

From the Mayor...

February 5, 2021

This past week, I began preparing for the State of the City Address that I will deliver next month. It will precede the regularly scheduled Common Council meeting on March 1 and begin at 7:00 pm. As with all public meetings, it will be live streamed and available at our city web page (www.warsaw.in.gov). There will be limited seating available in the Council Chambers.

The State of the City Address is statutorily required of every mayor in every city in our state. Indiana Code 36-4-5-3, which lists the power and duties of the Mayor, requires that the city executive shall “provide a statement of the finances and general condition of the city, to the city legislative body at least once a year.”

The State of the City is traditionally a report to our citizens listing progress we have made towards our stated goals, while also examining the pertinent issues of the previous year. A discussion of the city’s current fiscal condition is also included. Current goals and objectives are then outlined to set the expectations for the coming year as part of the speech.

Like everyone else, 2020 created quite a challenge for the city operations as we navigated the impacts of the pandemic. Doing what we are normally expected to do isn’t usually a part of the list of accomplishments. Last year was different.

Administratively, we were equally challenged, but obligations to our employees, partners, and contractors needed to be met. At the end of the day, we balanced our budget, picked up the trash, and responded to the calls for emergencies. We held public meetings, finished the expansion and modernization of our sewage treatment plant, and kept our parks open and looking great.

Economic development projects continued to come our way. Two companies committed to our community in 2020. Planning progress continued on our federally-funded road projects. COVID did not reduce the housing shortage that we continue to address. Construction projects moved ahead, albeit often with material delays.

While progress amidst the pandemic demonstrated the resilience of our community, the significance of the toll the pandemic took on our community will define 2020. Many suffered from the effects of COVID. We lost loved ones. Financial hardship impacted businesses and service organizations as they struggled and tried to hang on. Some could not survive. Many workers were furloughed or lost their jobs. Those and many others are the realities we face.

Our businesses have taken substantial hits. They need our support. Not-for-Profits have exhausted reserves and cannot endure another year of COVID. Donate and support as you are able. Homelessness and food insecurity are real problems. Reach out. People feel marginalized. Welcome all to share the opportunities and blessings of our great community.

The message is clear. The state of our city is more than a list of accomplishments and a healthy financial picture. With this being my tenth year being privileged to serve as your mayor, I know our community is blessed with opportunity and fiscal health. But solving the challenges we face is the true measure of the state of our city.