

Since 2009 I usually present my New Year message in January, but this time it is with sadness to me in bringing you my final Mayor's message. This message is not just for our great residents of Albany to hear, but also for our new council coming on board.

In reflecting back on my twenty-four years on the city council, I have seen the pendulum swing back and forth over many issues, including enduring three economic recessions. We have weathered through the challenges before, and we will again. Sadly, each time many people are financially and emotionally impacted. Plus our level of city services decline each time, yet our population keeps rising that adds to the overall demand on services.

Next month's new city council is walking into ten months now of the COVID 19 shut down and impacts. Several will be lobbied as the new person on the block and will hear from people with new ideas. Keep in mind some ideas, and as well thought out or innovative they might seem, could steer our city away from our core services. Some people assume the city has a bottomless pit of money and can solve every problem you can imagine. As you know, that is not the case and you have a lot work ahead of you to inform the public over the value of our core city services and their limited resources of funding.

We have a responsibility to the residents of Albany to provide our core city services that support our quality of life. Please do not let social issues divert your attention away from our core services, because that will put more demand on our staff. Each council member, on their own time, can network with social service agencies and organizations without the use of city resources.

I cannot stress enough to please keep our programs whole and any more lowering our level of service just erodes away our community's livability. Remember it is hard working people and neighborhoods who

built our city's livability and without a place people can be proud to call home, then you are impacting our city. Also, our city's character is in our historic stock and as I have stated before, downtown is the heart of our community. If you do not take care of your heart, then the community will decline in quality. It took years to bring the life back to our hometown, compared to where we were the past two decades, and please do not put us backwards. While we cared for the heart of our city, look how the ripple effect benefited the whole city with the many revitalized areas we have today.

Another big concern to me, besides wading through the pandemic crisis, is we have a rise in violent and property crimes in our state. I believe it will rise more from the passage of Measure 110, in decriminalizing meth and heroin. We have not seen that tsunami hit yet and you must stand strong and stand up to crime folks. Our public safety is our number one core service and if you lower your support of our public safety you are turning your heads away from criminal action and that impacts every one of us. I have devoted my life to our hometown and I still live here and want it to stay a safe environment. The city council has that obligation to provide a safe city and this upcoming budget is crucial in supporting our core services.

You know me well enough, as I could go on and on over our upcoming needs in the city. I also have always promoted Albany as a caring and compassionate community and please continue that message.

But, I have one thought I would like you to remember me by and that is — as a no gavel mayor. I went twelve years without using the gavel once. In my opinion, a gavel is an abrupt action from the dark ages to bring attention to a meeting. I proved you do not need a gavel to garner attention, all you need to do is smile. Just smile! A smile is a friendly action that I hope someday all governing bodies will follow and throw out that rude gavel.

I will end with my last words from each of my past Mayor's messages.
Let there be Peace to All.

Thank you for listening.