

City of Fall River Massachusetts
Office of the City Clerk

ALISON M. BOUCHARD
CITY CLERK

INÊS LEITE
ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

JOINT MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL AND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MEETING: Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.
Council Chamber, One Government Center

PRESENT: President Cliff Ponte, presiding;
Councilors Shawn E. Cadime, Steven A. Camara,
Bradford L. Kilby, Stephen R. Long, Leo O. Pelletier
and Derek R. Viveiros

ABSENT: Joseph D. Camara and Pam Laliberte-Lebeau

IN ATTENDANCE: Mayor Jasiel F. Correia II

President Cliff Ponte called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. with a moment of silence followed by a salute to the flag and announced that the meeting may be recorded with audio or video and transmitted through any medium. There was a presentation of the colors by the Fall River Police Department and Fall River Fire Department Honor Guards.

All members of the Fall River School Committee were present for this meeting.

President Cliff Ponte introduced Mayor Jasiel F. Correia II and stated that the purpose of the meeting was for the Mayor's State of the City address, a copy of which is attached hereto and made a part of these minutes.

Councilor Shawn E. Cadime left the Council Chamber at 5:34 p.m.

On a motion made by Councilor Steven A. Camara and seconded by Councilor Stephen R. Long, it was unanimously voted to adjourn at 6:03 p.m., with Councilors Shawn E. Cadime, Joseph D. Camara and Pam Laliberte-Lebeau absent and not voting.

List of documents and other exhibits used during the meeting:

Agenda packet (attached)
DVD of meeting
Mayor's State of the City Address

A true copy. Attest:

Alison M. Bouchard
City Clerk

In City Council, May 14, 2019
Approved

State of the City Address – March 19, 2019

Good evening, good evening everyone, what another important night. It's my pleasure to be here tonight pursuant to those provisions of the Charter which authorize and require me to deliver an annual State of the City Address no later than the third Wednesday in March. Let me start out by thanking all of our elected officials who are here tonight. I also want to thank every city employee, from clerks to department heads, police officers and fire fighters, school teachers and DCM workers, every single one of these people allow our city to function and shine. Thank you for your commitment to Fall River and please join me in applauding the efforts of every single municipal employee.

I also want to extend a warm welcome to our invited guests here tonight, including my friends, my family, my parents and my grandmother. Thank you and I love you.

It has been just a little over three years since taking office as your Mayor, the Mayor of the great City of Fall River. As we enter the Fiscal Year 2020 budget cycle, I want every citizen and business to know that the Correia Administration remains completely focused on providing you, the citizen, the renter, the veteran, the family, the child and the business owner with the city services you have asked for and deserve.

You elected me to serve as your Mayor in hopes that the programs that are important to you would be expanded and the fees and expenses that burden you would be eliminated. You asked me to eliminate the \$120 trash fee and we did it! You asked me to eliminate the purple bag program and we did it! You asked for better city services and a commitment to fiscal stability and responsibility and that's what my Administration has delivered and continues to do, every single day, with laser focus on providing the services you want and deserve. And so tonight, once again, I am thrilled to report to the citizens and business community of Fall River that the state of our city is strong and getting stronger!

Three short years ago, this was not the case; our city had been plagued by poor fiscal management. Former leaders even stated that the city was on the brink of receivership. My Administration was left with a mere \$500,000 in stabilization funds and a negative outlook by the credit agency, Moody's. Under the leadership of CFO Mary Sahady, City Administrator Cathy Ann Viveiros and I, our strategy was to cut costs in areas that did not reduce city services. Our goal was to eliminate fees and increase services. With the cooperation of every department head, we were able to implement a zero based budgeting practice for the first time and eliminate our snow and ice deficit.

By bringing competition to health insurance contracts and in cooperation with our city's unions, we have been able to stop a \$50 million dollar budget buster from spiraling out of control. Fall River has defied industry trends in curbing health insurance costs allowing us to spend those funds on other services.

The privatization of trash collection not only led to the fulfillment of a campaign promise to eliminate the \$120 household fee, it also improved collection services. We were one of the few, if not the only community in the Commonwealth, to eliminate not one but two fees and deliver savings to taxpayers without using any one time funds.

These new fiscal policies have allowed the city to begin to refund its stabilization account. Three years ago the City had \$500,000 in stabilization funds and today I am proud to tell you

that we have over \$7 million dollars in surplus. Just last year the credit and bond rating agency Moody's dropped their negative outlook on the City of Fall River, citing better fiscal policies, leadership and redevelopment opportunity.

In fiscal year 2020, we will focus our efforts on raising new revenues that will not burden our residents and businesses. Solar development, marijuana sales, billboard fees and electronic advertising will all be new revenues that do not come from taxpayers' pockets. A new transfer station will provide trash host fees that will bring in \$750,000 annually. These fiscal policies have allowed us to increase the municipal services that are important to you.

We have always been a community of neighborhoods. Your neighborhood is a priority; everyone deserves a clean and safe neighborhood with exciting improvements. My Administration has worked with Mike Dion and the Community Development Agency to bring new park and playground improvements to neighborhoods across the City; Pulaski Park, Chew Park, Griffin Park, Patriot's Playground and many others have all been upgraded.

Over \$1 million dollars has been spent on sidewalks. Many more streets and sidewalks will be upgraded through Chapter 90 funds, creating a more ADA compliant, accessible and beautiful city for all of us to enjoy.

This Administration has prioritized the restoration of housing stock in our neighborhoods by investing \$3.4 million dollars in Home Rehab Funds and assisted 50 first-time homebuyers with grants totaling \$439,000. These grants leveraged over \$8.7 million dollars of private mortgage funds. We continue to work with a new award from the Attorney General that revitalizes abandoned property throughout our neighborhoods and in a few months we will cut the ribbon on a brand new senior center on Alden Street.

A newly reorganized Department of Community Maintenance is no longer focused on trash collection, but rather on fixing streets, fixing potholes and sidewalks. This past year we launched a citywide street sweeping program bringing street sweepers into neighborhoods they had never been before and in Fiscal Year 2020 we will expand this program with regularly scheduled routes to clean throughout all of our city.

Our infrastructure is strong and getting stronger!

Over the short span of my first and second term in office, Fall River has certainly moved forward with economic development, job creation and job skill training. My Administration took the success of Amazon and Southcoast Marketplace and leveraged their success to grow many new small businesses. Canned Heat, Red Hen, Troy City Brewery, Mission Cold Brew and so many others are opening up every single week!

A storefront façade program, a loan program and grant funds for new and expanding businesses combined with unprecedented cooperation from state agencies has led to an economic boom in Fall River. Blount Seafood, Millstone Medical, Raw Seafoods and Korber Hats have chosen to expand in Fall River. These big and small expansions have put thousands of people to work in our region.

Despite the negativity promoted by the few, these businesses are living proof that our local economy is strong and existing businesses have faith in my Administration's ability to help them succeed. Our strong partnership with the Massachusetts Office of Business Development and

our workforce training services are providing these businesses what they need to make it here in our city.

Our workforce training group is helping Charlie and Owen Merrow resurrect a proud tradition of apparel and textile manufacturing to create a new, tech and textile industry that will allow Fall River to once again compete on the world stage. A permanent skills training center at Merrow will train the necessary skills to fill the 40 plus positions available right now.

Route 79 South has been completed and Route 79 North will become a boulevard connecting our City to the waterfront. In just a few weeks the cooling towers and chimneys at Brayton Point will be demolished making way for sweeping views and 300 acres of industrial waterfront development creating many more thousands of jobs.

My Administration is ensuring that we will be part of the new Wind Energy Economy. We possess the greatest waterfront of any gateway city in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, however for decades it has been underutilized. My Administration is proposing that we create a working waterfront, as well as a hospitality and entertainment destination. Some of the greatest waterfronts in the country follow this model. We have identified several parcels and several wind energy companies that are prepared to transform our region into a wind energy leader creating thousands of high paying jobs for our citizens and for generations to come.

A new, stronger, revitalized Redevelopment Authority is poised to reshape our waterfront, downtown and Bio-Park. We have entered a new era of economic development in the City of Fall River. The era of economic development for the many, not the few. The Redevelopment Authority will redevelop Weaver's Cove and working with our federal delegation, we will take down the old Brightman Street Bridge allowing use of Weaver's Cove for wind energy development and never for LNG.

Workforce training led by BCTC, the Workforce Investment Board, Bristol Community College and UMass will allow for the creation of thousands high paying new jobs. Jobs like underwater welders, electricians, project managers and laborers.

In addition to becoming a working waterfront by leading the wind energy sector, we will take advantage of the hospitality and entertainment opportunities that exist on the waterfront, capitalizing on the boating community under the direction of Bob Smith, completing and developing the city pier, adding more restaurants and venues like the Narrows Center for the Arts, Boneheads Live and Battleship Cove.

Economic development in 2019 and beyond means continuing to upgrade our streets and sidewalks. Thanks to City Council support, we are able to commit almost \$10 million dollars to our streetscape program. Today we see the results of streetscapes on Bank, Purchase and East Main Streets. We will begin to totally upgrade Bedford Street creating a new downtown corridor from Portugalia Marketplance to Battleship Cove. My vision is to totally reinvigorate this area with trolley service between our main streets and our waterfront. In addition to Bedford Street, we are upgrading Columbia Street, North and South Main Streets, New Boston Road and fully reconstructing William S. Canning Boulevard.

Blighted property and city tax possessions must also be redeveloped, just look at what is happening at the King Philip Mill, as that mills comes down a new neighborhood will rise, eliminating the public safety hazard as well as opening up the neighborhood to Cook Pond.

Like King Philip Mill, we will turn over the old police station and the Nu-Chrome site to the private sector for development in the next month.

We will move forward on plans to revitalize the Armory on Bank Street, which will complement the hundreds of new market rate housing units that are filling up all over our city. 44 units on Bank Street, 200 units on Alden Street and more market rate units coming to downtown. In addition to expanding market rate housing, this Administration has ensured project based housing does not expand while still protecting those residents who need housing assistance most.

This past December, the Housing Authority amended their plan to give preference to many of the residents of Riverview Towers. Through negotiations and compromises reached with, the building owner Ed Jouki, Tim Barrows from the Housing Authority and my office, we have protected the residents that are here in our community.

Businesses are opening up and people are moving in. As we get closer to the 2023 completion of the train connection to and from Boston, our city will transform even more.

This is just the beginning of our economic comeback! Our economy is strong and getting stronger!

The safety of every member of our community is a top priority of this Administration. I believe our Administration and this City Council have taken more action to improve the staffing and equipment in all of our public safety departments than any other administration in the last decade.

In the last three years we have:

- Increased the staffing level of our police department
- Added new police and animal control vehicles
- Added new positions including a crime analyst
- Added new dispatchers
- Added new radios and Tasers
- Added mobile cameras and a mobile command unit
- Increased community policing

And now we will add even more police positions and increase overtime to completely saturate and overpower crime in our city. We will give our police officers a much deserved raise and ensure that each officer and their family knows that we have their back and we want them to return home safely at the end of every single shift. We are so fortunate to have the best police chief in the entire state, Chief Al Dupere and under his leadership our department will continue to thrive.

As a city we encounter challenges all urban communities face, including intolerance, bigotry and hate crimes. We will vigorously protect the rights of all our citizens against these evils. However there is no question that we have one of the best police forces in the state, one of the few that is both state and nationally accredited. In 2018 we saw decreases in property crimes, robbery, motor vehicle theft, arson and violent crime. In 2019 and beyond we are committed to continuing to provide our officers with new tools to better do their job and increased manpower and overtime to better fight crime. Our Police Department is strong and getting stronger!

The Fire Department has seen an unprecedented amount of support. First and foremost, Chief Lynch has led the department to be the envy of the state. Chief your commitment to this department is not only honorable but something that gives me strength and security every day, it's an honor to work with you. I want to thank Union President Jason Burns constant support and an advocate for a fully upgraded Fire Department. In the last three years and into the 2020 budget we were able to purchase through grants and bonds the following:

- 68 sets of new breathing apparatus
- 104 sets of new fire protective gear
- Gear washers and dryers
- Our first ever rescue boat
- 4 new engines, 1 heavy rescue, 1 platform ladder truck and 1 command unit
- 2 new ambulances
- A 5th medical rescue
- New state of the art radio fire alarm system for all city properties.
- A new ladder truck is being built

And we will purchase a second set of gear to continue the fight against firefighter related cancers. In addition to this new much needed equipment we sustainably absorbed all SAFER Grant firefighters and pending contract negotiations we will have the opportunity for the first time in many years to bring man power up from 175 to 195 firefighters. Our Fire Department is strong and getting stronger!

An ever improving education system combined with a new Durfee High School is the top priority of this Administration. Education for all means more school funding and access to workforce training programs that focus on educating youth and adults in the traditional ways as well as job training. We took a fiscally challenged system and met and exceeded net school spending. We erased net school spending shortfalls and will provide over \$7 million dollars more in school funding in the FY2020 Budget.

We successfully guided a compromise for the Atlantis Charter High School. In addition to building a new Durfee High School we will build a new Diman High School. We funded and facilitated a relationship with the Resiliency Preparatory Academy and People, Inc., a partnership that yielded a community training center to train students that may have otherwise failed and instead now have an opportunity at a successful job. Whether it's a new Durfee High School or job training programs, or vocational programs offered by Diman High School; every citizen will have an opportunity and a chance to make it here. Our school system is strong and getting stronger!

Fall River has always been mindful of the sacrifices that our veterans have made. They are very much a part of the very fabric of our community. A replica of the Vietnam Memorial wall will be erected at Bicentennial Park. Using private donations and the City's commitment of \$300,000, we can augment our wonderful tribute to all veterans and make a spectacular addition to the monuments already present there. In addition, we have remodeled and upgraded the Veteran's Center on Pine Street. I want to thank Ray Hague, his staff and the so many volunteers who do their part in giving back to our veterans. Some of my proudest moments as Mayor have been honoring these outstanding individuals and their families. I want everyone to know that we have accomplished so much together and we will continue this great progress. We have many priorities ranging from economic development to public safety to

fiscal management. As you have heard tonight we improved these areas and strengthened all government to serve our citizens.

As we continue to make progress in all of these areas there are a few that continue to be challenges. Drug abuse, is a very important issue to me, a national disease that has crippled and ruined the lives of so many, I want everyone's help to tackle the issue of drug abuse. Together we have made a positive impact on many lives through the efforts of the Mayor's Opioid Task Force. My Administration has launched initiatives like project Re-Connect which has allowed police officers and providers to connect and help people who are experiencing substance abuse disorder. We organized monthly events like the Help Center at City Hall to help de-stigmatize and provide treatment to those in need.

On behalf of the City, under the auspices of Judge Macy, a national lawsuit has been filed against big pharmaceutical companies which will give our city an opportunity to receive significant funds to combat the opioid crisis.

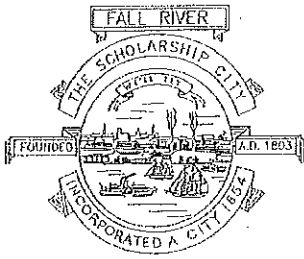
Joining us here tonight is proof that there is hope in the fight against the opioid crisis. Josh Goncalo is here tonight in the audience. Josh is a 31 year old lifelong resident of Fall River; he has had a drug addiction since he was 19. He overdosed twice last year and through project re-connect I am proud to share with all of you that he is in recovery and wanted to be here tonight to share his success and give hope to many others out there. Our programs have helped Josh and will continue to help many others.

We will work together with non-profits like Justice Resource Institute and Steppingstone to continue to address issues of homelessness and mental health issues in the coming months. The fight against these issues continues and we stand ready and willing to take on any enemy or challenge.

In order to continue all this progress, we need a network of relationships, both public and private, through which we can make our voices heard and our needs felt. As I look around this room tonight, I see many elected officials. I know we have not always gotten along and I know some of you are not happy with recent developments, but for the good of our city and adhering to your oath, please put differences aside to get even more things done for the citizens of our great city! To this end, I reaffirm my sincere desire to cooperate with all elected officials and most of all the City Council and School Committee. My door is always open to you. Please participate with me in a constructive manner to advance the interests of the city and its people. For my part, I will make a genuine effort to build trust and be more inclusive. There is no doubt the city has progressed over the last three years and I am excited about the future of our beautiful city. This is just the beginning and there is so much more to come. I pledge to continue to devote all my energy to making Fall River great. But I have not done it alone and cannot do it alone. I need your support, your help and your cooperation. Whatever we do, we must do together.

The goals are set, the tools are in place and the destination is known – now we must follow the path, the path that this Administration has laid out. So once again I attest to you, the citizen, the taxpayer, the student, the family, the veteran, the senior; that the state of our city is strong and getting stronger!

God bless you all and God bless Fall River. Thank you and have a good night.



City of Fall River Massachusetts
Office of the City Clerk

RECEIVED

2019 MAR 14 P 2:56

CITY CLERK _____
FALL RIVER, MA

ALISON M. BOUCHARD
CITY CLERK

INÊS LEITE
ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

JOINT MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL AND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2019 AT 5:30 PM

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ONE GOVERNMENT CENTER

AGENDA

The purpose of the meeting is to allow the Mayor to deliver the
State of the City Address



Alison M. Bouchard
City Clerk

ADA Coordinator: Gary P. Howayeck, Esq. 508-324-2650