

STATE OF THE TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA AS DELIVERED ON 02/07/2020

Good morning everyone!

Firstly, I would like to thank the Chamber of Commerce for organizing this great event today, especially the CEO Kristina Groff! Her work on behalf of the chamber has been a vital part of growing the spirit of enterprise that is alive and well in our town.

I also would like to thank Calspan for hosting the event this morning. To have a business of this caliber invest so heavily in our town speaks to our strength and growth. Let's all give them a round of applause!

I also would like to recognize my colleagues in government:

- First, State Senator Tim Kennedy!
- Our State Assemblywoman Monica Wallace!
- My Deputy Supervisor Christine Adamczyk!
- And town council member Brian Pilarski.
- Representing Highway Superintendent Mark Wegner, our hard working Deputy Highway Superintendent, Charlie Markel!

- As well as our newest elected town official: Please join me in congratulating our new Town Clerk Kimberly Burst!

This year, we have made some major changes in our police department. Our long-time police chief, David Zack, has left us for a great opportunity in North Carolina. We all will always be grateful for the work that Chief Zack did for our town, and we wish him much success in his future endeavors.

To that end, we had a major decision to make. Who would fill the position of Chief? I am pleased to announce here today, that Michael Sliwinski, formerly the Assistant Chief, will become our new Chief of Police, and Brian Gould, an outstanding captain who does so much good work in our community, has become our Assistant Chief.

Our police department, from the top down, is one of the crown jewels of our community. The commitment and bravery that they show every day makes us all proud. I ask that you all join me in giving our police department's leadership and officers a major round of applause.

I also would like to take a moment to talk about my own staff. For the last 4 years, Matt Janiszewski has served as Assistant to the Supervisor and has put so much work into

equipping us with the tools and procedures we need to modernize our town. It is bittersweet for me to tell you that Matt will be moving on to work for Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul, where I'm sure he will be an outstanding presence, but he will be sorely missed.

Matt, thank you for all of your service to the town and to me, and even though you are moving on, please know that you have left a strong legacy in my office. Best of luck.

I also would like to introduce you all to the newest additions to my staff. My new clerk Lynn Rybak! And filling Matt's position, my new Assistant to the Supervisor, Dan Jones! All of them bring a wealth of experience in government and management and they will serve my office as a great team!

When I ran for Town Supervisor four years ago, I ran on a platform of:

- Stability, accountability and growth.
- A town that will lead the way in economic development and good paying jobs.
- Safer neighborhoods, with strong employment and smarter services.
- Better quality of life.

- An infrastructure that matches the hard work that our own residents put into their properties.
- And to develop our town into a place that's known worldwide as a great place to work and raise a family.

These are the core values that drove my administration and our efforts throughout my first term.

Through pursuing that agenda. An agenda for the people - for our community - and for better government, I am pleased to report that the state of our town is **strong!**

One of my biggest priorities has been targeting neighborhood and housing issues. To that end, our town has now reduced the number of abandoned "zombie homes" from 545, to 198 at the end of 2019!!

Speaking of zombie homes, I am honored to announce that Habitat for Humanity, has been part of over \$1 million in rehab work in Cheektowaga. We also are looking into exciting new projects in the Pine Hill neighborhood to put people in homes and get those properties back on the tax rolls.

Thanks to our efforts on neighborhood preservation and housing development, and thanks to the Buffalo-Niagara Association of Realtors for selling all those homes, Cheektowaga has been named one of the top 10 healthiest

housing markets in the country! Can we have a round of applause.

I also would like to thank Senator Kennedy and Assemblymember Wallace for yet again providing over \$5 million this year in grant funding for our NYS DEC Consent Order. Thanks to their hard work, for the last four years, we have been able to obtain over \$35 million in funds benefiting the Town of Cheektowaga and a portion of the Village of Depew.

Our highway department, under our Highway Superintendent Mark Wegner and his Deputy Charlie Markel, has been very hard at work. They have managed to repave 30 town roads and continued to install sidewalks to bring them into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Our drainage project in the Towers Road area has increased the volume of storm water run-off capacity, which is critical to preventing flooding damage. We also reconstructed part of the roads where work was performed, and installed drainage for residential bubblers.

Town workers also repaired and replaced over 200 storm water receivers and manholes, and trimmed or removed over 250 trees. These are your tax dollars at work in a way that you can see and benefit from up close.

Thank you to the hard working men and women in the Highway Department, and our entire town work force for all you do throughout the year. Let's give them a big round of applause.

For our business community, I am very pleased to announce excellent commercial growth in our town.

Whether it's the expansion of:

- The DePaul Apple Blossom Apartments;
- Or the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport;
- Or McKesson Pharmaceutical;
- Or Hazlian's Sausage
- Or Rosina Foods;
- Or the Atwal Medical Building on Harlem Road;
- Or API Heat Transfer
- And Benderson Development adding new buildings and restaurants to the old K-Mart Plaza;

our strong record of exciting new commercial development has increased that will provide jobs and new properties on our tax rolls.

I am also pleased to announce that the first business to move into the long-awaited, newly-developed Garden Village Business Park, will be Cello-Pack.

I am also very happy to announce that Niagara Transformer plans to expand and open a \$3.3 million research and development facility right here at their location in Cheektowaga!

Also The Highway Rehab Corp will be relocating from Brewster, NY to Cheektowaga, bringing with them 15 new jobs!

I also am pleased to announce that, after carving out a retailing niche in the Bowmansville area, Lake Effect Furniture & Mattress Co. has relocated to the Dick's Sporting Goods Plaza on Union Rd. What a great re-use of a storefront that has stood vacant for many years!

I also would like to recognize some of the new businesses that have opened over the last year:

- Firstly, 5 Star Urgent Care on the corner of Union Road and Walden!
- A development that you couldn't miss if you paid attention to the news for more than five minutes: two Chick-Fil-A's opened in our town! The food is delicious, and so is the important source of sales-tax revenue for our community.
- Young Development launched a successful project at Woodside Villas on Transit Road!

- Green Genie Flood Response and Mold Remediation, who use only eco-friendly products, opened in July.
- L&W Supply moved into its 45,000-square-foot facility on Dick Road, creating new jobs
- Pella Windows and Doors expanded their business to include the new Pella Experience Center, which will allow customers to better compare products and operate fully functional windows and doors.

In 2020, we plan on expanding our housing projects with the Felician Sisters at Doat St, as well as Cleveland Senior Apartments on Harlem Road.

To all of the businesses and non-profits who make up the cultural and economic fabric of our town, thank you for all you do to grow Cheektowaga. Give yourselves a round of applause.

For our youth, we received over \$30,000 in funding from Legislature Majority Leader Tim Meyers and former Legislator John Brusco for youth programs, including our annual winter festival; breakfast with the Easter Bunny, and IT equipment for our Dartwood Community Center and pre-school program.

Thank you to our Assemblywoman Monica Wallace for funding in the amount of \$250,000 to make ADA modifications to our Alexander Community Center for the

future Boys and Girls Club and an additional \$100,000 slated for programming! We hope to open the Boys and Girls Club this September!

We also managed to receive new all-inclusive playground equipment for Stiglemeier Park thanks to Monica Wallace and a DASNY grant.

Also for our youth and seniors, Majority Leader Tim Meyers secured funding for a new handicapped accessible van that will help our seniors and youth better experience our community.

Speaking of our youth, I would like to recognize the Cheektowaga Warriors 16-under Hockey Team for winning our first ever national title, making history for our town. We are so proud of the team and their efforts.

Let's all give all our youth and seniors, as well as Legislator Meyers and Assemblywoman Wallace a big round of applause!

One of my major priorities has been modernizing our town and making town government more efficient. To that end, I have a major announcement....(cue drumroll)

We have renovated our town website! We also put together a new Cheektowaga video that appears on our website. It's better for me to show you than just tell you: (cue video)

I am also pleased to announce that Social Services made themselves available at town hall! Having Social Services personnel come to Cheektowaga Town Hall in the evening, helps residents who work during the day and also provides plenty of free parking!

This year, Cheektowaga Town Hall was lit up in purple for Domestic Violence Awareness month. Domestic Violence has been increasing throughout our country. Please know that we are here to support you. Call our police department. We are on your side.

Last year, the Town managed to negotiate a lower rate for electricity supply costs. This year the Town will be entering into the Erie County Utilities Aggregation through Fluent Energy, saving the town close to \$150,000.

We are also making progress on our clean energy grant and hope to be a leader in providing low-cost alternative energy to town residents. This kind of innovation will be a major benefit to Cheektowaga.

In addition, this year we will be looking into an LED streetlight conversion that will provide even more tax savings to the Town.

Under my administration, our town also has begun the

process of putting together a comprehensive plan that will cover future growth and intentions. We will work harder than ever to obtain public and private funding to obtain our vision, and our planners will work harder than ever to make it a reality.

The last four years have brought progress. We encountered obstacles and challenges, but thanks to the hard work of our community residents, our government and business leaders, we are stronger than ever. Our community's bedrock is our people -- a people with a long history of strong values, and they deserve a government as great as we are.

In my second term, we will build on our traditions, and modernization and bring strong accountability to our town government. I hope that in the next four years, I can leave this town better; our neighborhoods stronger; and our economy booming. I look forward to working with all of you in making this happen.

Together, we can set Cheektowaga on a course of prosperity for years to come. Let's get to work! Thank you!