

***** Press Release *****

City of Watervliet Mayor Charles Patricelli Announces He Will Run for Second Term

Mayor Charles Patricelli announced today that he will run in November 2023 for a second term as mayor. The Mayor has 15 months remaining in his first term but has been encouraged by city improvements he initiated and positive feedback from city residents, city businesses and elected officials on the local, county and state level to seek a second term.

“When I first ran, my only plan was improving Watervliet — the city I call home and love!” Mayor Patricelli said. “But then COVID hit in March of my first year as mayor. Was it hard? Absolutely! But we figured it out together! There was no rule book for “covid life”— we did the best we could. We didn’t hide our heads under the table but went right out there to provide food for our residents that needed it, helped homebound residents navigate through the pandemic, got our residents vaccines, and helped get them tests. Through it all we worked together!

After Covid, our “normal” changed and we had to improvise and move forward. I think we did an amazing job. Many cities in this state fell into hundreds of thousands and/or millions of dollars in debt because of lost revenue. Watervliet finished with a surplus only because we made difficult, but necessary decisions to protect our residents. I’m proud to say that there hasn’t been a city tax increase in my 2½ years as mayor.

We started off my first term buried in debt, which we have lowered through sound fiscal planning; mainly by limiting out-of-control overtime and upholding a bidding process when large projects are being considered to ensure the best price.

I promised transparency when I campaigned for mayor. I instituted a tracking system that allows residents to fill out work requests online and follow the process through to completion. For the first time, the city is using constant communication with residents on important issues and events in Watervliet by using email and social media and, whenever possible, videotaping our meetings so residents can view the meetings from their home.

My administration inherited a serious legal issue where the Watervliet Reservoir was reassessed by the Town of Guiderland that would have cost the Watervliet taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars. We filed a lawsuit against the town, and after 5 years of negotiations, we settled out of court, saving city residents from a large tax increase.

The vibe in the city is extremely positive and the reception we've received from city residents has emboldened my enthusiasm for a second term," Patricelli said. "When I first ran for mayor, I said I could not do it alone. The response from city business owners, the volunteer committees of city residents — those who live here and those who grew up here but moved away and want to see their hometown thrive and succeed — the donations to help improve the city, the work of the city council and the help we've received from State Senator Neil Breslin, State Assemblyman John McDonald and Albany County Executive Dan McCoy whenever we have asked or applied for grants has been tremendous.

I want Watervliet to be a destination where people choose to live and raise their children and a working-class community with deep pride and an unwavering sense of community. That can only happen with an effective city council and a sound financial plan where tax dollars are utilized so everyone in the city benefits. I have worked hard and given my best effort in the past 2½ years as mayor and even before that as your councilman for 2 years. I will continue to do so during my second term. I am anxious and excited to see what we can accomplish together without a pandemic, complicating our efforts.

City Accomplishments Since 2020

Financials

You can measure success or failures in many ways, but a true sign of success is when you are able to run a business and you're in the black. First as councilman and then when I continued as mayor, we had a 293% increase in our fund balance for our general fund and a 238% increase in our water fund balance which is another word for our savings account. This is one of the ways the NYS Comptroller reviews the financial health of our city. We went from a \$443,717 balance in 2016 to a \$1,745,294 balance in 2021. This can only be accomplished with a good team and someone who has experience with financial management. I'm proud to say my solid reputation of good fiscal management, with 39 years as Executive Director of the Watervliet Housing Authority, has helped move us into a better fiscal position.

Economic Development

- Secured over a \$1,500,000 in public and private grants for improvements to city water supply, pave city roads, improve infrastructure as well as city parks.
- Secured \$500,000 in donations to upgrade Veterans Memorial Swimming pool; upgrade Clinton Park basketball court; refinish and paint Seventh Street Park basketball court; add new playground equipment to 15th Street and Clinton Park; added new garbage truck to city fleet; placed Meneely Bell and kiosk at the entrance of Congress Street Bridge.
- Conducted a bridge study, with the City of Troy as a partner. This study is to find ways to increase the business attractiveness on both sides of the river. The focus is from 23rd Street, Hudson Shores Park to 16th Street and then up 19th Street to 5th Avenue. We are looking to increase the walkability of the area to attract more outside visitors to this section of Watervliet. The study also focuses on increasing safe access to the bike path.
- We're in the process of a submitting for grant funding for a Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). We are looking to apply for State funding to support the development of the 19th Street area. This funding is a game changer,

and we continue to work toward ideas and suggestions with residents, businesses, and consultants to look to the future of our city. Local communities that have successfully received this grant include Troy, Albany, Hudson, Amsterdam and Glens Falls. The City Council and I met with city officials in Hudson to see how they plan to use their DRI funding to develop their downtown. We walked away with some great ideas and possibilities for Watervliet. We will continue to work with local communities as their success is ours as well.

- Three abandoned and derelict buildings have been removed from the city. We will continue to work with the Albany County Landbank to attract suitable businesses. We now have a seat on the Landbank's Board of Directors enabling us to help move these projects along at a quicker pace and make these vacant buildings tax producing parcels once again.
- Received a grant to install electric vehicle charging stations on city property.
- Helped organize two "Restaurant Weeks" in Watervliet. These events promoted city businesses to show off their facilities and unique cuisine not only to city residents, but residents from nearby communities.
- During COVID we promoted our area restaurants by allowing more outdoor dining, and use of their area because of the limited space allowed for inside dining and promoting their menus by creating a mass media program to help increase their businesses.
- Established shared services with Colonie, Cohoes and Green Island to help cut the cost of public projects.
- In the midst of COVID, provided grants to businesses that were finding it difficult to keep their doors open.

Public Safety

- Increased city police force to maximum capacity.
- New weapons to keep police officers and city residents safe.

- New riot gear and body cameras to keep police officers and city residents safe.
- New resource officer at city schools.

City Water & Reservoir

- \$3 million grant for filter plant improvements to improve water quality.
- \$1.3 million grant for a Clean Water Separation Grant as part of the Albany County combined sewer overflow to improve water quality in the Hudson River. The goal for Watervliet is to separate our city's overflow and then to use revenue to continue to improve the city in other areas.
- \$540,000 grant for lead lateral replacement, which resulted in waterline replacement on 9th Avenue, between 16th and 19th streets.
- Completion of a 5-year process to relicense of the City hydro-electric plant in Guilderland through Federal Energy Commission to run at full power. The negotiating process was intense, and our team held fast and felt we accomplished a beneficial plan for all involved.
- Comprehensive watershed protection plan; water chestnut removal from city reservoir and now the purchasing of the weed boat to help reduce the amount of the weeds.
- Hydro plant improvements will allow the city to seek out municipalities with tainted water and sell water to increase revenue to those seeking a clean water supply.

Parks & Recreation

- A \$500,00 spray pad – paid for by donation – added to the Veterans Memorial Swimming Pool.
- Renovated the pool house for the first time in decades with a new roof, paint – interior and exterior.

- \$90,000 in playground equipment — paid for by donation — added to Clinton and 15th Street Parks. We're looking to upgrade Brotherhood and 7th Street Park in future.
- \$20,000 to repave and paint the basketball court at Clinton Park — paid for by donations.
- DOME renovations: floors cleaned and painted; roof repaired; water fountain added; obsolete equipment removed to make it suitable for city rec leagues and youth sports. For years this facility was underused and that has changed and is now a clean and safe recreation facility.
- Partnered with Albany County for an improved Parks and Recreation program that will increase programming and activities for city youth.
- Updated Hudson Shores Park: 30 dead trees were removed; brush and overgrowth along the river removed; two couple swings added for a view of the river; ongoing shoreline cleaned of garbage and weeds; parking lot repaved and lined; parking areas not paved were filled in with gravel to avoid erosion and mud; metal holiday trees and LED lights donated for the holiday season; 15 picnic tables painted by the Boy Scouts. All of these improvements helped to renovate the park so it may be used for musical concerts, theatrical plays, car shows, etc. We're working on attracting a small restaurant to be located in the park in the near future.
- The Tri-City ValleyCats, as part of their '4-in-24' field renovation program renovated the girls' softball field at the Civic Center. ValleyCats officials and volunteers created a certified girls softball infield, which saved the city \$35,000 in renovation costs.
- The Meneely Bell that serenaded the St. Patrick's neighborhood for decades was refurbished and placed at the entrance to the Congress Street Bridge. The bell was manufactured in Watervliet. A kiosk was built to protect the bell, which is now a welcoming marker for those coming into the city. This all made possible by a donation for \$110,000.

- A smaller Meneely Bell was purchased and donated by a city resident to be placed in the Gazebo Park, located on Third Avenue between 5th and 6th streets. The bell will be dedicated in a few weeks to Richard and Patricia Crinigan, two long-time members of the city who volunteered and donated to hundreds of projects as decades-long city residents.
- Scheduling the use of our ball fields, the Dome, and parks can be a challenge for residents and organizations. For this reason, a scheduling program was developed. Those interested can go to www.Watervlietbooking.org to check on the availability of the venue in which they are interested. This program simplifies the process for both administration and prospective users.
- Received a \$15,000 grant to replace protective bollards at Red's Field and to build new picnic tables for the city parks.

City Buildings and Fleet

- \$600,000 in grants from Assemblyman John McDonald and State Senator Neil Breslin will enable us to update city hall with a new heating system, new windows and soffits and fascia. These repairs were long overdue.
- A state grant to replace the heating system in the Watervliet Historical Museum was secured.
- A \$300,000 donation to purchase a new garbage truck for city waste and yard clippings.
- Purchased four new police cars.
- Purchased a vehicle for the water department.
- Purchase of a new ambulance for the fire department.
- Purchased and refurbished several new vehicles for the DPW.

Roads & Transportation

- Working with the Capital District Transportation Committee to help ease large vehicle congestion of 25th Street and to repave and rebuild the entire street to the city line. Both myself and the General Manager are members of the Capital District Transportation Committee and worked to get this funding for Watervliet.
- Working with the Town of Colonie, we are in the process of paving 8th Ave from 1st Street to 8th Street. The partnership will save each municipality money.
- 8th Street, from Third to Eighth Ave will be paved this month
- Avenue B
- City Hall parking lot
- 1st Avenue (15th St to 13th St)
- 3rd Avenue (19th St south to 15th St – with ADA curbing)
- 23rd St and Broadway intersection
- 10th St (4th Avenue to 8th Avenue)
- 19th St patch (4th to 5th)

Looking Toward the Future

We don't plan on stopping and resting on our accomplishments but rather see how we can improve our services, looking for ways to reduce energy costs and make our city a better place for all. We are working currently on updating the city code and increasing the staff of Code Inspectors. We are looking to have a restaurant at Hudson Shores Park to replace the barge, new public and private docks at the park, purchase our street lighting are just a few of the projects in the works. We hope to continue to provide more services to our businesses and improve our visibility.

We will continue to seek out new funding to help reduce the financial burden to our residents. We've done so much in the past 2 ½ year. I am extremely grateful to the residents of Watervliet for their trust and support and am looking forward to doing so much more during the rest of my current term and hopefully the next term.