

State of the City 2019

Presented by Mayor Debbie Winn on March 6, 2019

Tooele City Council, department heads, staff and residents of Tooele City, I am grateful for the opportunity to address you this evening and inform you of the state of the city.

2018 proved to be an exciting but difficult year. After 36 years, the council and I were left with the daunting task of raising property taxes. We conducted many public meetings to explain what we had to do and why we had to do it. We were transparent in every aspect of the process. We asked our citizens to trust us and to understand. Many of you did just that. As elected officials, I believe that this was the toughest decision we have ever had to make. Although the certified tax rate was increased, it is still lower today than it was 20 years ago.

I would like to present to you the results of the financial increase. We listened to you and made your requests a priority. We have hired two additional police officers to the department. We have also hired two civilian community service officers to help with community functions, VIN inspections, found property, graffiti, parking enforcement, and to assist with traffic control and at crime scenes. This will alleviate the workload of the patrol officers so that they can concentrate on more serious crime. They will also lessen the workload of administration by supporting crossing guards and animal control issues. Salaries and retirement benefits for police officers were increased to enable us to be competitive with other departments throughout the state, helping us to reduce the high turnover rate of trained officers in their first five years of service.

We are moving forward on the construction of a new police station. After 30 years of our officers and staff conducting business from an old temporary auto parts building, we will break ground on the new facility within the next few weeks. Residents can be proud of the finest police department in the state. Our officers respond to thousands of calls every year. Each time they leave their homes, they put their lives on the line for each one of you. They truly deserve a new building to conduct business, a building that we can all be proud of.

We were able to purchase much needed equipment, including five police vehicles, electrical supplies and tools for our electrician, who was previously using his own equipment; an enclosed utility vehicle equipped with a snowplow and snow blower to remove snow from the sidewalks and parking areas of city owned properties, snowplow blades for our one ton trucks, backup camera systems for our plow trucks, an air conditioner unit for fire station #2, and we were able to install a new phone system at City Hall replacing phones that were over 20 years old.

New playground equipment was installed at Linear Park last fall. A new concession building has been constructed at the Red Del Papa ballpark and by spring, we will have the lights back on at the field thanks to a generous donation from Chartway Federal Credit Union. Residents and visitors will also enjoy a new restroom facility to be constructed at the park on 200 West and Vine Street when the Fridays on Vine concerts begin in June. A new pavilion at the golf course is currently out to bid and should be ready by summer for all kinds of events that can be held at what

I believe is the finest golf course in the valley. An automatic sprinkler system will be installed at Elton Park this year. Although it will be inconvenient for a few months, it will be worth the wait. Also at Elton Park, the old tennis courts that have been unusable for several years will be renovated into pickle ball courts that will provide recreational opportunities for young and old! This project is on schedule to be completed by June 1.

Not unlike other communities in our valley, we are also experiencing a great amount of growth. It is interesting to know that the majority of our growth comes from within. Many of our children and grandchild want to stay in Tooele City. We need to provide homes for them and for those who are coming from outside of our county. Affordable housing has become a hot topic that must be addressed. I'm not surprised that people want to move here. We live in an exceptional city. I appreciate all of our community members who welcome change and understand our efforts to manage the growth. We will continue to work with other elected officials in the county and state to address water and transportation issues.

At times, we take for granted, many of the services the city employees provide. We have clean, safe water when we turn on our faucets. We have excellent employees who literally have the dirtiest job in the city taking care of the waste that we send down our drains. I am proud of all of our dedicated employees who respond with excellent customer service.

We have received a record amount of snowfall this year and we are grateful for it. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the dedicated city crews who have worked tirelessly for many days and hours to remove the snow from our streets, city owned parking areas and sidewalks. I am grateful to good citizens who have been patient and who have helped their neighbors remove the snow from sidewalks for elderly neighbors and cleared paths for our children as they walk to and from school. You are exceptional people and I thank you for your service.

President John F. Kennedy said this to the American people during his inaugural address in 1961: "Ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country." The same can be said for our city. It takes all of us working together to make our community the best it can be.

The greatest resource we have are our volunteers!

Tooele City residents can be proud of our excellent volunteer fire department. Fifty active members of the department and over 30 senior firefighters give of their time and talents to protect all of you. They donate time away from family and friends to complete training on a weekly basis, attend fire school to become certified in all aspects of firefighting, educate hundreds of children about fire safety, and jump at a moment's notice, day or night, to respond to a fire call. During 2018, they responded to 402 calls. This year our department will celebrate 100 years as a department. Chief Harrison and his crews will hold an open house during July where the community can join them in the celebration. Two hundred sixty-nine individuals have served on the department in the last 100 years and I am proud of each one of them.

During the past year, the Life's Worth Living Foundation conducted a fundraiser to place a statue in our Veterans Memorial Park to honor our veterans and bring awareness to the high rate

of veteran suicide in our country. Volunteers and generous donations made this dream a reality. The statue will stand as a reminder of the sacrifices made by our veterans. Thank you, veterans, for your preserving our freedoms.

The Ladies Community Club of Tooele purchased and planted beautiful flowers in the planters on Main Street and at the Senior Center. The Civic League added decorations to the planters after the summer was over. The Chamber of Commerce donated beautiful trees and lights to place in the planters for the holiday season. A local youth group decorated the trees and made them look beautiful! So many volunteers, giving of their time and money to make our downtown beautiful. I can't thank all of you enough for your efforts.

Recently, the residents of the Westland Estates subdivision were concerned about their neighborhood. Over 40 neighbors got together on a Saturday morning and learned how to organize a neighborhood watch program with the help of our police department. They were concerned about many things in their neighborhood including crime, no street lights, and abandoned homes. Rather than just call the city and complain, they came with a plan and a willingness to work together with city staff to improve their area. What a great group of volunteers!

Last May, staff and residents organized a spring cleanup campaign. We called it "Take Pride Tooele." We asked residents to clean up their own yards, sweep out the leaves and debris from the gutters (which by the way needs to be done again as soon as the snow clears!). We asked neighbors to help neighbors. We asked groups to help us clean up and organize our parks. Individuals, families, civic organizations, religious congregations and school groups responded and "took pride" in their community. I appreciate the efforts of all those who participated and ask for your help again this year during the month of May to make our city beautiful.

Whether you are a lifelong resident of Tooele City, moved here recently, or somewhere in between, you are an important part of our community. The council, staff and I will continue to work with you to ensure that Tooele City is a place we can be proud of!

Thank you! Mayor Debbie Winn