

MAYOR SCOTT W. LANG

STATE OF THE CITY

March 2, 2006

Good afternoon citizens of New Bedford, Jim Mathes, Maureen Armstrong, members of the New Bedford Chamber of Commerce, David Alves, President, and members of the City Council, members of our Board of Assessors, members of our School Committee, Senator Montigny, our Massachusetts State Representatives, (Rep. Cabral, Rep. Koczera, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Canessa) Governor's Councilor Carol Fiola, the Dartmouth Select Board and guests, all city employees and representatives of elected officials, and all of you listening to this broadcast from your homes, businesses and automobiles. Thank you for being with us today. I also want to thank our hosts today, Our Lady of Angels Band Cultural Center and its President, Tony Cabral. I selected this venue to show this facility off to the City. Thank you for your faith and investment in our City.

In modern tradition, the Mayor of New Bedford comes before the City and presents a State of the City Address; however, I have tried to keep the citizens of New Bedford informed of the occurrences that impact the "state of the city" each and every day. The public has the right to know on every issue the City is involved in, especially those that affect the quality of their lives. I have tried to conduct an open, citizen interactive Mayor's Office. I have followed a schedule (often times, running late) which involves meeting with community and business leaders, our citizens, and I have had a great deal of fun visiting many of our schools. I have learned much more than I have taught the students of the City.

The people of our City elected me to preside over an open, honest government--a government where all citizens are treated equally and all citizens have input. The days of backroom deals and special treatment in our City are over. When I find impropriety, I will report it to the appropriate authorities and disclose it to the public. Daylight shining through darkness produces sunshine. New

Bedford deserves sunshine, a good old fashioned common sense approach to problem solving—an approach that involves ensuring that solutions found are for the good of the order.

City Council

I have enjoyed working with the City Councilors. Many of them I have known for some time, and some I am just beginning to know. They are the neighborhood representatives, and I respect their role in our City government. They are trusted public servants. I believe that each Councilor should speak out on their vision on issues that affect the City. Whenever possible, the Administration will assist the Councilors with their ideas or specific project requests. It has been my honor to appear before the City Council three times and look forward to working closely with the City Council, presenting ideas before their meetings.

Importance of the State of the City Address

On January 2, 1860, Mayor Isaac C. Tabor gave his inaugural address to the City Council. His remarks on citizen participation and the role of government still ring true today three months and 146 years later. At that time, he said to the City Council, "The theory of our government requires that every citizen should interest himself in public affairs, and watch with a jealous eye the conduct of those whom he has placed in authority; and of us it is required, that acting not merely with reference to the present, but also as trustees for posterity, we should do all things necessary to be done to guard the honor, promote the permanent prosperity, and secure the perpetuity, of the government. To this end, let all our labors, all our efforts, be devoted; avoiding everything like a narrow, illiberal, or merely temporizing policy, and adopting in its stead a rule of guidance based upon a large and comprehensive view of all the wants, interests and demands of this entire community." (Mayor Isaac C. Taber Address to City Council January 2, 1860, 1860 City Document No. 1, p. 4-5).

The annual State of the City assessment is extremely important in that it provides a bellwether as to where we are and a clear guide as to where we must head as a City. I am very optimistic about our City's future. I was very optimistic when I was sworn in as Mayor; I was very optimistic when I

was campaigning for the position and I am very optimistic 60 days later, I have found there are 100,000 reasons to continue my sincere optimism and belief in this City. Working together, we are on the threshold of building the foundation for a great City based on a community sense of pride and respect, and upon a quality of life which will be a model for like-size urban areas.

Perhaps the best way to present the State of the City is to focus on the issues that are most important to us as citizens of New Bedford, and explain where I see the City's challenges for the future.

Public Safety

On January 2, 2006 at 7:00 P.M., in my first act as Mayor, I re-opened the police stations in the North End and in the South End of the City. The South End station was fully operational within a few weeks of January 2nd, and I am now pleased to announce that the newly renovated North End station is fully operational, beginning today with the 4:00 P.M. shift. Our police department has had several important successes over the past few months. We have placed a focus upon street crime, which has resulted in the confiscation of significant amounts of drugs, guns and ill-begotten money. The officers of our department are approaching their day-to-day assignments in a manner that builds strong community relations, which, over time, will lead to a cooperative effort by our police and our citizenry in prevention and intervention in criminal activity.

Approximately one month ago, our City experienced base violence motivated by vile hatred. This attack on numerous people was solely because of who they were as individuals. In this case, based solely upon their sexual orientation. In the aftermath of this cowardly act, 1500 miles away in Gassville, Arkansas, Officer James Sell gave his life in the line of duty. His loss of life was directly related to the apprehension of the individual who began his hate crime spree here in New Bedford. It was clear from the moment that this senseless tragedy took place that our City owed Officer Sell, his family, and his community a tremendous debt of gratitude and heartfelt sympathy. The City Police Department, working with a number of members of the Massachusetts State Police, had performed in

an exemplary manner in the investigation of the Puzzles attack. These men and women, and our entire police department, after hearing of Officer Sell's sacrifice, believed that they should regard Officer Sell's loss in the same manner as if the Department had lost one of its own. As a result, the Police Department's Honor Guard and representative officers, including our Chief, accompanied the New Bedford delegation to Mountain Home, Arkansas to pay their respects to Officer Sell, his family and his community. I can assure you that they represented our City with distinguished honor, respect and pride. Part of the delegation included Senator Mark Montigny and District Attorney Paul Walsh. We went to pay our respects and it was greatly appreciated by the people of Mountain Home, Arkansas.

This past Friday, I requested applications for the positions of Chief, and two Deputy Chiefs of Police. I have opened the application process through the rank of Sergeant in order to encourage diversity and gender participation in this process. I will shortly announce a screening committee, made up of representatives of the community to assist me in the review of the applicants' written materials and in-person interviews. It is my intention to announce the selection of a Chief and two Deputies within the next six weeks. Over the past 60 days, I have promoted a number of officers to the position of Lieutenant and Sergeant, in order to fill rank, and help ameliorate overtime costs. Lastly, I can report, as many of you know, the City, while working in good faith with the police union, has resolved the long-standing collective bargaining dispute. I sincerely appreciate the cooperation of the police officers and the dedication they have shown to the citizens of our City.

As we all know, we have serious issues regarding violent crime in our City. These issues were the driving force that convinced me to run for Mayor. I intend to work very closely with District Attorney, Paul Walsh, Attorney General, Tom Reilly, and U.S. Attorney, Michael Sullivan, to prevent such violent crime and to solve the cases which remain unsolved in this City. The Attorney General has pledged an Assistant Attorney General to work with our law enforcement officers on a day-to-day basis to help combat and prevent violence in our City. The process of bringing the Assistant Attorney

General to New Bedford is underway. The U.S. Attorney has pledged the full resources of the U.S. Government, both with law enforcement agents as well as prosecutors, to help make New Bedford a safe haven for its citizens and families. Our District Attorney is working very closely with the City to develop a comprehensive strategy to arrest and prosecute our criminal element by forming a fully-integrated team consisting of New Bedford police officers, Assistant District Attorneys, and members of the State Police. We have also committed to setting up a cold case file unit with the New Bedford Police Department and the District Attorney's Office to work on solving these old cases. I have received and will continue to receive the full support of the State Police, led by Colonel Tom Robbins, and the Sheriff's Department, led by Sheriff Tom Hodgson. We are very anxious to work with Sheriff Hodgson regarding the detailed intelligence he can provide us regarding activities in our City.

Law enforcement, both prevention, apprehension and prosecution is a task that requires unrelenting attention. My administration will be unrelenting. Our children, our parents, and our spouses must be safe in our homes, schools, commercial establishments and streets. That is the hallmark of a stable, secure, society and will be of our City, and that is the goal that I will strive to meet each day.

Our Fire Department protects our citizens, their homes and all of our buildings, with professionalism and valor. However, our firefighters work and live in stations that are in deplorable condition. As a City, we must address the renovation of these stations. In addition, the equipment used by our firefighters needs to be reviewed and, where necessary, upgraded to modern standards. I will work with the Chief and his Deputy to provide our firefighters with the life-saving equipment that is required to protect our City. Recently, I promoted our Acting Chief and Acting Deputy Chief, to the full ranks of Chief and Deputy Chief. Both men were deserving of these promotions based upon the fine work they had done over the years, and I believe it sent a clear signal that the politics of withholding the appointment of qualified individuals is over. Further, I believe that our firefighters desire the stability that the designation of permanent Chief and Deputy Chief provide to their

Department. I am pleased to announce that the firefighter labor negotiations, which again have dragged on for a number of years, have been successfully completed, and that the firefighters union and the City have reached into a tentative agreement that resolves the collective bargaining conflict which has existed for far too long.

Quality of Life and City Services

Our City is one of the more beautiful cities in the northeast. From our peninsula of beaches to our inner harbor, our waterfront is not rivaled in its natural beauty or in its intricacy as a working waterfront. New Bedford is blessed with elaborate historic neighborhoods, famous parks, a National Park and Historic District, and a strong backbone of diverse working-class neighborhoods. It is the job of the City government to serve and protect all of these assets on a year-round basis.

I have asked all of our City departments to redouble their efforts in performing their services to enhance the quality of life for the citizens of New Bedford so that the taxpayers of this City receive the maximum value for their tax dollar.

Just a few examples of our City employees' dedication to serving the public--our City recently experienced the first heavy snowfall of the winter. The employees responsible for snow removal did an outstanding job in keeping clear our residential streets and the economic hubs of our City, the business park, the downtown, and the streets surrounding our fishing port. Their enthusiasm for serving our City was on exhibit to the public and very apparent. They have also responded quickly to all icing conditions over the past several weeks I am sure will do the same later today. I know that the citizens of this City appreciated the fine efforts of these employees.

Another example of employees dedicated to serving the public are the pothole repair crews of the Department of Infrastructure that have diligently worked to keep our streets in good repair in these difficult winter months. This spring I anticipate a serious commitment to repairing streets and sidewalks throughout the City. Lastly, I would like to thank the skilled City employees of the Department of Public Facilities who have done an outstanding job in the maintenance and

construction of our many City buildings, including the fine work on the newly opened South and North End Police Stations.

In the next few weeks, we will announce a clean-up program that will involve all the neighborhoods of our City. It will combine a volunteer effort with the City's resources to clean up the streets, sidewalks, and neighborhoods so that as spring arrives a new pride and confidence will emerge in our neighborhoods. I ask all of our citizens to help in this clean-up effort. Details will follow about how you can get involved in your neighborhood.

It has come to my attention through a number of city councilors and neighborhood groups that sections of the north end of New Bedford experience significant problems with water pressure. I have requested that the Department of Infrastructure commence a study to lead to a plan of action to correct this problem. This will improve the safety of our neighborhoods and the quality of life in these neighborhoods, as well as will aid in future economic development of our City in the north end of our City.

During these next few months, City employees will refurbish sections of City Hall to enable the City government to function more efficiently. I also expect to undertake a comprehensive maintenance program for the sixty-seven buildings owned by the City. These are tangible assets of our taxpayers and cannot be allowed to deteriorate. Many of these buildings will become centerpieces for neighborhood activities. With our limited resources, it is time to begin to think of city buildings, parks, schools and school yards as year-round community centers for recreational and educational programs for our children and families. We are working closely with department heads and School Superintendent Michael Longo to provide such resources to our City residents.

As Mayor I am learning how important our public access television is to the citizens of our City and especially to our seniors and friends and neighbors who are unable to attend many of our City meetings and functions. I pledge to provide meaningful, educational and entertaining programming on our three channels. I believe that the public should have extensive access to our broadcast

facilities. I will adopt a policy which is broadly inclusive of our entire community—to foster citizen interest and participation in all avenues of New Bedford's activities.

Financial Status

It appears that the City will have a deficit for Fiscal Year 2006. The City Administration is working now to correct this deficiency and begin to draft a Fiscal Year 2007 Budget which is based on sound financial management practices designed to work within our City's means.

The Massachusetts Department of Revenue is currently conducting a systems audit of our financial management process. I am sure the Department's impact and insights will improve our City Government's financial management methods.

Our City deserves the best in Federal and State services, revenue sharing and grant awards. We will constantly present the City in the best light to obtain our fair share of these resources, thereby allowing us to provide greater services for the citizens of this City in addition to our own City's revenue.

New Bedford's Schools

The teachers in the New Bedford school system are dedicated to our students. If they did not love the children of this City and the challenge of teaching, they would not take the sacred responsibility of helping to shape each student's academic and personal development. They, along with our principals, administrators, staff, custodians and cafeteria staff, provide an excellent learning environment for our children each day. The school department is committed to lowering the drop-out rate and improving our MCAS scores. I fully support the legislative initiatives filed by our local delegation to raise the age at which a student may drop out of school. Lowering the dropout rate in our City will not be easy for a variety of reasons. New Bedford has limited City and school department resources to address this crucial issue. However, successfully resolving this issue is an important priority for our educators and the City. It is heartening to see the number of volunteer and non-profit and for-profit efforts, including parent groups which are focusing on our educational

system by concentrating on our individual students one on one. I believe that the effects of the Community Foundation's scholarship effort and the newly-launched SMILES Mentoring Program, the New Bedford Juvenile Court program, the Inter Church Council the Workforce Investment Board and the Learning Leaders Network to name just a few of the efforts, will help marshal our traditional and volunteer-based educational resources in the important areas of school drop-out rate and MCAS scores. The only way that we will see a dramatic improvement in our students' achievement is through a hands-on one-on-one approach, from a volunteer effort and through school department efforts. I believe that the school system must work with each child and their family at the inception of their school career to ensure that each child has a foundation for success. I want each child to know and feel that our entire New Bedford community will fully support them in their academic and recreational endeavors both in and out of our school buildings. We must relate to each of them individually and we must win the hearts and minds of our young people. I have been working with Superintendent Longo to enhance the opportunities in our schools for students to take music, art and gym and extracurricular activities, and we are working to develop comprehensive after-school activities to enhance our children's educational experiences. I expect that the City will develop and implement additional summer programs which capture our children's imagination and loyalty to the concept of learning and educational process. These programs will include both an educational component and a recreational component. Each neighborhood in our City will be encouraged to develop and participate in constructive summer activities for its youth.

As an aside, the more I learn about the 1994 Educational Reform Legislation, and its unintended consequences, the more I question the purpose of the MCAS test requirement for graduation. It is my opinion that a student who attends an accredited school system, as ours is, and is educated under an accredited curriculum, which New Bedford's is, and who is taught by teachers who are licensed and certified by the State Department of Education, as New Bedford teachers are, should, if they pass their required high school courses and accumulate the requisite number of

credits, receive a high school diploma. I do not have any objection to a dual system where students may receive an MCAS certified high school diploma, or have the option to receive a high school diploma, if they do not take, or pass the MCAS test, but I have serious reservations about relegating students who do not pass the MCAS test at an early age, or in high school, to either an eventual drop-out status, or a G.E.D. accomplishment, or receiving a certificate of attendance at their alleged high school graduation. Rather than putting the emphasis on the individual student and their tremendous attributes, we have relegated each student to attempting to conform to the philosophy of mastering a standardized test. Sadly, it appears that our state's educational systems must now be geared more towards teaching students how to pass the MCAS than they are to challenging our students to the highest learning experience. I pledge to help drive the debate to bring about a healthy balance between the standardized test mantra and the focus on a student's individuality and success.

My hat goes off to the previous administration for building Roosevelt Middle School and Normandin Middle School. Unfortunately, I am unable to applaud the previous administration's decisions regarding the location of the Keith Middle School. This school, which undoubtedly will be one of the more spectacular middle schools in the country, has two very serious drawbacks. First, it must be shown to the citizens of New Bedford that the toxic clean-up effort at the site has produced a safe environment for our children, the teachers, and all staff who will occupy the building. To accomplish this, I have asked the State Treasurer, Timothy Cahill, to conduct an environmental audit of the site, and review the method used to insulate the building from the contaminants found on this location. Once that report is issued, it will then be distributed to a "blue ribbon" panel for comment. Any reliable recommendations for additional remediation will be addressed at that time. I will make public all information which both the Cahill audit or the "blue ribbon" panel produces. I have also asked the State Treasurer to conduct a financial audit of this project. Originally, Keith's projected costs were \$39.5 million dollars. They now hover somewhere around \$70 million. This \$30.5 million

dollar cost overrun must be explained to the taxpayers of our City. Under the state's school building authority program, the City is entitled to a 90% reimbursement on \$43.8 million dollars; at this time, the remaining \$26.2 million dollars is the City's responsibility. I am working diligently with the Treasurer's Office to secure additional funds to pay for the Keith project. I will appeal to our state legislators for assistance in this matter as well. At the present time, it is unclear what, if any, impact the dramatic overruns at Keith Middle School will have on the five elementary schools which were proposed to be built by the previous administration. It is my intention, however, to subject each of these five proposals to public scrutiny and comment. The City of New Bedford will not build another school without complete public participation and scrutiny.

Economic Development

In order to provide a livable city and a fine quality of life for its families and citizens, our City must continue to strive to develop new jobs that will provide a living wage for our citizens. It is clear that New Bedford has all the elements needed for a renaissance of its local economy. A coordinated effort to expand existing industry and businesses and to transfer and develop new industries must be led by the City. It is my intention to amalgamate the departments and agencies which are involved in economic development into a coordinated inter-active team approach to job creation. I am pleased to report that the business park, led by Tom Davis, again is in an expansion mode. This spring, tremendous growth will be seen in this most-vital part of New Bedford's economy. The downtown district continues to undergo renovation for both business and residential purposes, and several new projects will be unveiled over the next few months pertaining to the Downtown area. This building boom will help restore a sense of vitality to the heart of our City. The downtown business community is in the process of marshaling its resources to present downtown business opportunities in their most attractive manner. This will encourage future development as well as fostering a real seven-day-a-week customer base for our downtown. I am hopeful that the tourism summit, which will be held on March 10, 2006, will bring together the key component parts of our local economy necessary to

cultivate tourism as a dynamic part of our local economy. The long-awaited Route 18 improvement project is moving forward with a new design purpose. I welcome citizen participation in this project. I believe we can make our City tourism friendly.

City Representatives and I met with Sprague Oil on the future vision for the former NStar generator building site on the harbor has been positive and fruitful. Cooperation between the City and private enterprises can lead to positive results for both entities and the citizens of New Bedford. This site on the harbor is extremely important to future development.

My discussions with Home Depot have been comprehensive. I am guided by the principle that this project must result in real economic gain for the City and must be an overall asset to the quality of life for the citizens of our City. I am hoping we can reach an agreement with Home Depot, but if we do not, we will move forward and the land will be developed in a way which will benefit our City.

On Saturday, March 5, 2006, the Portuguese Cultural Center Committee will begin the public process of determining the concept for a Portuguese Cultural Center. The Committee will then site and design the actual building. I am very excited about the project and look forward to working with the community to bringing this important cultural and economic project to fruition.

The north end and south end of our City have commercial districts which have been neglected for far too long. As part of our emphasis on revitalizing our neighborhoods, we will pay close attention to reviving the blighted areas in the near north end and the south end business corridor. These sections of the City are often the first impression that visitors have of New Bedford. We must present our most positive image in these important areas in order to stimulate economic growth.

According to the latest economic studies, the fishing industry is New Bedford's economic strength. Our City is the number one fishing port in the United States. As such, we are currently grappling with a new set of proposed regulations that would dramatically reduce the number of days allowed at sea for the ground fishing fleet. Our industry leaders are working closely with the City government and the State and National Governments to develop a conservation formula which

balances accurate, scientific fishery mortality statistics with the economic impact that these conservation measures would have on the port of New Bedford. We are working closely with other ports to form an alliance which will formulate an alternative program based upon state-of-the-art scientific data and decades of experience in the harvesting of various fishery species. We are working very closely with our congressional delegation to mitigate the impact of the proposed regulations. I have recently appointed a committee chaired by Dr. Brian Rothschild, the renowned marine scientist who is a Dean of the Marine Science Program at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth to work closely with the Federal, State and City governments on fishing conservation measures, and to improve the infrastructure of our harbor, as well as to ensure that our future harbor development focuses on fisheries and its related industries, and the future economy is based upon marine technology and science.

I believe that New Bedford is on the verge of meaningful economic improvement for its citizens. In order to maximize the City's potential to attract modern well-paying jobs, we must present a city that has a desirable quality of life for its residents and prospective residents and a superior school system. A great deal goes into establishing a reputation as a desirable place to live and raise a family. These ingredients include safe streets, excellent city services, a friendly, nurturing community, a superior school system and beautiful neighborhoods. Together, we can create these conditions so that we can attract the jobs of tomorrow to our City for ourselves and our children.

Neighborhoods

New Bedford's neighborhoods are very unique. Every one of our residents deserves a clean, safe neighborhood. All quality of life issues are dependent upon life within our neighborhoods. My administration will make an all-out effort to eliminate blighted or abandoned property. I have assigned a city solicitor specifically with the task of redeeming tax title property and nuisance properties. The City will once again institute a housing task force which will emphasize and implement the concept of clean, safe, and harmonious neighborhoods.

For the safety of our neighborhoods, we will undertake a lighting campaign to ensure security to all our citizens and their property. I will work closely with the City Council to establish areas in our City where safety cameras can assist law enforcement efforts in monitoring our streets.

As part of our neighborhood revitalization, it is my intention to continue to de-centralize the policing effort in our City. The City is best served when every police officer is a community police officer, and when every police officer has an interactive relationship with the citizens they serve and protect. For this reason, I am working with the police department and the community to establish police substations in some of our most challenging neighborhoods. In the near future, it is my intention to announce a number of sub-locations from which our police will patrol, in addition to our three existing police stations.

Parks and Recreation

New Bedford is blessed with beautiful parks. This year, it is crucial that the City expend the time and resources to ensure that our park assets are properly maintained. There is much work to be done at Hazelwood Park, Buttonwood Park and Brooklawn Park. I have asked the various department heads involved with planning and maintenance of public parks to present a comprehensive plan for the up-keep and building maintenance of these most important recreational resources. Further, I am working with a number of City agencies and various communities to restore Ben Rose Park so that it may be used as a little league baseball/softball complex in the spring and summer, and a football and soccer field in the fall. The police union has indicated a strong desire to establish a police athletic league program in our City, to help administer the programs at Ben Rose Park. Shortly, the City will resolve any outstanding issues pertaining to the Sgt. Joseph Camara soccer field so that it may come under the supervision of the park system and be used by the youth of our City. The expansive and beautiful Riverside Park will be entering its first spring season; I will ask the Park Department to help administer an equitable schedule of events at the park so that all our citizens will have an opportunity to enjoy this tremendous recreational asset.

Many of our school playgrounds are used on a year-round basis by our children for recreational purposes. I will ask the School Department to survey these school yards for the purpose of enhancing their value to the community as public play areas. Finally the Community Recreational Center Project is underway. New Bedford Acts will be holding a public forum to receive the community's input on this project.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

New Bedford's strength emanates from the fact that New Bedford is a community of tremendous diversity. This strength has existed since New Bedford's whaling days. On February 2, 2006, New Bedford's social fabric and conscience was tested to the limit by the senseless, hateful act which took place in our City. The citizens of New Bedford and the clergy responded in a manner which set an example for the entire nation. New Bedford is a city that will not tolerate intolerance, a city that will not turn its back on its own or its problems. There is a great deal of work to be done in our City on the issues of civil rights and tolerance, but our citizens have shown that they will not shy from their responsibilities in these areas. I look forward to working with all of the different communities and cultures in our City to bring about a greater degree of tolerance, acceptance and equality.

Pride and Respect

Throughout the campaign season, I pledged to help restore pride and respect back to New Bedford. I believe working with the citizens who have expressed a desire to volunteer their time and efforts to this City and to our young people, we can regain a sure-footed confidence. Scaling the mountain of greatness is a task the people of this City are looking forward to and, in fact, are already beginning to climb.

As Mayor Remington said 84 years and 3 months ago in his inaugural address: "Of all city officials and city employees generally, I ask hearty cooperation in forwarding this city's interests. Put 'Faith in New Bedford' into every blow of the pick, every scrape of the shovel, every stroke of the pen,

every touch of the typewriter, and every act of administration. Whether your employment be in an executive capacity, in the schools, in the offices, on the public works, or in any of the departments which go to make up the city's activities, give your whole soul to your work and 'Do it for New Bedford'." I believe our City, taking the advice of Mayor Remington 84 years ago, can achieve the greatness we want.

Citizens of New Bedford ask me on a regular basis if I like being Mayor. The answer to this question is somewhat complicated, as there is no doubt that I do enjoy the challenges and satisfaction of serving the City as Mayor. However, in reality, it is not that I like being Mayor, per se, but rather that I am extremely proud to serve the City as its Mayor. It is an honor for me to represent the great people of this City and it is a responsibility that I take very seriously. My role as Mayor is to diligently provide for and safeguard the interests of the citizens and taxpayers of this City at all times. That was my pledge and that is what I will always attempt to do, so help me God.

In closing, I ask each of you each morning and each night to say a quick prayer or have a kind thought for our young men and women serving in the armed forces, for our public safety servants, our teachers, our seniors, for all of our citizens and for our City. Let's resolve to work together to make New Bedford a great place to live, work and raise our families. I look forward to serving all of you.

Thank you.