
CITY COUNCIL

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Beloit City Council President Delivers Annual State of the City Address

April 2, 2024 - Beloit City Council President Regina Dunkin delivered the annual State of the City Address on Monday, April 1, during the Beloit City Council meeting. Her remarks are below:

My fellow City Councilors, City Manager, city staff, and our entire greater Beloit community ... I want to begin by thanking you for giving me the opportunity to serve on the city council for the last eight years. I hope that I have served as a positive role model for all, especially for the next generation of leaders so that they can step forward to serve our great city too.

I also want to give thanks to my council colleagues for their service to this community that we love. It has truly been my privilege to work alongside each of you. We have made Beloit even better today and for the future.

Next, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all city employees for their hard work and dedication to Beloit. I know firsthand how hard each of you work to keep the city operations running effectively and efficiently. I really appreciate all that you do and I know that you will continue to do so in the future.

Today, it is my distinct honor to deliver the 2024 State of the City address as your City Council President. As I reflect over the last year, we have seen great progress in our City. We have all worked tirelessly to provide outstanding public service and move Beloit forward.

Housing

One of the major initiatives this year in the City of Beloit has been our work related to housing. The dignity of housing is a basic human right. We have heard from countless residents about the need for housing in our community -- and our city needs all levels of housing -- but especially affordable housing to accommodate our workforce. Our continued commitment to addressing the City's housing needs remains steadfast through programs funded with TIF Housing dollars. These programs are intended to increase affordable housing options, including launching new

initiatives to incentivize developers to invest in our community. We look forward to seeing the results of these programs make a tangible difference in our city.

ARPA

We have also invested in our community by utilizing the city's award of over \$15 million dollars in ARPA funding to help combat the impacts of COVID-19. These game-changing funds are being used to improve city infrastructure and to assist with homelessness prevention and response initiatives, non-profit facility improvements, and youth programming. It has been extremely beneficial that our Community Development Department has led the effort in establishing and distributing these ARPA funds. In the first seven months of the homelessness prevention and response initiatives, we have served 839 residents, including 65 people who were provided overnight shelter. Although we have a long way to go, we are thankful for the federal resources allocated to our city.

Shared Revenue & Financial Success

This brings me to mention another game-changer for our city -- which was the Shared Revenue Bill that received bipartisan support. This bill increased funding for municipalities across the State of Wisconsin. Our budget has been lean for many, many years. Thank you to our state lawmakers and Gov. Tony Evers for this funding. With the guidance of our Finance and Administrative Services Department, this bill has improved our financial position, allowing us to make needed investments in our organization to better serve our residents.

Economic Development

Next, economic development opportunities continue to shine in Beloit. We see new businesses locating to our city and many of our existing companies are expanding their facilities and growing for the future. Additional investments in job creation and workforce training will help strengthen the economic resiliency of Beloit and our entire region. We know residents are anxiously awaiting an update on the casino project. I am confident that our city council and city leaders will continue to work diligently to bring this project to fruition.

Public Safety

Public Safety continues to be a high priority for Beloit. I am so proud of the work the Police Department has done to build relationships in our community. Our department strives to work with our youth, residents, non-profit agencies and our business community. The results are in - and crime is down. It is my hope that our community will continue to be engaged with our Police Department to make our city stronger and safer.

I also want to highlight the work that our Fire Department is doing to serve our community. We appreciate everything the department does to protect our residents whether it is extinguishing fires or providing life-saving measures to someone experiencing a medical emergency. Along with our agency partners, I want to

specifically thank you for your outstanding work in leading the emergency efforts during the large commercial fire in January.

Public Works

Special thanks also to our Public Works Department who played a critical role in addressing the fire. Our Public Works Department is vital to our city's success. This year we have expanded our Public Works team and are looking forward to the significant infrastructure projects that will benefit our entire Beloit community. One of the city's major initiatives is reducing the number of lead service lines owned by the city and introducing programs to help residents replace their lead service lines. It is important that we prioritize our Public Works Department so they have the resources necessary to sufficiently serve our neighborhoods.

Sustainability and Resiliency

We also need to continue to prioritize sustainability and resiliency so that today's youth have a brighter future. The City is addressing our reliance on gas-powered vehicles with the introduction of electric vehicles to the city fleet and a hybrid bus serving our Beloit Transit customers.

Additionally, as a member of the Green Tier Legacy Communities in Wisconsin, we will keep working towards securing a more sustainable environment. Progress toward this goal will only be achieved by all of us working together, including our critical partnerships with local stakeholders like Welty Environmental Center and Community Action's efforts with the Community Sharing Garden.

Community Engagement

Lastly, community outreach and engagement is needed now more than ever. The voices of all our residents are valued and we need to hear from you to make informed decisions on behalf of Beloit. I am pleased that the City has been conducting more public outreach and seeking feedback for our initiatives, by conducting surveys, hosting satellite city hall sessions and community meetings, and translating city communications into Spanish.

I encourage all residents, especially our youth, to become involved in local government and community service. As I finish my 4th term on city council, I urge everyone to extend a helping hand to those in need and spread more love and kindness throughout our entire community. Together, let's join in making Beloit even better.