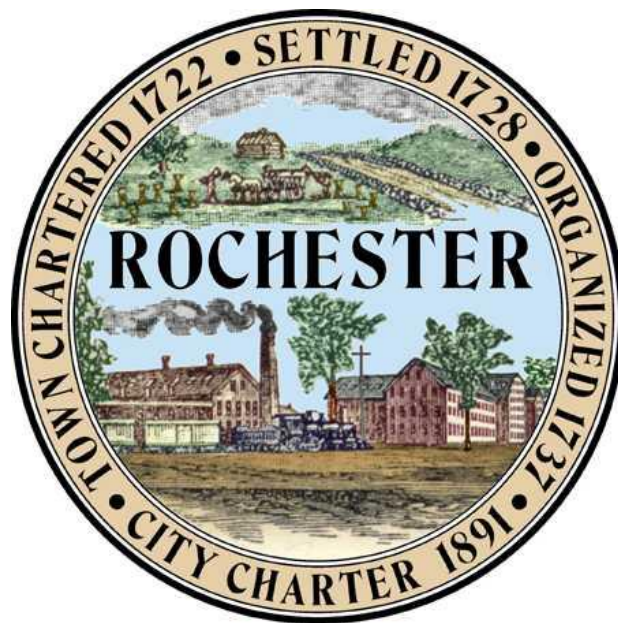


INAUGURAL ADDRESS



Thomas J. Jean

Mayor

City of Rochester, New Hampshire

January 5, 2010

Honored Guests and My Fellow Citizens:

I would like to begin this evening by offering my congratulations to the men and women of our city council, school board, and police commission who have taken their respective oaths of office this evening. I am looking forward to working closely with each and every one of you in the coming term of office. Also, I wish to thank Father Pierre Baker, former Pastor of St. Mary Church for traveling here this evening from Nashua to deliver our opening prayer. Father Pierre is a close family friend and has been with me during many major events in my life. Thank you, Father, for joining us this evening. A special thanks to Stacey Parker, a sophomore at Spaulding High School, for reading the Poem written by Rochester's Poet Laureate, Mr. Andrew Periale. Great job, Stacey. I would also like to thank family members, city staff, business leaders, and members of our community for joining us this evening. Your support is very much appreciated.

My Friends, today marks the beginning of a new decade for our beloved community. The beginning of a new era filled with uncertainty and opportunity nestled in the shadow of a turbulent economy. Our city has endured many economic downturns in our storied past. The citizens of Rochester have always answered positively during these periods showing tremendous resilience and a profound sense of community. Today is no different. We are once again being tested by a national and global economy seeking desperately to find its way.

Today, we find ourselves once again at a crossroads. Our nation is at war, we are facing deficits we cannot sustain, debt we cannot fund, and a local economy that finds itself less competitive today than decades ago. Although these factors are national issues, every one of them directly impacts the citizens of Rochester. We are moving forward today in tremendous uncertainty. A level of uncertainty our forefathers could have never envisioned. Yet today, we find ourselves in a crucial moment in time – a defining moment for which history has yet to be written.

Today, we have been provided a tremendous opportunity to make a difference in the lives of every man, woman, and child of our community. We should not take our responsibilities as elected officials lightly. The next two years will be filled with challenges we have never seen, opportunities that are very rare, and a renewed sense of

community that we, at our very core, must promote. Make no mistake, we have been called to a level of service that requires trust, discipline, and informed decision making at every level of municipal government.

During my preparation for this evening's address to you, I came across the inaugural address of the late mayor Roland Roberge. In his address to the city council in January 1992, he spoke of a then young City Manager form of government. As I read his remarks, I was taken by how relevant they remain today, eighteen years later, and I quote:

“The citizens of Rochester adopted the City Manager form of government two years ago. There has been some turmoil surrounding the position during that time. We are finding our way with this job. We need to chart a course that is clear to the manager. We need to let him or her, truly manage the day to day affairs of the City. If thirteen people try to micro manage the City, it will be next to impossible to have a group consensus on the direction we want to go.”

Roland R. Roberge – January 1992

My friends, mayor Roberge identified eighteen years ago a challenge that continues to burden our local municipal government today. If we as a governing body are to be successful in charting the long-term course of our community, we must place trust in those we have chosen to lead the administrative affairs of our city. This trust must be mutual and must be felt by every citizen, employee, business, perspective businesses, and our surrounding communities. We must stand together as one community, one voice in these difficult and uncertain times.

The city of Rochester is blessed to have such high quality and dedicated employees. When you reflect on how large an undertaking it is to operate a municipality of our size, we should be grateful our lean workforce is able to accomplish so much. Tonight, I call upon our city council, school board, and police commission to stand as one with our employees. And conversely, I ask our city employees to stand tall with us, shoulder to shoulder, as we work together collaboratively to improve the quality of life for the people we serve each and every day. Working together, we will overcome the vast challenges ahead which threaten to deteriorate the fiber of our community.

This evening we must also renew our commitment to our greatest asset, our children. Our children hold the key to our future. They are the future leaders of this community and the future leaders of our society. We must not spare anything to ensure we provide them with the tools and resources they need to be successful and compete in the global marketplace.

Many citizens have been quick to stress the importance of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Although this should remain the foundation of our education, we must take education even further. We must provide our children with twenty-first century skills. The skills of cooperation, teamwork, and effective communications are all global skills which will arm our students with a competitive advantage as they graduate high school and pursue employment or post-secondary education. The jobs of tomorrow will not resemble the jobs of years ago. To our benefit, and at times, to our detriment, our society is dependent upon the utilization of technology and electronic communication to be efficient and successful. We must provide our students with an educational experience that safely and effectively incorporates these components in their curriculum. I am pleased to see Spaulding High School principal John Shea take the initiative to explore alternative ways to deliver this level of education to our students with the Big Step Forward initiative. This is exactly the level of dialog we, as city leaders, must be engaged in. We have an opportunity to provide a level of education not yet realized at the public level in our area. Imagine if you will what this can do for our students as they enter the workforce and for the recruitment of new firms into our community. I look forward to working with the school board to explore new and innovative ways to deliver the highest quality and affordable education to our students.

Tonight, I also wish to reach out to our public safety personnel. The city of Rochester remains forever grateful for the sacrifices you make to ensure we are protected at all times. Our firefighters, police officers, dispatchers, and public works employees are called to a level of service that is reserved for an elite group of individuals. We are fortunate to have forces that embrace this calling and fulfill their duties with pride, integrity, and honor. This evening I renew our commitment to work with our public safety personnel to ensure you are equipped with the resources needed to safely execute your duties. I call upon our city council and police commission to stand as one with you as we continue to keep our citizens and businesses safe.

The city of Rochester is fortunate to have citizens who care deeply about our community and are quick to roll up their sleeves and get involved. Each and every individual seated behind me falls into this category. I submit to you our audience this evening is filled with individuals who also are passionate to see Rochester thrive. This evening, I am calling upon our entire community to renew their commitment to the success and prosperity of the Lilac City. Tonight, I am declaring 2010 the “Year of the Volunteer.” Our community lost an important event in 2009, the Lilac City Family Fun Festival. This perennial event fell victim to attrition. Volunteers became tired, and there just wasn’t enough energy to support this event. My friends, I am here to tell you that each

and every one of us can make a difference by committing and giving of our time, energy, and talent to the community we so love. Our city is filled with many fraternal, service, and professional organizations. Opportunities for involvement are everywhere. I am calling our community to action this evening and vowing to support the growth and prosperity of the Lilac City.

Finally this evening, I want to make clear the direction our city must take in order to emerge from these complex and uncertain times with integrity and prosperity. We must resolve here and now to trust in each other as elected officials, city administrators, employees, and citizens. Our work will be difficult, our decisions at times unpopular, and our burden heavy. Municipal government must raise its head and chart a new course, a course which takes into account and controls spending without comprising our vision for a stronger, safer, and highly successful Rochester. Our course must reach beyond and shatter the surly bonds of complacency. We need to seek innovation and increased efficiencies as a community. We must dare to be bold and embrace the technologies of the twenty-first century in every department of this city. Each and every one of our elected officials must understand our deliberations and actions have a far reaching impact on our employees and citizens. We must promote professionalism and civility on the city council and at every board, commission, and committee of our government. I urge our elected officials to advocate for our taxpayers by auditing our government with respect, humility, and civility. We must avoid the temptation to micro manage the day to day affairs of this city. Our role is to set policy which is aligned with the long-term and sustainable growth of our community. This can be achieved and is well within our reach. I invite all of you to join me today as a new dawn rises over the Lilac City.

Thank you and may God bless you all.