

# STATE OF THE CITY

“100 Days in Office”

*Thursday, April 10, 2014*

*City Council Chambers*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you Councilman Mihalko. I can always count on you for a gracious introduction. Members of City Council, ladies and gentlemen, good evening.

Thank you for joining me tonight for my first State of the City Address, which happens to be taking place on my 100<sup>th</sup> day in office. The reason I chose tonight to give this speech is because historically the 100 day mark is used as a benchmark to assess new leaders after they've had enough time to take action and layout a multi-faceted plan for the future.

Before we start, I'd like to ask for a moment of silence for a few reasons tonight: to honor Johnson City Police Officer David W. Smith, killed last week in the line of duty; to recognize the 5-year anniversary of the American Civic Association tragedy on April 4<sup>th</sup>, as well as the 1 year anniversary of the passing of Binghamton Firefighter John Janos, who died in the line of duty, on April 6<sup>th</sup>. I was also deeply saddened to learn of a loss in our own City Hall community, Fire Chief Daniel Thomas' wife Marie, who passed away last night. If you would, please join me in a moment of silent reflection. Thank you.

This administration's first 100 days have been quite busy. Building a new management team, charting a new course and implementing a business and resident friendly approach that focuses on core City services are just a few of the many challenges facing the new administration.

But tonight is not about outlining the challenges. We've talked at length for months about them. City residents know too well what the challenges are. They are living with them every day. Tonight is about action, about what our plan is to confront these challenges.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Outlining our plan to begin addressing the City's aging infrastructure is a fitting place to start. After all, I was greeted on January 2<sup>nd</sup> by a rather harsh winter snowstorm, and not one, but four more in the months ahead. I want to thank the employees in the Public Works Department who worked very hard this winter to salt and plow our streets. It was a challenging winter and I recognize and appreciate your efforts. We all do.

The repeated snowfalls, combined with several freeze and thaws wreaked havoc on City streets. In between the snowstorms, we initiated waves of emergency pothole repairs across the City. Public Works crews patched hundreds of potholes each week, and while only a temporary fix that was oftentimes undone by the next snowfall, crews were out each week in difficult conditions and I appreciate their dedication.

Streets that weren't even on the radar screen for upgrades this year quickly rose to the top of the list as result of repeated snowstorms. It should come as no surprise to anyone here that one of the most frequently asked questions is: "when are you going to fix my street?" Which is right up there with "when are you going to fix Riverside Drive?"

Well, the answer to Riverside Drive is we are going to start this year. The City plans to conduct a full in-depth reconstruction on Riverside from Front Street to Beethoven Street. From Beethoven to the Johnson City line we will conduct spot repairs and a thin layer of asphalt to improve the riding surface until next year when we can finish with an in depth reconstruction on that section. The cost this year is approximately \$2 million, but this project needs to be done. For far too long this central roadway has been ignored. This summer we will also address some of the other major thoroughfares such as Conklin Ave, LeRoy Street, Grand Boulevard, as well as focus on several dozen neighborhood streets.

What I can commit to you tonight is that while it took many years for these streets to reach the condition they are in, fixing as many of them as I can will be a priority of mine every year that I am in office.

I also want to take a moment to thank the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), which agreed to support my request to mill and pave a sizable portion of Prospect Street in recognition of the impact the Prospect Mountain project has had on the aging street. The DOT invested approximately \$100,000, which benefitted local taxpayers. I look forward to having a productive relationship with the State DOT and partnering to secure more state dollars on local projects.

This year the City will finally begin a project to lower Front Street by several feet at the intersection of Clinton Street so that we can avoid images such as this one right here: 18-wheelers colliding with the bridge and getting stuck. This \$2.5 million dollar project was actually on the drawing board more than 8 eight years and this summer will finally come to fruition. I'm discussing it as infrastructure issue, but it's also an economic development issue. Part of making Binghamton more attractive to businesses is making sure their product, which often times arrives on trucks, reaches the destination on time and without being wedged under a bridge. We have a responsibility to make Binghamton user friendly.

Work will also begin this year to fix the Exchange Street Bridge, which will undergo a \$3 million dollar reconstruction, which is 95% reimbursable — meaning the impact to local taxpayers is significantly reduced.

It was very troubling to learn that the City missed a deadline in 2012 to inspect all the piping that penetrates the City's flood falls. I was notified from the Department of Environmental Conservation last month, and wasted no time in getting the inspection process started. Given the fact that our community was devastated by floods not once, but twice, in a five year period, it's critical we do our best to work with the Army Corps of Engineers and DEC to monitor, inspect, maintain and upgrade the flood walls and levee system wherever and whenever possible. Under my watch, our floodwall systems will be held to the high standards. It's an issue that can't be ignored.

The City has hired JAMKO from Lyons, NY, which is the same company the DEC uses to conduct its own inspections. The inspection of 54 conduits is now underway and expected to be complete in a few weeks, before the deadline. I am also looking into how such an oversight occurred and have written to both the Army Corps of Engineers and DEC to see if other deadlines were missed in recent years, and if there are additional deadlines in place that require action so that we can avoid future oversights on such a critical public safety facility.

Another part of our infrastructure strategy involves energy efficiency. This year, we will advance plans to look at replacing more than 7,000 streetlights citywide with efficient LED lighting. Initial estimates show the energy and maintenance savings will pay for the cost of installing the lights — and then some. In a similar project, we are planning to replace all City water meters at one time. The cost will be covered by savings from more accurate water use metering, reduced resources spent reading meters and a sophisticated leak detection system to reduce wasting this valuable resource. When implemented, there will be additional savings to taxpayers in the area of several hundreds of thousands annually.

These topics I've referenced tonight are only the tip of the iceberg regarding what needs to be done to improve our public infrastructure.

On our horizon is more street reconstruction, the Front Street Gateway project, \$1 million dollar rehabilitation to the East Clinton Street Bridge, Chenango Trail River Connection, the North Bank Susquehanna Trail connection, and \$1.5 million dollar rehabilitation of the South Washington Street Bridge.

Our longer term goals include evaluating different options for changes at the Binghamton Johnson City Joint Sewage Treatment Plant, which is now underway, while also advancing a major lawsuit surrounding a defective wall and dealing with the impact of the 2011 flood. Approximately \$100 million dollars are on the line here. There is lot of analysis and discussion going on behind closed doors, and while there is not a lot I can say publically about the status of the plant, my goal is to move in a new direction with the overall management and governance at the plant while also evaluating the most economical and effective system to rebuilding and upgrading this plant.

Last week, Public Works Commissioner Gary Holmes and I traveled to the Regional Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Office in Cortland to talk with top officials about upcoming compliance deadlines at the plant, potential management and construction scenarios, and how to blend the two. This process will take some time, and both City Council and Johnson City Trustees must support any changes. Issues at the plant have not been addressed in recent years and the City cannot kick this can down the road any more.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Binghamton is fortunate to have a strong Fire Department and Police Department. Congratulations are in order to the Fire Department for securing a \$1.3 million dollar grant last month from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response or (SAFER) grant will result in eight additional firefighters for a two year period, fully funded by the federal government.

Just to put into perspective the activities our firefighters deal with on regular basis: the Fire Department responded to 1,842 fire related-incidents in the last twelve months. That includes 33 working structure fires, 14 of which happened in 2014. The fire department also rescued 3 people (a mother and her 5-year old, and a 2-week old baby from imminent danger at a well-involved house fire at 46 Park Street.

Working with the Police, the Fire Department also saved the life of a suicidal male attempting to jump to his death from the South Washington Street Bridge. Our Fire Medics responded to more than 7,000 calls where medical assistance was requested, resulting in approximately 3,000 ambulance transports.

I'm pleased to report that just last week, City medics saved someone using the heroin overdose reversal medication Narcan. On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, a middle-aged man was found unresponsive and not breathing inside a Fayette Street home downtown. The first responder used Narcan, marking the first time a Binghamton Fire Medic saved a life using this medication. Congratulations to the Fire Department.

Later this month, our police officers will also start carrying Narcan. Many times police officers are first on the scene and seconds matter, so all patrol officers and others are being trained by medical professionals from our Fire Department. Now police are better-equipped to respond to heroin overdoses. This heroin epidemic is very real. The highly addictive drug knows no boundaries, race, gender or class. Cases are on the rise, and now our police are in a better position to save lives. While I constantly stress the importance of police and fire, our overall goal is public safety.

On the topic of safety, many of you know I ran on a pledge to make Binghamton safer for all of us. Since January 2<sup>nd</sup> I have reinstated foot patrols downtown and we are working aggressively to increase our presence in all neighborhoods by police getting out of their cars and walking a beat.

Here's why. Let me take a moment to show you what's going on Citywide. As you can see in these charts here, crime is particularly high on the West Side and parts of downtown. While our overall plan targets crime across the City, we must focus on these hotspots to ensure they don't become larger.

Some of these dots are locations where armed robberies occurred at convenience stores and liquor stores. Yesterday we announced the arrest of Christopher Walsh, who was charged with three of the robberies and who police believe is the man responsible for 15 out of 23 robberies that have taken place in our region since November. Crime does not pay, and eventually you will get caught in Binghamton.

I'd like to thank our partners at the New York State Liquor Authority, who recently informed the City of their decision to revoke the liquor license for the Rock-B Tavern on Conklin Avenue, for 2 years — effective immediately. For several years now this business has been a haven of criminal activity including drugs and murder. The City is using every resource available to eliminate criminal activity at this location, and the end has now come to the many sleepless nights this business caused for south side neighbors living near this property.

It is no secret that I have been a vocal advocate of the City's lockdown law, and in February we initiated the process to lock down 13 properties that have been the site of criminal activities including, murder, assault, rape, drug activity and other quality of life issues. I can tell you that all 13 property owners immediately responded to the City's efforts and are working with the City to address the problem activities within their properties, and several new properties are currently under review for potential lockdown. It's frankly astonishing to me that so few efforts were taken in recent years to lock down residential properties. But know this, I am leading this effort myself, and under the letter of the law, I will use the lockdown law as a potent tool to reduce criminal activity, hold landlords accountable and provide relief to neighborhoods and residents who have been negatively impacted for far too long.

I am pleased to tell you that yesterday the City filed a petition in City Court to lockdown a nightclub called "17 East" on Clinton Street. 17 East is the site of multiple shootings, neighborhood disturbances, illegal gambling, drug activity and related crimes, and is frequented by gang members.

This location was one of nine in Binghamton that were raided as part of a multi-jurisdictional law enforcement operation. The operation included members from the United States Attorney's Office, the FBI, New York State Police, Broome County District Attorney's Office, Broome County Sheriff's Department, and Binghamton Police Department. At approximately 6:00 a.m. on March 26<sup>th</sup>, more than 100 law enforcement officers raided these locations simultaneously, and arrested 7 members and associates of the Bloods Street Gang known as the "MacBallers." Forty-nine other "MacBallers" were arrested in New York City in the last two days. The drug connection between New York City and Binghamton is very real.

These gang members operated in Binghamton, and were responsible for distributing large quantities of controlled substances including crack cocaine, powdered cocaine, heroin and marijuana. These gang members also utilized rental vehicles and rental apartments to facilitate their drug trafficking conspiracy to "cook," package, store and transport controlled substances in our community.

I was there at 6:00 a.m. when police raided 128 Liberty Street on the north side, and saw first-hand the professionalism and precision used in executing that search warrant, and taking a suspect into custody without incident. This law enforcement operation was one of the largest ever in the City. I think you would all have been very proud of our men and women in blue.

In a separate investigation last month the City also announced one of the largest heroin seizures Binghamton has seen in recent years. 730 packets of heroin were taken off the streets with a value of \$14,600. Also seized was \$2,600 in cash and a vehicle. Four people, four drug dealing criminals were also arrested.

Also in March, officers recovered 101 bags of heroin with a street value of \$1,750. Further investigation into this crime also led to a subsequent arrest that included 71 knotted wraps of crack cocaine, with an approximate street value of \$1,250.

All three of these investigations were coordinated by the police Community Response Team, or (CRT). Created around 2002, the focus of this 5-person team is to work with the community and

focus on “hot spots” of illegal activity across the City. A few members of the CRT are here tonight, and I’d ask them to stand at this time. Great job on these investigations.

Drug activity is on the rise, criminals are coming to Binghamton from other cities, such as New York, to peddle their poisons, and younger and younger citizens are beginning to travel down the path that can only lead to pain and prison, not success and prosperity.

We need more police on the streets and in our neighborhoods. I have been steadfast in that position since the day I sought out elected office. Adding police will result in more neighborhood patrols, and build a positive relationship with the community by providing direct and consistent contact with residents. Adding police will also allow the department to begin to restore the proactive approach to law enforcement, instead of simply responding to calls and crimes due to limited resources and personnel.

Tonight I announce the next step in my public safety plan. I will expand the Community Response Team by adding two additional police officers. Expanding the CRT will result in a stronger and more visible presence on our streets and will send a message that Binghamton is tough on crime and criminals.

Expanding the CRT is only one step, but it’s a much needed step to take back our neighborhoods and keep our families safe. My plan to add these two officers will not raise taxes. I plan to eliminate two positions created by the previous administration to pay for the new police positions. They are the Chief Information Officer and Assistant Building Maintenance Mechanic, both of which are currently vacant. Tomorrow I will begin the process to create these two new police positions and I am asking for Council’s support. The CRT will be active in every neighborhood. Let’s send a unified message to City residents that reducing crime is OUR collective priority.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

One of the barometers that will determine the future success of our community is economic development, or rather how much investment, expansion and job creation takes place in Binghamton.

You’ve heard me say it before. The City doesn’t create jobs per se, but rather creates the environment that’s attractive to investors, developers, business owners and residents. One of my first steps after being sworn in was to expand this building’s operating hours to 9-to-5, allowing us to better serve our residents and make clear that City Hall is open for business.

We must encourage and even leverage private investment wherever possible. One step towards that goal is getting public properties back on the tax rolls so we can promote investment, create jobs and increase our revenues.

That’s why I moved quickly when taking office to put the vacant downtown lot at 70-72 Court Street up for sale. Located at the busiest intersection downtown, this property is ripe for development. While the proposals are not officially due until next week, the City has seen a high level of interest from multiple parties and I am looking forward to reviewing solid proposals.

The sale of the former Greenman Center on Pine Street is now complete. I signed the closing documents last month. Red Barn Computers is scheduled to move its offices in by year's end, adding dozens of jobs, and putting another once public property back on the tax rolls, and making a major impact on this downtown neighborhood which is transitioning.

I am also advancing plans for a comprehensive parking study in downtown Binghamton. I want to thank the Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study (BMTS) for supporting my plan and allocating \$50,000 towards it. Simply put, the City does not have a parking plan that effectively addresses Binghamton's economic development needs. It sounds like a very simple concept, but one of the primary factors companies take into consideration when locating or expanding, is access to parking. Many people have an opinion on this topic, and it's time to finally address this issue. We saw the first casualty caused by the City's lack of downtown parking last month, and a multi-million dollar project to expand a student housing project at 20 Hawley Street is now on hold because of it. I'm asking members of City Council to approve the funding I have allocated so we can get a downtown parking plan in place and move one step closer to creating the environment that is necessary to attract businesses, developers, customers and residents.

On the subject of parking, the City's three parking ramps are outdated, unsightly, poorly lit, in various stages of disrepair and nearing the end of their useful lives. There have been studies recently (both public and private) that have touched on some of these points in way or another. The reason the ramps have gotten to this point is easy to explain. It costs a lot of money to make a significant dent in fixing the ramps, and even more to build a new one. And, our resources are limited. Let me give you an example. It would cost approximately \$16 million dollars to build one parking ramp the size of the Collier Street ramp downtown, which is in the worst condition of the three.

That's why for decades the City has taken a band-aid approach to extend the useful life by several years. Twenty years ago this approach made sense, but it does not today. It's time we deal with this problem head on, while also acknowledging the financial realities and limitations that exist.

The time has come to explore public-private partnerships as one way to address the challenges facing the parking ramps. This month I will send out a request for proposals from private developers interested in partnering with the City on a mixed-use project at the Collier Street Parking Ramp, which is in the worst condition of the three. This project would involve building a new parking ramp and combination of housing and retail space. These types of mixed-use projects are not new, and have been built in many cities across the nation.

The project is also a prime candidate for funding from the Regional Economic Development Council. In previous years, the City could not identify feasible projects, and didn't apply for funding, which is unfortunate, considering the Southern Tier Region received the largest award last year. That will not be the case this year. When the applications are made available this summer, the City will apply for \$9 million dollars towards this project. We must move forward now because of the availability and application deadlines of the state funding. This is a bold and dynamic proposal that could transform and revitalize an important section of downtown Binghamton.

Another exciting project expected to break ground this fall is the new Southern Tier High Tech Incubator. Located just a few blocks from this building the incubator will transform a decaying part of downtown while also sparking what could be a new wave of high tech companies creating jobs right here in downtown Binghamton.

Two new student housing projects are on their way to completion. Chenango Place, located on Wall Street downtown in what used to be known as the Fair Store Building, and the first phase of the Midtown Mall project. Both will open up this fall and will add several hundred students to the downtown community.

Another significant initiative taking place is the City's Comprehensive Plan, also known as Blueprint Binghamton, which will impact downtown and neighborhood business districts and many neighborhoods. This plan will guide the growth and development of our City for the next decade and beyond. While this initiative did not start under my watch, it is our responsibility to put a plan in place that is reflective of the community's overall needs. If you have not yet taken a look at the draft plan, please do so at [BlueprintBinghamton.com](http://BlueprintBinghamton.com). Both Council and I are providing input, and while I will be advocating for a significant number of changes, the most important voice is yours. Please review the draft plan and provide your thoughts.

An important priority for this administration is meeting the unmet nutritional needs of residents on the north side resulting from a lack of a grocery store. Last summer I talked about my plans to make space available for a Farmer's Market at the Binghamton Plaza, while also continuing the search for a full service grocery store. While I haven't solved this 10-year issue in the first 100 days, I can tell you there is a group of concerned citizens working on a solution. We do have an agreement with the owners of the Binghamton Plaza to locate a farmers market free of charge, are working with Broome County to promote the north side as a potential location for the County's year round Farmer's Market, and I am in contact with commercial real estate developers who are working their connections pro bono to attract a full service store because it is important. Finding a permanent solution is a priority to this administration.

### **PARKS AND NEIGHBORHOODS**

Basic City services starts with having a clean downtown and neighborhood streets. Here's something that Binghamton hasn't seen in use in quite some time... a street sweeper. It's been a regular fixture downtown and in some neighborhoods since January 2<sup>nd</sup>. This year we are looking to buy more. If we can't improve the basic cleanliness of our community I'm not sure how we can expect to accomplish larger initiatives.

Street sweepers are only one part of our strategy to clean up Binghamton. I've often said that we must use every tool in our toolbox, every resource at our disposal. Now that spring has arrived I will initiate a series of code sweeps focusing on problem neighborhoods in our community. We must put our code officers and inspectors on the street as much as possible so we can begin to get a grip on the multitude of code issues that exist in each neighborhood and impact not only property values, but quality of life.

Talking with residents last summer, many could point to a blighted property on their street or neighborhood, and in too many cases the property had been deteriorating for years and can no

longer be salvaged. Those properties must come down. Using Community Development Block Grant funds we will start by demolishing these 8 properties. Obviously there are many more properties that need to be razed and we are working on the next wave of demolitions for later this summer.

We are also moving forward with plans to demolish 18 structures damaged in the 2011 flood, which marks the conclusion of the FEMA buyout project. Demolition on these will begin later this month, and the City will be working closely with residents to re-purpose these lots. This process was started before I took office and I want to recognize the work of many City Hall employees who worked tirelessly on behalf of residents.

One of the primary financial resources the City has available to address parks, neighborhoods and other issues are Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG), which come from the federal government each year. Unfortunately leaders in Washington keep cutting these funds, which leaves fewer and fewer dollars available to meet our community's needs. As this graph illustrates funding has been reduced by more than \$600,000 since 2007. This means we need to set our sights of other sources of grant and additional funding.

A critical aspect to improving the integrity of our neighborhoods is promoting and expanding not only homeownership but owner occupied ownership. While we are currently exploring a number of incentives and programs to expand homeownership, we must keep in mind the most important factor in promoting homeownership is having a community that offers good paying jobs to attract the families that will revitalize and strengthen our neighborhoods.

We cannot have a discussion about the integrity of our neighborhoods without talking about our parks. Many critical projects are moving forward this year. You can see a list of some of this year's projects here on this slide, but just to highlight a few examples: new spray park at Columbus Park, repairing electrical deficiencies at every park in the system, new learn to swim program for up to 500 youths, upgrade tennis courts at West End and Webster Streets parks, and much more. Thank you to Parks Commissioner Bill Barber and all Parks and Recreation employees who are working to keep these neighborhood jewels in great shape for our community.

This summer marks a significant change to a major regional sporting event in our community: The Chris Thater Race. After more than three decades the race will move from the West Side and Recreation Park to downtown for a new look and feel. Combining the excitement of this race with the energy of downtown will make for a great event this summer.

We must never lose sight of the fact everything we are doing today is part of a larger plan to make our community better for the children of tomorrow. That's why I've worked with the Binghamton City School District to create the Youth Success Initiative, a first of its kind partnership which impacts all 5,600 students in the district. The goal is to put the needs our youth front and center, address safety and educational issues and prepare students for the world beyond Binghamton.

You can see a list of the goals on this slide, some of which include: creating safer neighborhoods and schools, establishing a high-quality mentoring program, increasing the availability of

recreational/athletic/extra-curricular opportunities, promoting the importance of civic responsibility, and adding School Resource Officers (SRO) at East and West Middle Schools.

The School District has agreed to pay the salaries for these two new police department positions, which reduces the cost to the City, and increases the number of City police officers. The function of the SRO is three-fold: As a law enforcement officer, a counselor and educator. The SRO will work in collaboration with the school to promote a safe atmosphere and serve as a resource to help keep kids on track. I'd like to thank superintendent Martinez for not only supporting this Youth Success Initiative and being a willing partner, but for leading it on the District's end. Thank you also to Dr. Al Penna, former Binghamton High School Principal for coordinating the City's part of this initiative. My mission to make our community a better one starts with our youth.

I like to end on a high note when possible, and want to share this photo which was taken at the grand opening at Sunflower Park in the First Ward. It's great to see so many young people using this park. This summer, the City will help improve Sunflower Park by expanding electrical service and constructing a shed. I am an advocate for promoting more of these types of parks projects in the City.

## **FINANCE**

When I took office there were a number of challenges related to the City's Finances. The City had difficulty filing financial statements and other financial reports in a timely basis, the City's long term bond rating was downgraded and multiple employees were caught stealing money from the taxpayers. Just to name a few examples.

Working with the Finance staff to correct these issues is ongoing, but progress is being made. In February, the auditors completed the long overdue 2012 audit and financial reports, which allowed the City to complete and file the necessary 2012 financial documents that are required annually by the state and federal government.

As a result of completing and filing the 2012 audit and financials, Standard and Poors, an international financial rating agency, upgraded the City's long-term bond rating to an A/stable status, which will improve Binghamton's financial reputation and save money on the amount taxpayers pay in interest on multi-million dollar projects.

Now that the City has caught up on all previous audits and has submitted the financial documents required by the state and federal government through 2012, we are setting our sights on the 2013 reports. It is my commitment to ensure the 2013 audit and all accompanying financial reports and statements will be filed on time and all deadlines met.

Next month, City auditors will begin their work on the financial reports and State single audit. Both documents will be released to the public before the September 30<sup>th</sup> compliance deadline. I am committed to strengthening the City's financial position and integrity.

Part of that commitment involves instituting a new system of checks and balances in all our all departments that accept cash. Over the last few months the City's financial policies and procedures were reviewed and several new safeguards are being implemented. Many of the

departments that accept cash, which are fewer now, have the same checks and balances as a bank. Whether it's installing lock boxes, making more weekly deposits, having multiple employees check and double-check record keeping, or many other precautions, each change offers an important extra layer of financial protection.

While I have not yet had the opportunity to create and present my own budget, the topic is a regular discussion at City Hall. Almost every decision I make has the potential to impact the budget, and taxes. I meet regularly with department heads to talk about the 2015 spending plan, how to cut costs and maintain or increase services. We are doing our best to rein in spending and minimize annual tax increases.

Part of that conversation involves Broome County, as we discuss what areas or services we can share or consolidate. We are currently talking about sharing some Information Technology services as well as training and safety programs, and hope to come to agreement later this year. In addition I'm also having discussions with the Mayor of Johnson City about our current agreement to share a police chief and other areas we may want to look at to save money. We can and will do everything we can to cut costs and save taxpayers money.

## CONCLUSION

I want to conclude tonight by saying thank you. It is an honor to be your Mayor and to chart the course that will allow this City to grow and prosper in the future.

Many of you have commented that I have my work cut out for me, and I certainly do. I believe that elected officials have more of an opportunity to help their community than most people will have over the course of their lives. I go into work each day thinking about what this team is going to do to improve Binghamton. My attitude is that if I succeed, the City succeeds, and I genuinely believe that.

I want to share some words from former President Teddy Roosevelt, who once said; *"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."*

I've laid out the beginnings of a very ambitious plan for Binghamton tonight. There is a lot of work that needs to be done to get here. There are City Council members on both sides of the aisle that have expressed a sincere interest to work with the new administration, and I appreciate that sentiment and take you at your word.

Let's do better than what we see happening in Washington.

Let's show Binghamton residents what we can accomplish by working together.

Let's show them the State Of Our City can be strong once again.

Thank you and good night.