



**City of Port Jervis 2016
State of the City Address
By: Mayor Kelly B. Decker
January 27, 2016**

Councilman-At-Large Bavoso, Councilmembers Fitzpatrick, Hendry, Trovei, Belcher, Bell, Foster, Ritchie and Siegel, department heads, distinguished guests, and ladies and gentlemen of the City of Port Jervis.

As I present my third State of the City Address, I want the residents of the city to know that their locally elected officials have worked very hard over the last 2 years towards accomplishing goals with limited funding. I want to “Thank” not only the officials that have returned to continue that work but I also want to “Thank” the council members who have left office but put much of their time and energy towards making this city great once more. Additionally, I would like to “Welcome” our new members and hope to work with you to make Port Jervis greater than it is today.

Tonight as we gather to hear the State of the City Address I want to take us back to a time when our forefathers were seeking to build a new nation. I would like to turn your attention to one particular individual who would become the first governor of the State of New York and later the 4th Vice President of the United States, George Clinton. Clinton was labeled an anti-federalist as he was worried about government getting to big. I believe what the anti-federalist feared, at that time, is exactly what is happening to our small city and other small communities across this great nation today. Our country and our state has become the plight in which individuals like George Clinton foresaw over 230 years ago. I would like to paraphrase a quote from Clinton in which he said “*The great will struggle for power, honor and wealth; the poor become a prey to avarice (greed, miserable, desire for wealth), insolence (rude) and oppression. And while some are studying to supplant (take the place of or scheme) their neighbors, and others striving to keep their stations, one villain will wink at the oppression of another, the people*

be fleeced (deprived by fraud), and the public business neglected. In a nutshell they were worried about individuals becoming greedy and desiring wealth and power in an uncaring society where some would struggle to survive while others scheme to commit fraud against those that are weak.

Wow, some may ask why I have come off with such a harsh quote. 230 years ago, Anti-Federalist saw the national government as being too big and too powerful. They were fighting for the rights of the little guy. Not only were they on the right path but what they never expected was that even the states themselves would fall to the same concern. Instead of being Anti-Federalist perhaps their “title” should have been even narrower and labeled them “Community Supporters.” A harsh reality has come on our little city along the banks of the Delaware and Neversink rivers. We are a small cross section of Americans that are not a voting bloc, we have limited funds, and a high percentage of poor who have been outcast and not given the proper tools to better themselves. We have become victims of the larger government with its extended red tape, prohibitive policies, and zest for making themselves look like they are doing what is right for the common man when in fact they have fallen short. Some may ask what I mean by this. Well let me just explain what I have learned over the past 2 years about the plight of Port Jervis in our state. In September of 2015 the Port Jervis Common Council approved an idea of proposing to local New York State municipalities, by resolution, that fall within 4 miles of another state border, to be given the opportunity of fairness in matching taxes of that bordering state in a plan called the New York State Border Enterprise Zone. This idea would positively affect 132 small towns, villages, and cities in New York State that struggle with competition from states such as New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont

that all have lower sales and excise taxes. The plan, although calling for lower sales and excise taxes in the area, could actually create additional revenue for the state, county, and municipality. When the city contacted the governor's office and our local representatives, we did hear back from those that understand our situation like our New York Assemblymen, our State Senator, our County Executive, and our County Legislature who embraced the idea but not the Governor's office. After again trying to contact the Governor's office, the city was asked to wait until after the regional economic development announcements were made and they would have time to respond. Since that announcement in December, the governor's office has been called but yet has not followed through on the agreed plan to give advice, concern, complaints, praise or even help with this plan. In addition, one would think that the state would encourage commerce to build within its state borders, but clearly it doesn't seem prudent to them or at least in the communities that border our state. Another example of neglecting their own would be something as simple as the NYS DOT and their road direction signs. If you were to travel Interstate 87 (Thruway) near the Interstate 84 junction, you will see tremendously large directional/exit signs stating Newburgh/Scranton PA thus skipping over Middletown/Walkill and even Port Jervis as identified locations with commerce in New York State. If you are traveling on 17 (I-86) and near the Interstate 84 junction, you will see large directional/exit signs stating Newburgh/Scranton PA again skipping Port Jervis NY. However, if you are in Scranton PA on Interstate 81 nearing the westbound exits for Interstate 84, all signs point towards Milford PA. Milford has a population of 1,001 (2013) but is in Pennsylvania. So why can PennDOT put up signs promoting even their small municipalities but New York doesn't? Let's add insult to injury with the NYS DOT who has decided to remove the one New York State gas station (located in

the City of Port Jervis) from its exit signs at Exit 1 on I-84, leaving the space blank, and promoting the 5 gas stations located in the State of New Jersey. Additionally, ALL indicators that tell a motorist that they have entered the State of New York on I-84 from Pennsylvania are after Exit 1 for the City of Port Jervis, NY. I could then go on with the red tape hold up by the state on items like the road widening and bridge replacement project in Tri-States. Now the city is now being told that they have to come up with the additional monies for the project that is over 16 years in the making because state and federal agencies held up the project. One state official called it “The Perfect Storm” in regards to the need for studies. Well our city would rather call it an embarrassment and has a different name for it called “Waste of Public Funds.” I could also speak about the \$99 million sewer collection system replacement that the city desperately needs or could be fined by the state but is getting no or very limited help. Meanwhile in the press, the state is being praised for adding another \$100 million in aid which is peanuts compared to what every municipality in the state would need. Let me also mention the governments snail’s pace when trying to get approvals for a natural embedded rock White Water Kayak Park, that by all indicators could not only show good habitat growth in the river but also major growth, activity, and fiscal help to our city. I think I’ve made my point that Clinton’s concern was really not as an anti-federalist but more as an individual for “Community Support.” He was for Ulster County and Kingston the place he called his home and never realized how big government would have become. Mankind has changed and values that were once held by many are now only held by a few but that should not stop us from making our city great again as long as we understand what we are up against.

I have asked our citizens to commit our city to change and that is what we are doing. Embracing our past but pushing ahead for success. In the past there has been some fiscal irresponsibility but we can't look back. We need to focus on hard work, alternative revenue, growth, volunteerism, and community pride that will create a new Port Jervis.

I am confident that 2016 will be a banner year for our city as we see the revitalization of our downtown with major project already in the works. There will be new sidewalks along East Main Street and Kingston Avenue and the city will become an area that embraces outdoor activities. The city's walking, hiking, and biking trails are taking shape. The railroad turntable, future museum, tow path connection, and a linear revival of the D&H Canal are beginning to develop into a historical location for 19th Century Transportation in America. During this past year, the BOCES summer work program again returned putting local teens to work clearing the turntable property. Again this free labor that is run, supervised, and paid for by BOCES is a program that teaches our local teenage resident's responsibility, coupled with hard work, equals success. A link from the old Erie railroad turntable to a 1 mile walking trail along a linear D&H canal, in the city, will be an asset that no other community can enjoy. From Spring to Fall volunteers have continued to come out to help beautify our city during "Community Service Saturday's" by working on the D&H Canal and tow path. Additionally the council has been working on clearing titles on properties that it owns and developing the rules and procedures that will allow the proposed City of Port Jervis Homeowner Resident Purchase Program to move forward. This program will welcome new single family homeownership to hardworking individuals and families to their new neighborhoods. Hard work over the last two years is beginning to payoff and it will continue. We have offered new events along with many of our

traditional events that draw hundreds if not thousands of visitors to our city. Aside from our coveted Soap Box Derby, Dinner Along the Delaware and Fireworks Show, Fall Foliage Festival, and Chrstkindlmarkt we added 2 new events to the city calendar in 2015 with the very successful Stephen Crane's 'The Red Badge of Courage' A Living Memorial Day now called Art and History in the Park, with the same Civil War theme, at Orange Square as well as the Tri-State Triathlon which will return in August. This year will see more new city events through our recreation department.

Unfortunately there can never be just good news because you can't have good without having bad and of course there is bad news for the city. Our fund balance is dangerously low at only \$250,000.00 when it should be 10% of our budget thus putting it at \$1,450,000.00. Dipping into the fund balance to balance a budget is a recipe for disaster. When doing this the council is only covering up the inevitable payment or creating a gap in funding that puts the city in jeopardy of failure. As I said last year, a fund balance, for those that do not know, is supposed to be your rainy day savings. Unfortunately we had many gaps to fill from over anticipated tax revenue, loss of multiple types of other revenue, and increased expenses with only a .05% tax increase in 2015. We were barely making our monthly bills for the city that run roughly \$1.2 million dollars. So now when money gets tight before city taxes are paid in April, the city has to take an anticipated note to pay bills which costs the city interest; whereas before it could come out of the fund balance and be put back. Therefore I will again state that using monies from the fund balance to make up a shortfall in the budget must not only stop now but we must begin to be replenished it. How do we do that? We have cut personnel over the past few years. We have increased revenues by fees. We continue to explore how to create sustainable

alternative revenues while enhancing our city. But we still have a problem. When the State of New York tries to force your hand to stay under a titled “2% tax cap” but goes ahead and raises mandated fees, program fees, and insurances rates to support their continued exorbitant spending without additional state aid to municipalities is not only an embarrassment but shameful. Again this year the state health insurance expense on our city employees, which are set by the state each year, went up 6.5% for 2016. Yet I reiterate the state expects municipalities to only raise taxes less than 2% but charges us on benefits and retirements over that amount. We live in a municipality that by the title “city” offers services. Cutting services and cutting personnel are the easy fix but it will ultimately lead to greater hardship for our citizens. If we cut services we will see more garbage on our streets, we will see crime rise, everyone will see insurance rates escalate, and much more. By cleaning up our city and making it more attractive to visitors and new homeowners is one way our value will increase, as building values increase, so does the tax base. We also need to continue to look at how to correct the disparaging property tax difference between our residential tax known as “Homestead” and our taxes on businesses also known as “Non-Homestead” to actually attract new businesses to our city. This year we will be working on a Serial Bond in which the city will make some major needed repairs on city properties but also use some of those funds to invest in the city so that we can begin to produce a revenue stream such as the development of Elks Brox Park, West End Beach with canoe, kayak, and raft livery, and the Railroad and Canal Museum’s just to name a few. Additional ways of raising revenue, to at least off-set some overtime expenses that are incurred during events is that the city will now charge a \$5.00 per participant/vendor fee at these events, not for spectators or visitors.

Speaking of fees, the city had to implement the sewer fee last year because of fines it incurred from a sewer main break in 2013 on Jersey Avenue. The New York Department of Environmental Conservation fined the city for the sewer line break and of course the city did not have the funds budgeted to pay for the fix let alone the fine. At that time it was decided that a comprehensive plan needed to be put in place to rebuild and repair our 120 year old sewer distribution line system that has been minimally maintained and had spotted replacement since its inception. Over the last year the City replaced a major line imminent of collapse nearly 19 feet deep in the ground between the Wagner Street pump house near the railroad tracks, across the Dollar General parking lot, to Jersey Avenue for nearly \$580,000.00. As I said before it will cost the city to replace the entire system in today's money about \$99,000,000.00 and the city received \$150,000.00 this year from the state for engineering study.

Although some of the construction that people don't see might be underground, clearly one could see just driving around, major home improvements throughout this great city. Some residents have taken advantage of 421-f called the "Capital Improvements to Residential Property" exemption which allows homeowners who are putting an addition onto or rehabilitating their main structure the ability to apply for a tax exemption on city taxes over the course of 4 years thus offsetting any new tax burden. This law is a sunset law that the council must entertain this year if they choose to continue the program, which I highly recommend. Our businesses also have tax exemptions too that are rarely taken advantage of but are encouraged to find out how they can save money through our city Assessor. One such program that the city is looking into is Energize NY and their ability to decrease utility bills for businesses while making them energy efficient. An open meeting

regarding Energize NY will be on February 8th in the Council Room at 6:00pm.

Speaking of housing, businesses, and taxes I would like to look at the Assessor's Department. Headed by our city Assessor, Yvonne Duryea, who works diligently reviewing, inspecting, and updating properties in the city to make sure everyone, pays their fair share. Unfortunately property exemptions continue to take up a great deal of the assessor's office time. 21% of the city's assessment roll is exempt and mandated by the State of New York without any type of state restitution. This equates to an annual loss to the city in the amount of \$1,762,168.00 up \$165,156.00 from last year. Although the citizens should not be happy, the assessor's office continually monitors these properties to make sure they abide by their exemption status. Foreclosures doubled in 2015 from the increased amount in 2014 of 147%. Again as we need to try and look at this in a positive way, many of the foreclosures that were multifamily are now being converted into single family homes because of the city's 240 day vacancy law. In addition, banks are beginning to readily get rid of these empty properties as many have paid on the newly established vacant building fee that started last year and cost the owner a \$1,000.00 per unit. If the building is a repeat offender this year, the cost is \$2,000.00 per unit for just letting the property sit vacant. If this fee is not paid it gets rolled over to the tax bill the following year to make sure payment is made. On the bright side in the Assessor's office, is that the highest sale price for a single family home increased by 44% in 2015 up from 33% in 2014 as the market increased by 10%, 5% over what was predicted for 2015.

As we are talking about houses and businesses, I find it important to let the citizenry know that some of your needs may be fulfilled without

going to a bank. The office of Community Development Agency is contracted by the city as an intricate part of our city's future growth. CDA director Valerie Maginsky has worked diligently for the agency and the city in working and contributing to many projects and discussions, by seeking funding for Housing, the White Water Kayak Park, 19th Century Transportation in America and Museum, Infrastructure, and more. The CDA primarily attains grants and disburses low interest loans on behalf of the city to help businesses establish, grow, and flourish but also helps to secure funds to improve infrastructure and homes. In 2015, the city benefited from over \$1.1 million written by the CDA for housing repairs, code updates, sewer, tech rescue-swift water training, Greenway, and Drug Free Communities. Working with the mayor's office the CDA has focused on marketing our city as well as establishing a program for zoning codes and architectural review that will help in the aesthetic look of our homes, businesses, and general layout of our city.

Recreation, led by John Faggione, again continued to offer more than any other previous year. The summer playgrounds saw over 3,000 children and served over 1,000 free lunches for 9 weeks. While the parks are in full swing during the summer, the recreational programs and Youth Center are open all year long. Recreational programs offered range from Art & Crafts to Karate, Judo, Basketball, Bowling, Skateboarding, and Sleigh Riding which all help bring countless kids, teens, and adults together while also building family time. The Youth Center had nearly 6,000 kids in attendance in 2015 that experienced homework help, games, activities and even guest speakers to talk to them in varying different fields. Special events topped the Recreation department with field trips, concerts, basketball tournaments, downhill skate board racing, the Delaware River 5K run, Dinner Along the

Delaware and Fireworks Show and the Halloween parade. This year the city got a taste of its first ever Tri-State Triathlon, which was a Sprint race. As predicted last year and built this year nearly 26 miles of hiking and biking trails that encompass the Elks-Brox Park and City Watershed Property will kick-off a race this March to opening the trails. They are still in development but on March 19th the first event, called the Snowball's Chance Mountain Bike Race, will begin an opportunity for thousands of outdoor enthusiast to come to Port Jervis to experience the pristine and abundant natural beauty of these trails. This race is for all ages on a new park that was developed specifically for non-motorized activity that will be closely monitored. Also new this year will be the Port Jervis Mid-Atlantic Cup Challenge 1/2 Ironman, Olympic, and Sprint Triathlon on June 17th, 18th, and 19th. The city and the Recreation Department are still working with developers on an Adventure Rope Park with Zip lines and hoping to make that a reality this year too. Recreation is a key component to this city's survival and we will continue to expand and change, where necessary, to meet the demands of drawing tourists and new residents as well as keeping friends who live here to stay.

Of course it goes without saying that every event or project that we do has this department working behind the scenes as well as performing their daily tasks. The Department of Public Works is led by Director Jack Farr and his assistant Steve Duryea. Major projects, in the DPW, like the water filtration plant clarifier that was built over the last year and is now online. This clarifier will not only allow the water to be purer but will eliminate any smell or residual in the filtration process. The city Water Department upgraded 5 new fire hydrants city wide, reinstated a twice a year flushing of our water pipes to avoid bacteria and other build up in the lines, they rebuilt the water intake building at

Reservoir #1 and installed 2 new pumps to facilitate moving water faster to the North Orange Street Water Supply tank. The versatile Department of Public Works employees in addition to their general duties of garbage removal, recyclables, cardboard, newspapers, Christmas tree removal, stumps, line painting, replacement, and repair of cracked and broken pipes underground, street sweeping, paving, snow plowing and much more... were also able to clear cut the trees on a 1 mile stretch of the D&H Canal, clear the Tow Path with the help of Orange and Rockland storm hardening thus allowing for more accessibility. They paved over 3300 feet of city streets and installed 15 ADA compliant handicap accessible sidewalk curb cuts. Additionally the Tri-State bridge and road widening project has finally received design approval from the NYS DOT for a possible Spring 2017 construction.

Our Police Department is led by Chief William Worden. This year, as in the past, the department continues to commit to fulfilling its obligation to work in partnership with our community and other law enforcement agencies to suppress and prevent crime. This year our police department will continue its proactive efforts towards illegal drug activity and related crimes by encouraging citizens, businesses, and civic groups to work side by side with officers and city officials to identify problems, develop solutions and work together to solve them. This will certainly reduce negativity, promote positive collaboration and improve the quality of life in our city. In 2015, the department launched a program that is being taught to 8th graders in the Port Jervis school district called "Too Good for Drugs" in which students begin to understand why they are important and what illegal activity and drug use can do to them. During 2016 there will be some belt tightening in this department but under excellent leadership that has created a plan that uses valuable time

wisely. The threat of cuts was nearly all too real for the police department dispatchers but with time management and concerns expressed by the public, they have remained. Police Dispatchers are not only experienced people handling the emergency and non-emergency calls that come into the police department but gives a real life opportunity for first line supervisory sergeants to be in the field providing enhanced supervision and support. In the area of technology for the police department we will be looking to completely upgrade and enhance the City Street Camera System with high visibility pole cameras in strategic areas along our business district to improve public safety but to also allow an expansion of headquarters in city hall. In the area of crime there are good indicators and not so good indicators. The city's Part 1 and Part 2 crimes are down as well as well as areas of simple assaults, disorderly conduct, DWI, and other offenses but there are increases in areas related to drug use and abuse. Although our officers cannot stop the growing national epidemic, our officers provide us with protection and the peace of mind knowing that they will stand in harm's way. They understand that reducing drug abuse is a nationwide problem and that enforcing laws is simply one component. Our officers continually receive Professional Development training as part of what is needed to understand the community in which they work. Their investment equates to enhanced excellence and professionalism. Over the past year our officers investigated 12,735 incidents in 2015 a decrease of 4.3% over 2014. There can be many factors that caused this decrease but ultimately our citizens have been actively involved as well as having supervisors on the street adding to a layer of enhanced protection and proactive policing. The raids that citizens have seen on those who have decided to continue a life of ill repute in our city will continue until that element of people who partake in illegal drug activity has decide leave. We the citizens of the City of Port Jervis must each

understand that it is the men and woman of our police department that are out there every day acting professionally and providing optimal service with courage, vision, and integrity to protect our residents. Increasing the department's transparency and ability to provide public information will continue this year as it did last year.

The city building department led by building official, Dave Rivera, has really stepped up to the plate and took to task cleaning up the appearances of dilapidated, unkept, and unsafe buildings throughout the city. Dave has taken the approach that has allowed for many compliance issues to work themselves out before being issued orders thus making this city look and operate in a safe manner. This year Rivera and his assistant Laurie Powrie will continue to work to improve Port Jervis by making sure code enforcement is fair, equal, and across the board. Their department has received and will be putting into implementation a comprehensive tracking system that alerts them to inspections as well as appointments and history from the address being inspected. As was the case last year, observing and identifying violations that will hopefully be corrected first with just a contact or heads up, will be welcomed; while others will need to be moved along in a different manner and will be well documented and violated if necessary. It is important that our neglected buildings are attended too and it is this department that will make sure that the code and standards are followed.

Our City Clerk's office, led by our City Clerk-Treasurer Robin Waizenegger, traditionally collects taxes, fines and fees. Additionally, the City Clerk's office responsibility is to improve its cash flow and make the recommendations needed to effectively run our city efficiently. The city is facing financial challenges as we head into 2016 and as a result of trying to provide our residents with a level of services that they

are accustomed to while trying to meet the unrealistic financial goals set through NYS policy is trying. We have tried to maintain services with shrinking resources but unfortunately it just hasn't worked. The City Clerk has advised the council of the City of Port Jervis that it cannot continue to cannibalize our financial security to satisfy the demands of policy makers that are not our constituents.

A program that our seniors have relied on for some time is our Nutrition Program, headed by Kathy Shortell. Although meals are now produced by Orange County, Kathy and her staff continue to welcome guests with a hot meal that come to the Farnum House for lunch. Others receive meals sent out to guests that are flash frozen and need to be microwaved. A substantial part of the expense for this department is paid for by the county therefore this change was a change that was unavoidable. However, Kathy and her staff of paid and many volunteers have stepped up to the plate and made this new change work to the best of their ability. In addition, 2015 still saw the Nutrition Program provide the 5 week summer cooking program called "The Little Chefs at Rec." This program provided cooking techniques to children as well as sanitation education, culinary vocabulary, and of course lots of taste testing. The project once again produced, bagged, and labeled 400 cookies for the National Night Out against Crime that was held on the first Tuesday of August at Riverside Park and that program will continue this year. Further Kathy and her staff have coordinated a tax program that is offered to our low-income seniors. This program begins once again in February.

The City of Port Jervis Fire Department is a 100% volunteer fire department led by Frank Fuller 3rd. In 2015, the fire department

responded to a total of 411 calls and of those calls 380 were within the city.

The Fire Department is currently undergoing a significant update in regards to technology. Last year, the fire department went live with a new records management computer system. This system allows the department to streamline paperwork and track calls better. The system will also assist hydrant locations, occupancy hazards, and many other items. The fire stations will soon have internet capabilities to assist with the new web based Emergency Reporting system. The Fire Department with the assistance of Ms. Valerie Maginsky from the Community Development Agency has recently applied for a micro-grant(AFG) to finish off the technical upgrades with placing tablets inside the fire apparatus for real-time updates directly from the 911 center.

The Fire Department received a grant from the Department of Homeland Security for the purposes of creating a Swift water rescue team. The grant allowed the department to purchase a total of over \$142,000 worth of water operations equipment. Just recently the department was awarded an additional \$12,000 for the purposes of training the new team. In May, the department will send 8 firefighters down south for the most advanced swift water training.

The Fire Departments ISO rating is currently a 4 (which is good for an all-volunteer fire department) however, the Fire Chiefs are dedicated to lowering that rating to a 3 (in which few all-volunteer fire departments have this rating). This will take a lot of hard work and time but the benefits for the city and all of its commercial buildings and business' will be tremendous. The fire insurance premiums will automatically lower and help with making Port Jervis a more business friendly city.

As always, the Fire Department is looking for special individuals that are willing to step up and answer the call to be a firefighter and protect our city.

Earlier I spoke about the White Water Kayak Park which is in the permitting stage and has just recently been given the clearance of delineation of wetlands by the Army Corp of Engineers. After much work in gathering the necessary documents to proceed to this stage, the CDA is now seeking funding for the project as this is a vital piece of recreational activity that can bring a positive economic impact to our city. The White Water Kayak Park can increase tourism in the city and provide a unique draw for those with different levels of expertise that like to fish, kayak, canoe, raft, tube, surf, or boogie-board as well as welcoming sunbathers and walkers in an area that is currently overgrown and underutilized.

Of course our local Soap Box Derby continues to be the world's largest local with the most participants and returns to Sussex Street on Sunday, June 12th. Our local derby completed its 16th year and is affiliated with the International All-American Soap Box Derby. After the racing this year is over there will be 4 champions in 4 different divisions (Stock, Super Stock, Masters and Super Kids) who will go on to participate in the worldwide event in Akron, Ohio. This local, led by its director Wayne Addy, brings thousands of spectators that spend their entire day watching races, eating food from local vendors, and enjoying activities for kids right here in our city.

Over the past year the Mayor's office has worked extremely hard in trying to notify as many of our residents and businesses in the city about activities, functions, events and projects through e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, Nixle, and the radio. In February we launched the city's new website and by November we created our first city newsletter. To sign up for an electronic copy of the newsletter visit our new site at www.portjervisny.org and click the Newsletter tab located at the upper right hand of the page. You will be prompted to enter your email address and will be enrolled to receive the newsletter when it is published. Our council meetings are still broadcasted live on the internet as well as on Public Access Tri 23TV for cable viewers. Speaking of Tri 23 I would like to thank the many volunteers there for not only taping and showing our council meetings but for the entertainment and news worthy shows they have offered on access for nearly 3 decades. My office continues to work closely with Neversink Media Group, broadcasting live on 107.7 FM and 1490 AM WDLC, as we record periodic shows on Saturday morning called "Plugged In – Port Jervis." The show gives details of events, happenings and projects in the City of Port Jervis. Additionally, my office stays in continual contact with our area newspaper reporters from the Times Herald Record, The Gazette, Epoch Times, River Reporter, and the Pike County Dispatch so that those that read print are also included.

As I said last year, these could be some trying years that lie ahead for our city, we need to focus on correcting our financial woes ourselves as we see that help from the State and Federal levels has been little more than rhetoric. This will involve facing the hard truths that the services we provide to our residents come with a price tag and that we are pretty much on our own in addressing those needs of our community for clean drinking water, safe roads, a functional sewer system, quick response by

the police and fire department in emergencies, and replacing an aging infrastructure but with hard work, determination, and team building we can get through these difficult times and begin to live in a city that will prosper and make our forefathers proud.

I finished last year with a quote from Teddy Roosevelt who said “In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing.” This past year we began to do something and must continue to do something but we certainly must avoid doing nothing. Therefore the citizens of Port Jervis need to come together and plan to work hard to show those that visit our city, or to show those that want to buy a home or business in our city that we have more to offer to them and their families in a place they too can call home.

Thank you