

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

January 23, 2023

As I stand here today and reflect on the last eleven years, I can tell you I am extremely proud of what we have accomplished. Although it wasn't always seamless, it could not have been done without the collaboration of all of us on our team the City Council, department heads, board and commissions and volunteers.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for our partnership and look forward to that continuing.

I am happy to share with you that the state of our City of Marlborough could not be stronger.

We continue to attract businesses of all sizes, enabling us to provide quality services to our residents while maintaining the lowest tax bills in the region! I recognize not everyone is in favor of new development, but that's what allows us to keep Marlborough affordable.

Marlborough's home values went up 18% last year and the average homeowner is only seeing an average tax increase of \$199. Where other local communities saw increases of between \$306 and \$4,373 this year, yes \$4,373!

We continued our great relationship with Governor Charlie Baker and Lt Gov Karen Polito receiving yet another MassWorks grant.

A \$2 million award to make improvements to Cedar Hill Street and increasing pedestrian walkability in the area. This vital industrial area connects directly to the 495 interchange.

And this is the perfect time to thank Gov Baker and Lt Gov Polito for eight great years and wish them both the very best of luck with life's next chapter.

I look forward to working with Gov Healy and Lt Gov Kim Driscoll, and anticipate a similar working partnership with them.

We have started construction with the \$3 million Massworks grant received last year to make upgrades to Main and Weed Streets, creating more usable outdoor space, better lighting, and walkability.

I realize that any Main Street project is a huge inconvenience to residents and area businesses, and we will make every effort to keep disruptions to a minimal.

Over the course of the past 11 years, we have invested heavily in our water and sewer infrastructure and much-needed upgrades to our streets. This past year some of our street reconstruction projects included Stow Road, Beaman and Denoncourt Streets, Freemont and Ash Street, Boundary, Clover Hill, Harrison Place and Donald Lynch Blvd., Sherman, Neil, Lambert, and Zombetti Streets and yes there were others.

We have created a “Proposed Development” communication page on the City’s website to increase transparency, sharing updated and accurate information with residents on proposed developments.

Social media has been used by some to provide misinformation on projects, and I believe we have an obligation to provide factual information to the public. Some of you may remember the rumors going around about the Senior Center being built in the middle of Ward Park. No matter how hard we tried we couldn't get people to believe the facts of the project. Today we have a popular Senior Center and renovated Ward Park that all can access and enjoy.

I think one of the things we should be most proud of over the last year has been the Lincoln/Mechanic Street project. For several decades, this property has been run down and used as warehouse space. When finished we will see a mixed-use development with housing and retail stores as well as parking and public restrooms on the rail trail tying the French Hill neighborhood to the downtown area.

With our vision, and support of the City Council we purchased the corner lot to control what would eventually be built. We did not need another gas station or convenience store in the neighborhood as was proposed. Your faith in my request has paid off. And I look forward to the groundbreaking with Wood Partners in the coming months.

The Marlborough Public Library expansion project is more than half complete. Many of you were at the beam signing just a few months ago. We are fortunate to have a Marlborough resident named as the new and enthusiastic Library Director, Sara Belisle (B-Lyle) who was able to come on board prior to Margaret Cardello's retirement and get up to speed. We look forward to celebrating the grand opening sometime this summer.

In addition to Sara, we also were fortunate to find a new experienced Human Resource Director, Attorney John Harmon. John brings his HR and legal background and will be looking for new and innovative ways to recruit new hires and fill city positions.

We appointed Mary Murphy as the new Superintendent of Schools, hiring from within our current staff with the departure of Mike Bergeron.

In addition, we promoted Chad Carter to Housing Director. Some of you may know that Chad just eight years ago, participated in our Summer Public Service Internship Program and has been with us ever since. That program continues today.

Under Chad's leadership, the Community Development Authority has completed the upgrade of the 40-unit senior housing complex on Pleasant Street and a new roof at 250 Main Street. Plans are already in place for additional upgrades to our senior housing complexes.

We continue to invest in our recreation facilities.

We recently unveiled the 26.2-mile Panther Trail a marathon distance loop located entirely in Marlborough.

Thank you, to the dedication of Pricilla Ryder the Conservation Commission, and volunteers who worked hard to make this happen. Additionally, a section of the walking path at Ghiloni Park that travels around the back field has been repaved. The walking trail and track section is a frequent stop for visitors to the park as well as Marlborough and AMSA High Schools track teams, using it for their meets.

This past June on flag day, along with state and local officials we honored all our service men who gave the ultimate sacrifice during WWII. It was the largest community Medal of Liberty Recognition held in Massachusetts. Although solemn, it was also very special, and I appreciate the Marlborough Historical Society and volunteers for organizing the event and all of those who took the time to attend, especially the families who made the effort to participate coming from different parts of the country.

We received a dedication from the Massachusetts Sons of the American Revolution at the Old Common Cemetery. Marlborough is only one of three cities to hold this honor and I'd like to thank Veterans Agent Mike Hennessy and volunteer Matt Sargent for their help in both these special events.

We again have done our part to improve energy efficiency in the city, retrofitting – new LED fixtures at DPW, transfer stations, water treatment plant. Along with Whitcomb, Goodnow, MHS, and Hildreth schools.

City residents are again seeing large cost savings on their electricity bills. Last year we were about five cents below National Grid's rate. This year we are seeing a savings of 24.5 cents. The average homeowner can anticipate savings of \$147.00 per month. Overall, the anticipated savings for all residents in the program during the winter period will be close to \$10 million dollars. I'd like to thank President Ossing and the entire municipal aggregation committee for their recommendation to move forward with this program.

To help our seniors who are on fixed incomes, I plan to propose increasing the Senior Citizen Tax Work Off Program to \$1,500.00 per person, per year for those eligible participants to assist with high inflation cost.

I'd like to recognize Meredith Harris and her team at the MEDC, for their continued efforts and support. While these last few years were strange to say the least, their phones kept ringing. Companies continue to be interested in locating to Marlborough. Meredith and I were able to visit 30 companies in 2022. And had companies like Automated Health Systems, Lifeline Systems, and PI-USA all choose to take space in Marlborough.

With a big boost from our partnership with Phantom Gourmet, we saw the last two quarters of meals tax collected, the largest in the city's history.

And the hotel tax last quarter was also the highest we've ever seen. As I'm sure you recall that our meals tax income is dedicated to the parks and recreation areas in the city.

I had told the President I would only take 10 minutes of your meeting tonight, but I should have known that would not be enough time to recognize another busy year.

I also want to make sure I quickly mentioned other important news:

- We hired eight new police officers and had four internal promotions.
- Ten new firefighters and had five internal promotions.
- Had a successful freshman year for Councilor Brown.

- Received a \$100,000 grant from Quest Diagnostics to help our MHS students with SAT and AP test preparation.
- We had graduation for the entire MHS class for the first-time since 2019.
- We brought back the youth police academy and The Masons brought back the car show.
- Girls' youth softball celebrated its 30th year.
- We made most virtual meetings a thing of the past.
- I was invited and participated with State Treasurer Goldberg in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Mass Lottery.
- And after having my knee replaced was able to dance at the annual Senior Beach party where we were entertained with the music of Flashback.

Looking ahead, I ask you to expedite the proposal before you for the additional \$10 million in Street projects to get a jump on other communities for this spring's construction season.

And, to our residents, if you have an idea or suggestion, that can make our city a better place to work, live and play please don't hesitate to reach out to my office. And don't forget we are always looking for experienced residents to step up if you would like to serve on one of our boards or commissions.

Again, thank you for placing your faith in me, and together we can make the next few years as successful as the last decade.

Thank you and have a great meeting.