

Inaugural Speech

Good evening, Franklin!! Thank you all for coming out tonight-we promise we will not keep you here all night!! Well, here we are still in a pandemic, and while all of us are **really ready** for it to end, and especially our first responders, in spite of it Franklin has continued to move forward.

Clearly our biggest project, now literally unfolding as we speak, is our first in the region White Water Park. Although a rainy day, First Day was a great success as many paddlers checked out our new water feature. As a small business downtown, we had a **very** good day, kayakers were all over the river and many, many spectators came out to see Franklin's continuing revitalization. And I think we ought to claim bragging rights to this, we are, in fact, THE ONLY WHITE WATER PARK in NE. A lot of people worked on this to make it happen, and aside from a couple of salaries for city oversight of the project, this new attraction was at NO city expense. But of course, Franklin is not going to stop there, we have lots of other things going on...

Work is ongoing on the Chinburg Stevens Mill project with the first new tenant projected to be a Kettlehead Brewing Production facility, hopefully very early spring timeframe. They will also be having a tasting room. Over 140 market rate apartments will also be put into the old textile building and other businesses will be located on the ground floor.

There are high value condominiums going into the old IOOF building on Central St, and if you go back as far as I do, that would be above the old Griffin Rexall Drug store on the corner of Central and Smith across from Marceau Park.

But I know the real project you are all waiting to hear about is Cumberland Farm- so-drumroll- we are there!!! All the paperwork has been signed and construction is projected to begin in the April/May timeframe.

So what about our schools - what's happening there? A lot! And if I misspeak, Superintendent LeGallo will correct me in his comments later on...

As a result of the challenges that communities have faced due to COVID and the additional financial burdens that cities and schools have incurred, significant federal monies have been received by the SAU to help recover learning loss and to make improvements to the facility to better protect our students. Portrait of a Graduate, an in-depth faculty inclusive study funded by a grant is on going and looking at new and better ways to engage our students in a more non-traditional learning environment.

We have talked a lot about our Manufacturing initiative that has been moving forward the last year. Currently the high school is offering 4 dual credit, high school and college credit manufacturing classes, at no cost to the students, and the classes are full. This month, we will be sending 5 students to an intern program with PCC Structurals and are working with other local manufacturers to include them in our program as well.

In our middle school we will be offering a woodworking and culinary after school program beginning this semester. And, just a couple of week ago, acting very quickly, like 2 days, under a very short deadline, Franklin resident Yama Ploskonka

and Middle School Principal Darsney completed an application to secure a total of \$14,122 over the next 2 years to start a FIRST ROBOTICS program in the Middle School. This is being initially funded by a grant from the state through the RSA 188-E:24a, Robotics Education Development Program and Robotics Education. And **a shout out** to PCC Structural and Katherine Broughton Zink Bookkeeping and Tax Service for very quickly agreeing, like in one day, to be business partners in this new endeavor. **Now, this is where you all come in – we need coaches!** If you want to be a part of this exciting new opportunity that counts toward giving more opportunities to our students, **please** contact the Middle School. We need all kinds of people; all you need to bring is a desire to help our middle school students get involved in this exciting new program!

SO, what about city things, like roads and water, and all that stuff! Well, this year our City Council will be more focused on meeting with the city directors on a quarterly basis. These committees include Municipal Services, Fire, Police, Recreation and school committees and others. Committee Assignments and meeting dates are available for your information, so if you have ideas on how things should be, attend the meetings and learn about what the city is doing and the challenges we face. Get involved and make a difference.

One last initiative that I want to bring up is recycling. As you may have read in the local papers, Laconia and Gilford are back at it, and I think we need to be too. The market, especially for cardboard is coming around. Gilford, has completely revamped its recycling program in the last two years. For example, properly sorted and baled mixed paper went from being sold for \$20 a ton in February to \$105 a ton in September, while clean, baled cardboard rose from \$80 to \$190 a ton.

Gilford has collected 173,000 pounds of mixed paper through October, roughly on par with past years, but its cardboard collection has soared, presumably a result of more items being bought online. Last year through October Gilford had collected 203,000 pounds of cardboard; this year it has collected 366,000 pounds, an increase of some 80%.

Many prices for recycled material have rebounded from low points earlier in the pandemic. The most profitable at the moment is No. 2 plastic, the kind used in milk jugs, which has gone up 60% in a year to more than \$1,200 per ton, according to the Northeast Resource Recovery Association, more even than aluminum cans.

Councilor Dzujna and I and folks from our transfer station will be meeting with the folks in Gilford in the coming couple of weeks to see how we can make recycling work for us. More to come on this!

So, when people ask you what's good about Franklin, your answer is - a lot! We are the New England **leader** in developing a White-water Park; The revitalization of the Stevens Mill by Eric Chinburg is a game changer for housing in our city - and his product is top shelf!! Governor Sununu has recognized the importance of our manufacturing initiative and wants to see Franklin go from the Alpha phase to rolling it out to the Beta phase across several NH communities. And we are the **only manufacturing** program in New England affiliated with the world wide recognized German American Chamber of Commerce Apprenticeship program.

Our Council is strong, our City Leaders among the best in the state and fully engaged in moving us forward. The SAU is changing education in Franklin and I am confident we will soon see solid results from our new initiatives. And our Citizens

care about each other - we saw that a lot these past couple of years- because we believe in each other. And me? I could not be happier than to be the mayor of my home town. Franklin may be the smallest city in the state, but we are the mightiest because we are moving strongly forward.

Thank you all again for being here tonight - Happy New Year - now let's get to work!!.