*Thank you and congratulations, Council President Clarke.  Thank you, Clerk Bazzano.  Good evening and thank you to everyone who is here tonight. And to the families of those of us on the dais, a special gratitude for your sacrifices you have made and will make.*

*Governor Malloy, Lieutenant Governor Wyman, Mayor Milner, members of Hartford’s legislative delegation, thank you so much for being with us tonight.*

*Treasurer Cloud, Council President Clarke, Council members Julio Concepcion, John Gale, Glendowlyn Thames, Jimmy Sanchez, rJO Winch, Wildaliz Bermudez, Dr. Larry Deutsch, Cynthia R. Jennings.*

*Congratulations. I’m proud and honored to be your partner in government. To partner with you in governing in a way that is worthy of the people of Hartford.*

*The Courant editorial page asked yesterday if we all know what we’d gotten ourselves into.  Well, I think we do. If the path ahead were easy or smooth, we wouldn’t have asked for the job.*

*Our challenges are big.*

*We begin our term facing a four million dollar deficit this current year and far more daunting deficits in the years ahead.*

*Too many of our neighbors can’t find a job that pays a living wage.*

*Too many of our young men and women feel little hope that their lives will be different.*

*We know those things, but we also know the resilience, the perseverance, and the greatness of this city.*

*We know the power of our diversity, our arts and cultural assets that should be the envy of cities far larger than ours, our businesses small and big, our beautiful parks, our history.*

*And because we know what Hartford can be, we will not be paralyzed by challenges, but emboldened by them. We will not be afraid of tough choices or of change.*

*Our aspiration is to build a Hartford that once again is the undisputed economic and cultural heart of this region of a million and a half people; and a Hartford in which every resident feels that they’ve got a share in Hartford’s rise.*

*It won’t happen overnight.  But if we come together as one Hartford, it will happen.*

*To the residents of Hartford: you put your trust in us.  We will honor that trust with transparency, with accountability, and with tireless hard work.*

*We can’t do it alone.  Whether you put some new paint on your home, plant a new garden, mentor a friend or neighbor, form a block watch, join your NRZ — in whatever way feels right to you, join us and put your shoulder to the wheel.  This is your city, and your city needs you.*

*To the hundreds of thousands of people who have your roots in Hartford, but no longer call our city home: come home to Hartford.*

*Whether you’re in Windsor or Bloomfield, Wethersfield or West Hartford, come back and rediscover this city – come to live, come for Sunday Jazz or a UCONN game and stay for dinner, come in for some jerk chicken on North Main or some pasteles in Parkville.*

*Come home to Hartford and be part of a city’s rebirth, because Hartford cannot succeed without the region.  And this region cannot thrive without a vibrant Hartford at its heart.*

*If we come together as one city, one region; if we’re not afraid to make tough choices; if we’re not afraid of change, we will build Hartford into the great city we know it will be.*

*And when we face stormy days, as we surely will, we’ll look to the pins on our lapels.  Post Nubila Phoebus.  That’s Hartford’s Latin motto.  After the clouds, the sun.*

*A motto we now proudly wear, of a city we now proudly serve.*

*Thank you to all of you here tonight. Congratulations to the Court of Common Council.*

*And God bless the City of Hartford.*