



City of Salisbury FY10 Budget Mayor's Budget Message

Citizens, Taxpayers and Salisbury City Council:

Each year I review the previous year's budget message to prepare for the creation of the new fiscal year's message. As I re-read the message I prepared exactly one year ago, I was struck by the profound and sweeping changes that have occurred across our nation in the past twelve months. Not since 9-11 have we experienced such a signal change in our national life. The failure of our system of financial regulatory control will affect our community, county and state for a number of years to come. Consistent with the national economic situation, conservative revenue projections and close monitoring of expenditures will drive our work plan and our budget decisions for at least the next three years. We are more fortunate than many areas which have been devastated by foreclosures and unemployment, but we are, as always, at the end of the funding chain, so as the State deals with the budget shortfalls, we will experience their pain.

This is true of all states. As I have followed the developing situation since the early Fall, I have realized that many local governments are in serious jeopardy. I would like to share a few thoughts and statistics from national municipal publications in the hopes of providing a context for the budget I am submitting to the City Council:

- The National League of Cities 2008 City Fiscal Conditions Report: “found that the decline in property tax revenues (3.6% from the prior year in inflation adjusted terms) is having an impact on the fiscal health of local governments.”
- “Unlike the previous economic downturn in 2001 when property taxes were able to buffer the effects of declining income and sales tax receipts, the weak housing market is likely to affect city budgets until 2010.”
- 64% of city finance officers surveyed in September 2008 stated that they “expect cities to have a harder time meeting fiscal needs in 2008, and 79% forecast even bigger problems in 2009.” In February 2009 that percentage of finance officers who reported facing financial difficulties had risen to 84%.
- Michael A. Pagano, dean of the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Chicago, stated, **“The sharp decline in property tax receipts erodes a critical buffer that has helped cities through economic downturns for the last three decades.”**

- In a column, written in October 2008, the National League of Cities Executive Director made the following sobering statement: **“For the first time in more than 20 years, revenues from property sales and income taxes are all down at the same time. That is even before the dramatic impact of the current economic crisis.”**

Last year my budget message included many statistics and relevant facts about the shrinking role of federal spending in investment in aging infrastructure. Unfortunately, by the end of 2008, more city officials were reporting that relations with state and federal governments “have worsened over the past year than improved.” Additionally, six in ten report the impacts of unfunded mandates and presumptions from federal and state governments have worsened since last year. There is clearly pressure on all fronts to maintain quality and levels of service. The effort to address our citizens’ needs and expectations in light of the national and state constraints has been the driving force in our budget deliberations and decisions.

FEDERAL STIMULUS FUNDS

If there is a “silver lining” in this crisis, it is the Federal stimulus spending package. The decision to send monies to local governments to replace aging infrastructure as a method to stimulate the economy will have more effect on some communities than others, but we will all benefit from this “bridge over troubled water.” Under Governor O’Malley’s leadership, we have made great progress, and I can say that the Governor’s Administration has made a great effort to ensure timely and equitable delivery of stimulus funds.

We took the lead in the early days of stimulus funding discussions in the late fall of 2008. City Departments began adjusting capital project “thinking” to align with the evolving guidelines in the late Fall and early in the New Year. When I attended the annual Maryland Mayor’s Conference in Annapolis in February, it coincided with the “finishing touches” on the Stimulus package. We had the advantage of direct and specific conversation with the Maryland Cabinet Secretaries who were on the cutting edge of the Federal changes to the legislation. Even before I arrived home, I communicated the latest developments to City Administrator John Pick. We quickly formed an inter-departmental work group dedicated to compiling a list of “shovel ready” projects and programs that could be considered for the Stimulus program, as we understood it, under the direction of Assistant City Administrator Loré Chambers.

At this point we are very fortunate to have received word of grant funding / low-no interest loans through the following sources:

- Energy Block Grant (\$147,300)
- Justice Assistance Grant (\$255,000)
- Clean Water Fund (\$4,280,435)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) (\$81,000)

We have also applied for a grant totaling \$1,492,909 for eight sworn police officers for three years through the COPS Program. The City's cost for these positions will total \$390,721 over this three year period. The City will also be obligated to pick up funding for these positions for at least one year. We anticipate further funding or clarification of guidelines as the Stimulus works its way through the system.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Last year in my budget message, I spoke of our intent to implement a performance measurement system. I am pleased to report that we have made great strides in accomplishing this goal. Over the current year, under Loré Chambers' guidance, this system is up and running. Loré met with each department and collaboratively they established quantifiable benchmarks. Each quarter, City departments will submit reports on their progress in meeting their performance measurements. For example, in the Mayor's Office, we are tracking citizen concerns in a much more transparent and measured manner. We have established a goal of two days for acknowledging the citizen concern and beginning to address these concerns. Each City department has concrete measures as well as goals for improvement in effectiveness and efficient delivery of service. We realize that this system is a "work in progress", but we believe that it will pay dividends for the City and our citizens in the future.

We received notification from Wicomico County that they wish to terminate their Information Technology (IT) contract with the City. This is a result of the rising demand for service by County departments. We anticipate doing a needs analysis to determine the most effective way to provide this service to City Departments. I am submitting the budget for IT at the current year funding level. Once we have a better picture of how to proceed, we may need to make adjustments in this area.

REVENUE: GENERAL FUND OVERVIEW

The overall General Fund budget, totaling \$33,212,042, represents an increase over the original FY09 budget only due to the fact that the FY10 budget includes \$1.7M in capital lease proceeds that were not included in the FY09 budget. If this item, which is needed in order to address a comment in the City's audit, is removed, the FY10 General Fund budget is less than the original FY09 budget. Real Property Tax Revenues are projected to increase 9% this year, the last year of a three-year phase in of assessments by the State of Maryland. This projection is based on information provided by the State Department of Assessments and Taxation. All other revenue sources are projected to either maintain their current level or decrease because of the economic situation. Business personal property tax revenue will be down as a result of business cut backs and closures. We are currently projecting a decrease of \$300,000 from our current year budget in this revenue item. We are anticipating that income tax revenues will be steady for FY10, but we are concerned about revenues from this source for upcoming years as the effects of the national recession will be more pronounced. Income Tax revenues also lag current conditions because they are based on the previous year's income tax collections. Building permits revenue is

projected to be down \$177,000 from the current year budget and down \$282,000 from FY08. Again this is an indicator of the national downturn. Investment income is down \$110,000 from the current year due to reduced interest rates.

Governor O'Malley was true to his promise not to balance the State budget on the backs of local governments. However, as the full effect of the economy reached the State level, the Legislature considered dramatic cuts in the State shared Highway User Tax. Initially the proposal was to completely eliminate sharing this revenue source with local governments. Then, with the help of lobbying by the Maryland Municipal League (MML), the General Assembly considered reducing these distributions by 30%. For Salisbury, that would have meant a loss of approximately \$500,000. This would have effectively eliminated our street repair/re-pavement program for the upcoming fiscal year. Finally, thanks to the great work of the MML, this reduction was ultimately decreased to 10.8% of the total that would otherwise be due. As a result, we have been able to save our street maintenance program, although we have had to reduce it by \$80,000 from last year's level.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) grant funds from Wicomico County will be reduced by \$149,000 next year. This is a result of the fact that Fruitland will take over responsibility for EMS service to their fire district beginning July 1, 2009. Ambulance claims payments will also be reduced by \$135,000 as a result of anticipated loss in bill payments from Fruitland's assumption of this service.

By way of historical perspective, I offer the following. Several years before I became mayor, my predecessor Mayor Paul Martin and the City of Fruitland negotiated an agreement for the continuation of the delivery of EMS Service to Fruitland and Allen. Allen assumed responsibility for this service a number of years ago. This year, the Fruitland Fire Department decided it was in their best interest to separate Fruitland and Salisbury's relationship. While this will reduce the income to the City EMS, it will lessen the case load for our EMS responders and help to forestall the need for more personnel. This is a move that serves both Fruitland and Salisbury.

We are about to begin the long-awaited study in cooperation with Fruitland, Delmar and Wicomico County to determine if and what the tax set-off should be between the three cities/towns of the metro core and Wicomico County. This is the most progress we have made in our ten-year discussion with the County on this critically important issue for the citizens of the County. I have discussed this issue in detail as I have traveled to City neighborhoods preparing for the transition to the new mayor's tenure. Unfortunately, we will not have the benefit of the result of this study for this year's budget, but I am confident that it will prove beneficial in future years.

EXPENDITURES: GENERAL FUND OVERVIEW

Early in the budget process, Department Heads were instructed not to request additional positions and to hold operating expenditures at the current fiscal year level. The only new positions requested are the eight new police officers which we hope to have funded through the COPS Grant Program.

The proposed FY10 budget does not include a cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) for our employees, nor does it include any step increase for employees. This is a very difficult decision, but in light of the serious economic conditions, we are convinced that we have to avoid added costs that will automatically be built into the next few years' budgets and which may be difficult to maintain.

Over the course of the past year, we conducted an operational review of the Finance Department to determine efficiencies. The recommendations of this review are currently being implemented, and we will continue implementation during the upcoming fiscal year. One of these recommendations was to increase training on the MUNIS programs. I am recommending funding of \$43,830 in consulting services from our software vendor, as the first year of a two year process to address all MUNIS modules. This will enable us to offer training of employees to ensure that the MUNIS programs have been installed correctly and are being fully, effectively and efficiently utilized.

The proposed Budget Analyst position which was recommended by the study has not been funded. We are concerned that revenues may not be available in future years to continue funding this position. The Department Work Groups, which were created following the study, are continuing the implementation of additional recommendations from the Operational Review, which do not have budgetary implications.

We have completed three years of work by the Neighborhood Services and Code Compliance Department (NSCC). Under Tom Stevenson's direction, the staff is doing an excellent job in tackling over-occupancy cases and in improving the appearance of the neighborhoods of the City. The Neighborhood Services Task Force, created five years ago, has been under Tom's direction and is doing a great job of coordinating the work of Public Works, Fire, County Fire, Police, NSCC, and Building Permits & Inspections in dealing with many of the major challenges facing the City, such as prostitution, drug and gang activity, as they are impacted by property conditions.

The FY10 budget includes funding for the resumption of the career ladder program for the Motor Equipment Operators in Public Works (\$13,500). This program will provide an incentive for those employees to improve their skill levels in equipment operation as well as their overall knowledge of the Public Works Department and the City. This program will reduce turnover, reduce vehicle

accidents and enhance employee morale. This was deleted in the FY09 budget but will have a tremendous positive effect on the work of the Department if reinstated.

We are pleased to budget only a 4% increase in health insurance costs over the next year. We continue to see very modest premium cost increases as a result of our excellent loss rate. We are expecting property and liability insurance premium increases of approximately 14%.

We are faced with the need to replace the City's telephone system. The manufacturer no longer fabricates this system, seriously jeopardizing our ability to maintain the system. We are proposing a lease purchase arrangement for a total cost of \$219,000 and annual payments of \$44,128.

Several repair/renovation projects to City facilities include:

- Chimney repair at Poplar Hill Mansion, with a total cost of \$32,500 (50% from Grant Funds).
- Repair/replace sidewalks, trees and pavers in the front of the Government Office Building (GOB) at a total cost of \$16,000. City share will be \$8,000. This project is underway by decision of the County.
- Replace hall windows on second and third floors of the GOB. The total cost is \$70,000. Our share is \$35,000. As an aside and a point of personal privilege, I am pleased to see this happening since the new windows will be able to be opened. I leave this office happy that this enhancement to the 1975 building will have a positive effect on the work environment in the building.

NEIGHBORHOOD INVESTMENT

Several specific neighborhood investment projects being proposed for completion in the next year are:

- Installation of light poles in Sassafra Meadows Phase I (\$50,000). The infrastructure in this neighborhood was installed before the neighborhood was annexed into the City and was designed compliant with county, not City, standards.
- Installation of sidewalks along the entrance way to Harbor Pointe along one side of Harbor Pointe Drive to Anchor's Way. The total of this project is \$55,000. The residents are to re-pay the City for 50% of this cost over a period of five years. This is the second partnership with Harbor Pointe to improve the infrastructure in the neighborhood. Harbor Pointe was developed as the City's first Planned Residential Development, but there were few "City" amenities required. The residents and the City have been working together for over ten years to address issues that arose from the original design concept as well as the history of some of the developers.

- Hire a Main Street Coordinator as a contractual/part-time position to replace Urban Salisbury. This reorganization will reduce funds allocated for the downtown and will have the advantage of coordinating efforts with the State Main Street program and Main Street managers across the State. Funds for this position are budgeted at \$25,000.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

I have found that when I say it is critical that the City invest in our infrastructure, I feel that the word falls short of an adequate description of what exactly infrastructure is and how critical it is to the quality of life for our citizens. Several months ago, I read a great article in Governing Magazine that tackled a better description of the concept of “infrastructure.” The author of the article pointed out that until the 1980s infrastructure described military projects. Only in the last 25 years has it come to mean “non-military public works such as roads, bridges and power lines.”

The word “infra” comes from a Latin word meaning “beneath.” That means the infrastructure means the “structure beneath” the City. That is, “something that underpins something else.” When I read it in that context it takes on a much more immediate and important role. The definition now in the American Heritage Dictionary is, “the basic underlying framework of a system; the ‘fundamental system’ of a country or city.” Infrastructure is “the things we do in common.” These are the things that benefit us collectively! Public Works is good because it denotes that these are the ‘works’ we do together.” That is why it is so important.

This budget includes the following projects that represent our investment in our all-important infrastructure.

PUBLIC WORKS – GENERAL FUND

- Engineering cost for Beaverdam Creek Tidal Dam Repairs (\$30,000)
- Main Street Storm Drain Evaluation (\$5,000)
- East Main Street Storm Drain Repairs Engineering (\$33,000)
- Engineering for Flood Relief project on Vine Street (\$15,000)
- Engineering for Naylor Mill Road Bridge Repair (\$10,000)
- Engineering for City-Wide Storm Drain Repair & Rehabilitation (\$10,000)
- Installation of Safety Devices on City-Owned Dams
- Beaverdam Drive Bridge Repairs (\$50,000)
- Foundation Repairs on Lemmon Hill Land Standpipe (\$15,000)
- Street Re-pavement Program and associated curb gutter and sidewalk repair (\$320,000) as a result of the work of MML to restore these State shared funds. This has already been mentioned in the revenue narrative.

PUBLIC WORKS – WATER & SEWER FUND

- Replacement of the West Isabella Street Water Main (\$210,000)
- Installation of 12” Water Main at Naylor Mill Road from Northwood Drive to Northgate (\$200,000)
- Ongoing Restoration of the Park Well Field (\$180,000)
- Ongoing restoration of the Paleo Well Field (\$200,000)
- Clean and De-Commission Sludge Lagoons #1 and #3 (\$575,000)
- Ongoing System-Wide Replacement & Refurbishment Program for the Sewer System (\$200,000)
- Maintenance of the Mill Street Lift Station and Sewer Shed Maintenance (\$165,000)
- Paleo Water Storage Tank (\$1.9M from Water & Sewer Fund and \$1M from Capacity Fees)
- Engineering for Paleo Well #3 (\$200,000)
- Engineering for Caustic Soda Feed System at the WWTP (\$100,000 from the Water & Sewer Fund and \$100,000 from Capacity Fees)
- Installation of 12” Sewer Main on Naylor Mill Road (Northwood to Northgate) \$125,000 will come from the Sewer Fund and \$125,000 from Capacity Fees
- Lift Station Pump Replacement(\$175,000 from Capacity Fees)
- Upgrade of Major Lift Stations (\$1,211,800 from Capacity Fees)
- Paleo Water Tank (\$2,700,000)

In keeping with the results of the Financial Forecasting Report we began last year, we are recommending an overall increase in water and sewer fees of 14% this year. This actually translates into a 13% increase on water rates and a 15% increase on sewer rates. When we began the financial forecasting last year, we were clear that there would be modest increases over the next few years to upgrade the water and waste water systems, so that we can ensure the continuing reliability of these systems.

An interesting note is that capacity fee collections are down as a result of the economic slow-down. The net result of this is that we will have to delay projects that we had hoped to construct. The good news is that these are growth related projects, and as the economy slows, the immediate need for the construction of these projects diminishes.

PARKING AUTHORITY

The budget requests in the Parking Fund are driven by the study completed last year, which identified needed maintenance and improvements to our parking facilities, and matched fees to fund these improvements.

- Replacement of two ticket dispensers for the Parking Garage (\$12,000)
- Repairs to the Parking Garage (water-proofing levels #2 and #3, sealing cracks, tuck pointing and securing brick cladding – all a product of the consultant study of last year) (\$155,000)
- Upgrade of Parking Garage Lighting (\$84,000)

PUBLIC SAFETY: INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPITAL REQUESTS

- Internet Based Training Program to make more training available to volunteer and career firefighters at a significant cost savings over site specific training opportunities (\$16,225).
- Purchase of three (3) ambulances via lease/purchase. The total cost is \$620,000. The annual lease/purchase payments will be \$137,902. This is to replace two older units and to add a sixth ambulance to the EMS Fleet.
- Purchase of ten (10) replacement heart monitors and twenty-one (21) AEDs through lease/purchase. The total cost will be \$259,000. Through annual lease/purchase the cost will be \$57,603. These units will replace units that have proven to be unreliable.
- Replacement of three (3) emergency vehicles in the Police Department with necessary equipment (\$96,894).

CAPITAL OUTLAY

We have a continuing emphasis and focus on vehicle replacement to ensure the safety of our employees and the delivery of services to ensure the safety and well-being of our citizens. This program ensures the continuity of City services and reduces maintenance costs and time.

- Replacement of a 3-ton dump truck in the Streets Division through lease/purchase. The total cost is \$110,000. The annual cost will be \$25,000.
- Replacement of a ¾ ton dump truck in the Streets Division through lease/purchase. The total cost is \$28,000. The annual lease/purchase is \$7,000.
- Replacement of a street sweeper through lease/purchase. The total cost is \$200,000. The annual lease/purchase is \$32,000.

- Replacement of an automated Sanitation Truck through lease/purchase. The total cost is \$200,000. The annual lease/purchase is \$40,000.
- Replacement of a One-Ton Dump Truck in the Sanitation Division through lease/purchase. The total cost is \$45,000. The annual lease/purchase is \$8,500.
- Replacement of a ½ ton crew cab truck for the Recycling Coordinator through lease/purchase. The total cost is \$28,000. The annual lease/purchase is \$6,500.

MARINA FUND: REPORT

The City Council voted for the City to take over operation of the City Marina, removing the private contractor, at the beginning of March 2009. In FY10, we project a deficit of \$45,000 for this City facility. This includes funds for part-time dock masters who will provide services, sixty hours per week during the peak boating season (April – September). This also includes twenty hours per week in the off-peak season (October – March). We have also included funds for promotions and advertising. The goal is to enhance revenues and decrease/eliminate the deficit. We have recently appointed three new members to the Marina Committee who have extensive experience with this marina and other “destination” facilities. We believe that the recommendations of this group will make this facility more attractive and enhance the services offered by the Marina.

BONDED DEBT: OVERVIEW

There has been much public discussion about the City’s debt obligations over the past few years. The City’s debt has risen in the water and sewer fund primarily as a result of the construction of the upgrade and expansion of the City’s Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP). We have gone from a debt of just over \$8M in FY99 to a debt of \$52M in FY08. That is the major source of the increase in bonded debt over the past decade. We have also borrowed money to invest in the water and sewer lines to Wor-Wic and on Phase II of the Northeast Collector (now known as Beaglin Park Drive). I think it is important to note that our interest rate on the WWTP upgrade and expansion is .4% which is an extremely low rate made possible through the State’s Clean Water Revolving Loan Program. Participation in this program has saved our rate payers millions of dollars compared to the cost if we had borrowed these funds through the conventional capital market.

In addition we have increased the debt in the General Fund, primarily by constructing a much needed fire station on Cypress Street and the needed improvements to Station #1 on Beaglin Park Drive. We finally “faced the music” and funded the environmentally critical stabilization of the Beaverdam Creek in the City Park and Zoo. As Mayor, I have faced the decision to meet the needs of the citizens of the City or to continue to defer the needed improvements. We have consistently balanced our indebtedness with the long

deferred needs of the City. As a point of reference, our debt limit is \$101,030,967 as of June 30, 2008. With the major projects we have bonded to improve our citizens' quality of life we maintain an available debt margin of over \$30,000,000.

PROPOSALS FOR FY10: GENERAL FUND

I am proposing that the City borrow funds in FY10 for the following General Fund projects:

- Riverwalk Repairs (\$500,000)
- Replace Vehicle Maintenance Facility (General Fund Share) (\$1,351,000)

Both of these projects are critically needed to address safety concerns for both our citizens and our employees.

PROPOSALS FOR FY10: WATER & SEWER

I am proposing that we borrow funds in FY10 for the following Water and Sewer Fund projects:

- Replacement of Vehicle Maintenance Facility (Water & Sewer Share) (\$579,000)
- Paleo Water Tank (\$2,700,000)

The vehicle maintenance facility replacement is badly needed because of the condition of this building. The Paleo Water Tank is badly needed to help address our shortage of water storage capacity system-wide.

CONCLUSION

The next few years will be extraordinarily challenging for Salisbury, its government, and for all of us, the citizens. Most of my colleagues across the State agree that the upcoming year will be considerably easier than the following two years, as we see property values dip. I stated in my State of the City that the property tax is almost always proven to be recession proof. That is not the case with this recession. The foreclosures and the credit challenge will surely affect all local governments, heavily dependent as Salisbury is upon property tax revenues. Currently we are watching the bond markets very closely as we have several projects that have been approved and are ready to go, but we are concerned that we may well not have bidders or competitive rates. Never far from our minds as we craft budgets, adopt spending and work plans is the concern generated by the volatile fuel and energy costs. Prices are down, but the general volatility of these prices does not convince us that the lower prices will remain.

This provides a tremendous opportunity to reinvent our relationships with our State and Federal partners. The National League of Cities President said in December that, “the Federal government and cities need to come together to work for the common goals of improving our nation’s infrastructure and assisting our citizens during these difficult economic times.” If we seize the opportunity that this economic crisis offers, we can create a new approach to partnership between State, Federal and local governments.

As I leave office after preparing eleven annual budgets, I would like to offer a perspective on how our spending has changed over the past eleven years. A comparison of the General Fund Budget between FY99 and FY10 indicates the following:

- Police accounted for 30% of the total GF budget in FY99 and 31% of the proposed FY10 budget
- Fire accounted for 18% of the total GF budget in FY99 and 25% of the proposed FY10 budget
- Public Works has decreased from a GF level of 32% of the FY99 budget and 25% of the proposed FY10 budget
- Debt Service accounted for 7% of the General Fund FY99 budget and represents 6% of the proposed budget for FY10

The FY99 budget was crafted by my predecessor. My budget priorities have clearly reflected a strong emphasis on improvements to the infrastructure and to enhancing the Fire Department to meet the demands of the 21st century delivery of Fire and Emergency services. I believe that we will need to address the Public Works needs for facilities, equipment and personnel in the near future. Public Works, while not the high profile of the public safety sector, is the backbone of our everyday quality of life. But it is clear that all budgets are driven by the need to serve our citizens and deliver the most basic of services.

The most pressing need for cities and towns in Maryland over the next several years is to continue to build momentum for alternative revenue streams from the General Assembly. Earlier I mentioned the ongoing work for a tax consideration from Wicomico County. That is critical, but enabling legislation to create new sources of revenue is equally important. 60% of our revenue comes from property taxes. With these sharply declining, we have no real drop back position to continue services at the level our citizens need and expect. Now that the legislative session has ended, there will be a legislative workgroup appointed by Senate and House presiding officers to explore this critical issue. We need to do all we can to promote the importance of “not having most of our revenue eggs in one basket.”

I am currently reading a new book on the first 100 days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s first administration. It is impossible not to draw parallels between that time and the crisis we are currently working through. That leads my mind back to the similar time in the life of the City. As the campaign of 1932 wore through the summer of 1932, and the economic situation in the country deteriorated by the day, Salisbury planned and executed one of the most lavish and exciting celebrations in the City’s history. That was the two week celebration of the City’s bicentennial complete with a delegation from our Sister City of Salisbury, Wiltshire, England.

Then, as now, the citizens of this city continue to see what is important and good about Salisbury and rise up to meet needs and celebrate successes. This summer, 77 years later, we have a great energy and celebration planned for this summer. Out of 5000 eligible cities, Salisbury is one of 32 finalists in the National Civic League's All-America Cities' competition. What has distinguished us from all the many other cities is our commitment to our youth, our future, as well as our community spirit and commitment. I am proud to have served this city, a city that believes, as I had hoped a dozen years ago, that working together, there is nothing we cannot accomplish.

I hope that the citizens who read this and who continue to care for this city will take to heart the words of John Adams, penned in a letter to his son, Thomas. "Public Business, my son, must always be done by somebody. It will be done by somebody or other. If wise men decline it, others will not; if honest men refuse it others will not." As I complete the last major project of my three terms of office, I leave with the prayer and belief that we all will rise up to meet the Biblical challenge that "we are in this place for such a times as this."

Barrie P. Tilghman, Mayor
City of Salisbury