

MAYOR DEAGLAN MCEACHERN INAUGURAL ADDRESS, January 3, 2022

Thank you Citizens of Portsmouth. I am honored by your confidence in me to lead, and I'm proud to serve alongside this new Council.

I wanted to thank Congressman Pappas for joining us this evening along with representatives for Senator Hassan and Senator Shaheen.

I also want to thank the outgoing council. We tackled many firsts together and I feel ready for the next two years having served alongside each of you. It is true that there were times where our opinions differed. But a difference of opinion does not equal a difference of principle. We all love Portsmouth and each of us served our city to the best of our abilities while faced with unthinkable challenges. I'd like to publicly acknowledge and thank Rick Becksted, Jim Splaine, Peter Whelan, Cliff Lazenby, Esther Kennedy, Petra Huda and Paige Trace. I expect your service to the City will undoubtedly continue.

I also want to take a moment to thank my family. While my father isn't here with us tonight, I always feel his presence. He instilled in me a faith in service for which I am thankful. To my mother from who I inherited my passion, I have come to appreciate your sacrifice even more as I've grown. I've seen first-hand that no one serves in public life alone. It is a family commitment that weighs heavy especially with young children. I've seen this through Lori, who steps up the many nights I'm away. Lori-you are a beacon for our family and I couldn't do any of this without your support.

To Karen Conard our city manager and all our city staff, your professionalism and determination is a testament to the city. We are lucky to have each of you. Your grit in the face of Covid makes us all proud. You didn't flinch when I asked to move this event outdoors for the safety of our community. I look forward to resuming our meetings in a much warmer setting very soon.

But outside in the cold reminds us of much.

The cold reminds us our first job as a council is to keep our citizens safe.

The cold reminds me of our resolve. That we are outside city hall during the coldest night of this new year is a testament to the challenges we have faced throughout the pandemic. Challenges that have yet to cease. Instead of break our will they have strengthened our resolve. We are made of tougher stuff here in Portsmouth, and we will see the end of this pandemic.

The cold reminds us that the sledding won't always be easy but will always be worth it because we live in the greatest City in the State, the city of the open door.

Tonight, we sacrifice our warmth so that we can be together celebrating our future.

Over the next two years we will need to draw on that strength as challenges lay all around us.

As a council we must address how we grow as a city. Development is vital, but we need to make sure it doesn't leave behind the character that defines our city--our people. I plan to ask this council to review and make recommendations to update our ordinances in the first 100 days as a council.

We must prepare for climate change. This goes beyond acting locally. We must be the tip of the spear for NH as we prepare a climate action plan to incorporate across our departments.

We must prepare for a post covid world that will see work habits permanently change. We need to take advantage of that, while understanding there are many whose tax burden is unsustainable.

Most importantly, to meet these challenges, we must come together. I am not the Mayor of Old Portsmouth, just as I am not the Mayor of New Portsmouth. I am a Citizen of Portsmouth and as our Mayor I am calling us all to serve in writing our next chapter.

It can be as simple as being a better neighbor or better parent. It can mean being more civically involved or starting a business. But Portsmouth works because we work together.

As I leave you tonight, please remember who local government is. It's your former teacher, your neighbor, your local coffee shop owner. Our government is you. It works because we've decided to come together, whether born here, or moved here, as my great grandfather did to make a better life. Together, there is nothing we can't solve.