

State of the City Address 2009
Mayor David J. Carucci
City of Olean
1-2-09

Welcome members of the Common Council, guests, family members and citizens of the Great City of Olean, New York.

I shall begin with our financial year in review. You will recall that my administration began in January 2006 with the City in a financial crisis, having inherited a \$3.2 million operating deficit, significant shortfalls in all 3 City funds, General, Water and Sewer, and among other issues having an inability to timely pay bills. To date, we have made enormous strides in rectifying this plight by tightening our belt with major cooperation from our City's employees, implementing long-range planning by Department Heads and the Administration and generally, better fiscal oversight as well as adjustments in City taxes and water & sewer fees – just to name a few.

In its recently completed outside Independent Audit on October 16, 2008 by BWB, it was reported that for the 2007-08 budget year concluded on May 31, 2008, the General Fund showed a \$1.5 million fund balance (the first such balance recorded in OVER a decade...having essentially BROKEN EVEN in the previous year) a \$500,000 fund balance in Water and a \$270,000 fund balance in Sewer. Overall, the General Fund has reduced its deficit from \$2,420,546 to \$910,001 [i.e. \$1,510,545], the Sewer from \$345,826 to \$73,756 [i.e. \$272,070] and the Water has gone from a \$135,513 deficit to a surplus of \$387,674 [i.e. \$524,187].

This progress represents a \$2.3 million plus turnaround.

Contributing to the success of the fund balances was the settlement this past year of the Union Contract with CSEA, our largest City Union, on mutually beneficial terms including increased contributions by Union members to their health insurance coverage. More work, however, remains to be done. The Firefighter Contract is still unresolved and the matter is tentatively scheduled for its first court-ordered mediation session on January 26, 2009. Most significant to the City and its taxpayers is a reduction or possible elimination of the 8-man minimum staffing clause which has been a part to the Firefighter Contract for some 30 years and more. The Administration, with the strong support of certain key Council members, will be phasing in

for the first time ever the use of highly trained, skilled part-time Firefighters. We expect to have this implemented during the coming year.

Also, I have directed the Fire Chief to begin training current full-time Firefighters in Code Enforcement so that enhanced productivity can be achieved. In 2001, the Firefighter's Union negotiated exclusivity of the Code Enforcement office but to date has only staffed it with 2 light-duty Firefighters.

Other noteworthy developments this past year are as follows:

Two years ago, the City lost \$27,000 in the operation of its parking lots due to the payroll associated therewith. Since then, the parking lots have been metered and the City is on a pace to turn a profit of \$9,000 this year...a turnaround of about \$36,000.

The \$1.5 million East State Street bridge project was completed ahead of schedule with very few traffic problems.

Another section of the Allegheny River Valley Trail was completed.

Finally, we broke ground on the 2-mile sewer project and anticipate completion to the area of the County building by late August. This will alleviate or eliminate sewer back up problems experienced by West End residents and will open up Homer and Buffalo Streets for major commercial and industrial development.

The expiration of an agreement by Cattaraugus County Department of Social Services to provide transportation services in the City proved a challenging situation. The adoption of the Olean Area Transit System (OATS) is looking to be a more valuable program than we thought in the beginning. Through successful partnerships with Cattaraugus County, St. Bonaventure University and a new collaboration with the Rehabilitation Center, we are striving to better serve the transportation needs of the general public. Through this initiative and a shared vision, we hope to make our collective efforts even stronger to develop a viable, cost-effective, community solution to serve this vital need.

Combining the efforts of the Olean City School District Foundation and the Olean Sports Boosters, the Gus Macker was played in Olean for the first

time. The event was a great success drawing some 7,000 players and spectators to Olean for the two-day tournament. The Rally in the Valley and the YMCA Corn Festival also enhanced greatly the success of the weekend. We are looking forward to the 2009 Gus Macker tournament.

The Property Revaluation is moving along nicely. New property values will be sent out by March 1, 2009, including the dates and times of informal hearings when property owners may appear to discuss the new assessment. Any issues not resolved during the informal review process may be appealed during the formal review process with the Board of Assessment Review in late May. Public informational meetings will be held prior to the hearings to answer questions on the review process as well. We look forward to the successful conclusion of the endeavor in establishing fair and equitable assessments for the taxpayers of the City of Olean and maintain assessment equity in future years.

Due to my involvement with New York Conference of Mayors, I have been appointed to the NYCOM Legislative Committee. The purpose of this committee is to provide feedback to the Governor from other Mayors throughout New York State. The committee was successful in November when it fought Governor Paterson's proposed cuts to A.I.M. Aid to municipalities.

Items of Importance

Oak Hill Park Improvements

East Olean Sewer Project continues to demand our unabated attention

Agway Felmont Property remediation continues to progress

Sex Offender Law was adopted

Veteran Exemption(s) for property taxes was re-codified

New / Expanding Businesses

Close's Lumber

Tractor Supply will open soon

Call Center is employing almost 200

ASA Glass Co.

Bistro 188

The PACE Center facility is now in full swing

Tim Horton's

Napa Auto / Jon Stranburg

Napoli Pizza Restaurant Facility will open in near future

Allegany Eye Associates opened an office in Olean
Holiday Park Plaza under remodeling

Dresser-Rand's new \$12 million office complex is scheduled to be completed in the Spring. Dresser has already completed construction of a new \$4 million test facility.

Cytec celebrated 50 years of operation in Olean

In conclusion, the City is moving in the right direction. With sound fiscal policy, our attractive small-town quality of life and continued private sector investment, I am confident that our best days lie ahead.

I would like to extend special recognition to Lou Magnano from Park Centre Development and Vince Volpe from Dresser-Rand as two of the major contributors. Also a number of outside developers have made recent, important investments such as Don Close with the opening of Close's Lumber and David Eade, a developer from Syracuse who was instrumental in bringing Tractor Supply to our community.

With the collaboration of all these entities, we can all see a bright future for the City of Olean.