



CITY OF FRANKLIN, NEW HAMPSHIRE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Pastor Carter, honorable members of the City Council for 2015 and 2016, City Manager Dragon and Department Directors, honored School Board members, friends, and fellow citizens:

I wish to begin this new term of office with a personal note of thanks to our wonderful, generous community, for it was in the first week of October that you selected me to serve yet another term as Mayor. After eight years as the highest elected official in the city, and seven years of service on the City Council, and eight more years on the school board before that - one might understand if voters wanted to "kick the tires" with someone else.

It is astonishing to me, personally, that this fifth term that you have given me will make me, God willing, the longest serving Mayor in Franklin history. I have seen friends in other NH cities come and go in this role. But you have sent me back into office by the largest margin I have ever had here in a contested election - with nearly 75% of your ballots. It is extraordinary, historic, and the message has been received: "Keep doing what you're doing." And lest you conclude that I think this is all about me, I absolutely believe that this message was intended for all of us, whether in city government, in volunteer roles, or in our ordinary work.

Because, looking back on the year past, we should all be proud of what has been happening here. An entrepreneurial spirit has seized downtown Franklin. From the bold and broad vision of Todd Workman, to Jo Brown's Franklin Studio, to Tom Charbono's Central Sweets, to Mr. Mansfield's cozy used bookstore - and on and on - brave friends are taking a risk on our city again in increasing numbers and standing alongside veteran businesses that have weathered the Great Recession. It is a marvelous turnaround to behold. We applaud it, we encourage it, and this city government must do all it can to accelerate it.

The "Franklin For A Lifetime" project inspired a couple of exciting developments - a USDA grant sought by Director Lewis to hire a downtown coordinator, and

Franklin - The Three Rivers City

also the advent of the Riverbend Mill renovation. That project may well be the single greatest investment in downtown Franklin in our entire history - coming as it does with a price tag of almost 12 million dollars. This is something we will all see with our own eyes because construction starts soon.

And I know it has been very expensive and difficult for many of our residents - but we can honestly say that today we have the cleanest water in the State. The Water Department under Director Sullivan was honored as the "Utility of the Year" in 2015 as a result.

We also move ahead into 2016 with work on the largest municipal solar project in NH history, which will deliver new revenue approaching \$100,000 annually. Sincere thanks to Mayor Giunta, City Manager Dragon, Directors Sullivan & Lewis and all city staff who have worked so hard on these projects.

One accomplishment that makes me particularly proud this year is the renewal of our Drug Free Community grant, which funds the Mayor's Drug Task Force. I am very pleased that this effort will continue for another five years, because we can't have a healthy city without healthy individuals and healthy families. And we know this problem lurks in the shadows all around us. My deepest thanks go to all involved in helping their neighbors and making a difference. As a grieving mom said to me this year: "We must save every single person we can."

There are other successes, but we must also look ahead. Given new revenues and retiring debt service payments - I believe the City Council will have an opportunity to address some serious infrastructure concerns, including roads. We must be wise and cautious in our approaches - because every million dollars spent in the general fund represents 10% of your property tax bill. I expect the esteemed and honored City Council to be forthright with any proposal to appropriate additional property tax revenue. We know it is the people's City Charter, not ours. We must ask the people before ever going beyond its bounds.

Indeed - there is one project that makes a lot of exciting improvements possible for our schools, for our roads, for buildings and equipment, and even for recreation - without burdening our current taxpayers. One week from tonight, the NH Site Evaluation Committee will hold an open house and hearing in this room to discuss the Northern Pass Project. If we truly want greater funding for our schools, roads, and other needs - it is imperative that our community speak out in

Franklin - The Three Rivers City

favor of this project, as the honorable City Council has unanimously done in recent days. This project will nearly double the taxable value of our city and yield an additional \$7 million each year. We are now in the fourth quarter of this game and we can see the end zone. It is time for Franklin to win this one.

In this, and in all things, we must persevere. We must "keep doing what we are doing". We must work hard to make our businesses profitable because a hot economy solves almost everything. We must work with our young people and help them achieve in school and in life. We must be generous and caring towards each other as neighbors. We must celebrate our successes and push them forward into a bright future.

I paraphrase Nobel laureate William Faulkner in saying: Franklin will not only endure. Franklin will prevail.

For the 60th chapter of Isaiah commands us to:

"Rise up in splendor ... your light has come, the glory of the LORD shines upon you.... Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow, for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you, [and] the wealth of nations shall be brought to you..."

So let it be said of Franklin, New Hampshire in 2016.

Again, I thank you all and wish you the very best.

Good luck and may God bless Franklin.