
- City Assessor, Kevin Okerlund
- Director of Information and Technology, Mark Dean
- Recreation Coordinator, Julia Ciesla-Hanley
- Parks Manager, John Williams
- And last, but certainly not least, my internal office staff members, who not only work throughout the year with this amazing management team to deal with constituent issues in the city, but are also the individuals that labored long and hard on and are principally responsible for putting together this very comprehensive State of the City Report package.
 - Executive Assistant to the Mayor, Matt Hanley

- Office Manager, Leigh Anne Jordan

Again, these are the folks that are directing and working with our great staff, helping people throughout the community and getting it done every single day.

While my remarks tonight will not entail a lengthy recitation of the dozens of initiatives and goals contained in the report package, there are a few areas of concern and critical importance that I would like to once again highlight and focus on tonight.

I. Education

As local government representatives and concerned residents, we need to remain vested in and supportive of the efforts of our colleagues on Martin Road to protect, build upon, celebrate and market the attributes of our outstanding public school system and the young people they are molding into the leaders of tomorrow. Quite possibly, from a long-term standpoint, this may be the single most important thing that we can be doing to attract residents, businesses, jobs and tax base into our City.

On the higher education front, we must support the development and expansion of two of our most significant economic engines; Jamestown Business College (JBC) and Jamestown Community College (JCC).

As one of the three regional sponsors of JCC, we, as a city government, must help advance efforts to once again blaze a new trail and enable the first and best community college in the state, to provide on-site, higher educational degree opportunities. Not only for residents of our immediate area, but also for the hundreds or even thousands of bright minds that are willing to journey here and become new, contributing members of our great community. And, when this does happen, it will clearly drive additional private investment opportunities and new jobs throughout the Greater Jamestown Region.

Today, 21st century businesses trade in and often rise and fall on access to human and so-called “intellectual capital.” And, higher-level colleges and universities are not only suppliers of that “intellectual capital”, but through what they also add to a community from a cultural, social, recreational goods/services standpoint, serve as powerful magnets for the type of people that companies today must have to succeed in the global marketplace.

Make no mistake about it. Higher education is to today's knowledge and information based economy, what railroads, electrification and interstate highways were... and then some... to the economies of the last two centuries.

Unfortunately, Greater Jamestown is the single largest urban area in New York State and the only one in the "TOP TEN," WITHOUT at least one major four year university or college offering Bachelor's or Master's level programs. And that needs to be rectified.

During the coming years, our collective voices need to be raised and our demands must be heard by those who have the ability to help us address our education and economic development needs.

To that end, we have been working closely with JCC President, Daniel DeMarte, several members of the college's Board of Trustees and their outstanding professional and support staff team, to explore and pursue a variety of initiatives that will promote the growth and development of one of our region's most important assets. This, in turn, will positively drive and impact the future of the entire Greater Jamestown area. Simply put, and make no mistake about it, what is good for JCC is good for the entire community.

II. Transportation

If people and product can not easily get to and from here, our ability to sustain and grow a vibrant local economy will eventually be destroyed.

What is now a safety hazard and an embarrassing impediment to commerce and development, can, should and must be transformed into a modern and attractive business thoroughfare...PERIOD! And, of course, I am referring to New York State Route 60.

If we aspire to grow our economy in the increasingly competitive 21st century, we must have a safe, efficient and inviting north-south traffic artery that connects our County's two major urban areas and our only two Interstate Highways. Furthermore, a Route 60 that has the capability of moving traffic in a modern, fast and safe fashion is absolutely essential if we are going to attract more commerce to our region from Pennsylvania, fully benefit from our proximity to both the flourishing Buffalo-Niagara and Canadian markets and encourage visitors to travel here and support our growing tourism and hospitality sectors.

An improved north-south highway would also provide much needed relief on other county and local roads that were not built or intended for the volume and type of heavy vehicle traffic that is presently being diverted from an insufficient and commerce-killing Route 60.

In recognition of all of this, our efforts at the state, county and local government levels must be redoubled to transform what is now a poorly designed, secondary road (that fails to be recognized by most maps, apps and travel guides), into Chautauqua County's Highway of Economic Opportunity, Investment and Growth.

Likewise, a region that offers absolutely no local and convenient commercial air service, can not be expected to sustain a viable hospitality and visitor industry component to the local economy.

As I have said before, while I would not want to try to develop a dynamic and viable local economy exclusively around tourism, I also do not relish the task of building that dynamic, diverse and viable economy without a strong tourism component in the mix.

As highlighted in tonight's report package, we must all intensify our efforts at the federal, state, county, local and private levels to re-establish, upgrade and support commercial air service at the Chautauqua County-Jamestown Airport.

III. Infrastructure and Capital Investment

During 2019, final preparations should be taken to launch a multi-million dollar Capital Infrastructure Improvement and Equipment Replacement Program to make investments in the type of long neglected items that will stimulate efficiencies and productivity in various city operations and thereby, reduce expenditures for taxpayers and city utility customers. A combination of municipal bond resources and outside funding will be pursued to advance this long needed initiative. Included in the plan, which is intended to help the City "get in front of the investment curve", will be the following:

- a. Water main replacement and reconstruction.
- b. Sanitary sewer line replacement, reconstruction and slip lining.
- c. Significant storm water infrastructure upgrades.

- d. Investments in code compliance, energy conservation and structural improvements to the Municipal Building, fire stations and other city owned facilities.
- e. Establishment of a vehicle and equipment acquisition and replacement fund.
- f. Construction of a new central maintenance garage facility that will expand the level of equipment maintenance and repair services provided in house by the city's certified vehicle technicians, thereby reducing expenditures for city taxpayers and ratepayers. This initiative, which was called for in a plan by Mercury Consultants (and paid for with a grant from the State Financial Restructuring Board), will also expand the city's capability to offer its maintenance services to other public partners like the Jamestown School District, Jamestown Community College and neighboring municipalities.

IV. Census 2020

As U.S. Census data is utilized to determine everything from legislative reapportionment at all levels, to state sales tax, state aid and CDBG allocations, the importance of the upcoming 2020 Census process can not be OVER STATED.

During the coming year we must develop and launch a community based complete count effort to insure that the all-important tabulations for our city and region are as accurate and helpful as possible.

During my lifetime, Jamestown's official population count... like that of most urban centers across our state... has declined significantly. 1960 – 41,818, 1970 – 39,795, 1980 – 35,775, 1990 – 34,681, 2000 – 31,984 and 2010 – 31,146.

Prior to the 2010 Census, the 2008 Census Bureau estimates for Jamestown listed the population at about 27,000... which was a projected drop of nearly 5,000 or roughly 16% from the previous census in the year 2000.

Following the official 2010 Census (as flawed as it was), the actual reduction was only 835 or 2.6% ... a far cry from what the enumerator geniuses were warning about just a couple years earlier.

So what happened? Did more than 4,000 people move into the city or was there a baby boom at local hospitals during this two year window? Hardly!

Both our intuition and analysis indicate that:

1. The two year update projections via the US Department of Commerce (that utilize a variety of tax documents and other algorithms) are not worth the paper or computer chips they are written on.
2. Only the detailed decennial census process (as incomplete and flawed as it is) can give us a somewhat accurate glimpse into the number of folks actually living within a specific community.
3. Our very aggressive local Complete Count Committee initiatives... linked to very effective efforts by Census Bureau hired enumerators (selected from the local area)... really helped to drive the message and draw out the numbers in 2010.

While we still believe in our heart of hearts that Jamestown's final 2010 number of 31,146 was light (possibly by as much as 3,500 to 5,000 people), we also KNOW things could and would have been much worse had we, as a community, laid back, did nothing and let US Census Bureau nature take its course.

Quite literally, we should be shaking in our boots today about the impending disaster we could all be facing in 2020... given the gross administrative incompetence and the nefarious political agendas at work at top levels of the Federal government.

Here in Jamestown (and across the state), we need to again do something dramatic and take a certain level of control over our own census destiny. We need to match and far exceed what we did in 2010... and this time, unfortunately, with little more than lip service from our "friends" at the Federal level.

New York State and local governments need to do what they have always done over the years... on so many fronts... when the Federal government has ignored and abdicated its responsibilities to protect and serve the people. We need to look out for our own interests. New York State and local governments need to step in and fill the void. New York State needs to fully fund and orchestrate a statewide strategy that assists efforts at the local level to drive numbers to their true and accurate levels. We need to do things for ourselves, when we can't count on others to do their jobs and take this process seriously. If we do, we will have a fighting chance. And, if we don't, we will all be crying in our political and economic beer for the next decade.

To my colleagues on the City Council, I have no doubt that there will be a very persistent contingent of folks telling us that the ambitious agenda contained in tonight's report will be impossible for us to achieve or make any headway with. And, we have all heard these common refrains, over and over again, throughout our times in public service.

- It's going to be impossible to change negative attitudes in this town.
- It's going to be impossible to improve these neighborhoods.
- Impossible... you can't bring that decrepit and soon to be dead Downtown back to life.
- It is going to be impossible to improve education, healthcare and the quality of life in this town and to bring in and keep good paying jobs.
- Given the current situation, it's impossible to restore and keep the city's finances on track.

And my personal favorite...

- I wouldn't do your impossible job for a million bucks.

Despite what some may fear, think and even say, I can't bring myself... not for one moment... to believe and follow this form of extreme negativity.

This is a good town with good people. This is a place with incredible attributes and resources that, quite often, those of us who consider ourselves natives, apparently do not recognize or fully appreciate.

This is a tough and resilient town that has proven time and time again, that when its people pull and work together... when we serve in the interest of those around us and not ourselves... when we persist and persevere... when we do all of this with just the right type of positive attitude, inspiration and constructive leadership... there is literally nothing that we can't overcome and accomplish.

And, the proof is not in our words, but rather in our actions and results.

Do I believe that Jamestown's future can be even more promising than its past?

Absolutely! But we will make our future better only by realizing that we are all in this together. That everyone in this community and everything we do is carefully and

inseparably connected. As someone once said, “We may have come here on different ships... but we are all in the same boat now!”

We in government also need to realize our own limited significance and true importance in the overall scheme of things. I have long believed that we alone in government can not solve the problems of the world. But we do maintain the unique opportunity and awesome responsibility to bring together and inspire others to do so.

The simple truth of the matter is that the answers to our problems... the keys to making this into the type of safe and dynamic place we all want it to be, are already in this room tonight.

They are also in the churches, schools, civic clubs, labor halls and business board rooms of this community. They are today... have been right along... and always will be. The challenge before us as elected officials, is first, to be smart enough to recognize this, and then, to figure out the ways in which to unlock and unleash the magic inherent in us all.

It’s not going to be easy and the change we continue to seek will be hard... and sprinkled with periodic setbacks. But if we stay focused and agree to set our personal and self-serving agendas and differences aside, I believe that we can and will continue to make things even better.

And, with all the good that is currently happening, I am more positive and optimistic about the future for this city and our entire region, than I have been at any other time during my nearly four decades in public service.

On behalf of all of my colleagues, tonight, I ask the following of the residents, businesses and tax payers of this great community.

I ask for your understanding and patience. I also ask for your support and involvement.

I ask that you join us as we deal with all of the challenges, opportunities and excitement of an unknown future.

Join with us as we continue to work together, to bring fresh and new approaches to local government.

Join with us as we work to realize the true meaning and benefits of real regional cooperation and development.

Join with us as we continue to build the Downtown of the future.

Join with us as we work to attract our young people back by seeking out and nurturing family sustaining jobs in our community.

Join us as we build bridges, not only over ravines and the magnificent river that winds its way through this beautiful city... but bridges to the countless groups and the thousands of individuals through whom the future of this place will truly be determined.

And, as our ancestors and leaders before us worked against all odds to transform an isolated back woods settlement into a wonderful and vibrant city... I ask that you join us as together we continue our journey... and make our rendezvous with the impossible.

Thank you.