

Four years ago, I entered this office during a time of pessimism for our city. McMinnville was literally a dark city; street lights had been removed as a cost-cutting measure; the Park Theatre was languishing without any direction; our unemployment rate was 3.5% higher than it is today; and many of our citizens did not feel proud to live in McMinnville. It was—by most accounts—figuratively and literally a dark city.

Four years later, I stand before you with a report full of progress and optimism. Great change has occurred. The cloud of pessimism has been lifted and now we have a long list of accomplishments to celebrate. McMinnville became the first city in the state to install all LED street lights; the Park Theatre now stands as a bright beacon of hope and symbol of the renaissance movement which has occurred on Main Street; and, most importantly, a new pride toward McMinnville has emerged. After four years of hard work by countless employees, community partners, volunteers, and elected officials, I am proud to report the State of our City has never been stronger.

Our progress did not happen without tireless effort and a shared vision. The vision of progress and improved quality of life has been embraced by our community. **We feel the change.** However, this progress did not come without its detractors. Time to move on... So, with the help of sound leadership, it is up to us as a community to find more ways to work together and unify behind this common goal of progress for all. It is the future we have to invest in, but let us not forget the not-so-distant past.

For years, McMinnville was stagnant. Progress was placed on the backburner and our government took on a reactionary ideology. To save a little, we had to lose a lot. The consequence was a population which felt McMinnville was—and could only ever be—a retirement town. Recently though, we challenged this concept, we took it to the ballot box, and a new generation of leaders has emerged. Our citizens have made it clear...they are ready to move forward; we have heard them...and things are starting to change.

Our progress to this point is worth noting. Over the past year alone, over \$9 million of construction was invested in our city...with over 100 business licenses issued. Bluegrass Underground has gained national acclaim, winning 11 Emmy Awards, and has brought people from all across the nation to McMinnville to help celebrate our music heritage. Isha has grown and soon plans to create housing units which will bring even more individuals to our city. The Musky Tournament helps to showcase our waterways and outdoor recreation and allows fishermen to use our rivers year-round. Cumberland Caverns continues to expand its programs and bring more tourists to the area. We received a \$5.5 million grant to build the Advanced Robotics Center at Motlow. We upgraded our technology at both the Water and the Codes Departments—finally utilizing our GIS capabilities. We upgraded our Parks and Recreation department by updating our ballfields and adding new equipment and programs. We bought a

new fire truck for the city. AND, We received a \$1 million sidewalk grant to connect downtown to Motlow. Most importantly, we did every bit of this with a balanced budget and without raising taxes.

I cannot accept the credit for this renaissance. Our community partners, my Board of Aldermen and our City employees deserve the credit for all of their hard work to turn our dreams into a reality. City employees have worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life for our citizens, and I cannot thank them enough for their efforts. Most importantly, my Board continues to have faith in my leadership and vision.

Furthermore, I cannot overstate the value of community's support for many of these initiatives. Our citizens have stepped up to the plate in every instance where we have called upon them to do so. We rallied together to save the Park Theatre, to re-open the Driver Services Center, and collectively we revitalized Main Street...the heart and soul our community. We will continue to rally together for a multitude of causes, and with your support, we will achieve our goals.

I could not be more proud of all that we accomplished over the past four years, but I am not content with where we are—we have to keep moving forward. I believe McMinnville is on the cusp of greatness. With just a few more changes, we can greatly enhance the quality of life for our citizens and make McMinnville a destination for tourists coming to our beautiful state. Expanding our partnerships and cooperation with all the stakeholders will be the key to our success. The creation of the new Tourism Development Board should also prove beneficial in our marketing strategy for the whole community. So, our work is not finished...we must keep McMinnville moving forward!

Let me be clear, I plan to do my part, and I will never ask volunteers to do any job that I am not willing to do myself. I love this city and am vested in its future. I am willing to put in the work to make my dreams for the city become reality. But I can't do it alone.

Therefore, with the support of my Board, I plan to initiate polices and programs which will foster an environment of progress. I will pursue the establishment of a city-wide recycling program, increase on-line billing and applications at City Hall, advocate for the much-needed renovations at the Civic Center and lay the groundwork for an indoor pool, explore building a fire station on the south side of the city, find a permanent facility for our police department...which is way overdue, and continue our support of tax incentives to encourage investment and new economic development. We must continue our infrastructure upgrades and make street paving and a priority. We will continue to work with TDOT to install much-needed

crosswalks at critical intersections for the safety of our citizens. Yes, our lists of necessary improvements are many, but together we can make these important initiatives happen.

However, I believe the government cannot do everything, so I will work to foster our partnerships with the Chamber, the IDB, BRAC, and Main Street...to benefit our community without expanding the size of the city government.

After years of struggling, our City is now financially sound. Fund balances are good and revenues are increasing. There are grant opportunities available. We now have the ability to complete many projects which have been neglected for years. The time is now for us to pave the road for progress so McMinnville can become a better place to live, raise a family, work, and invest.

We have a bright future ahead of us. Our community has every reason to celebrate our successes and be hopeful for the future. Together, we are going to build a better tomorrow for all citizens of McMinnville—present and future. I am counting on your help, because it is only together that we can turn our dreams into reality. Truly, our citizens are our greatest asset. I hear stories all the time about how friendly our people are and about their willingness to lend a hand to help their neighbors. We all recognize that the volunteer spirit is alive and well in McMinnville. That is why it is my honor and privilege to serve the greatest constituents in the nation every single day...I am living my dream.

I believe, you believe, we all believe in McMinnville.

We have much work to do, but I would not want to be on any other team. Together, we are going to build a better tomorrow for McMinnville.

So, let's get to work and make that happen!

God bless the United States of America, God bless the State of Tennessee, and God bless the City of McMinnville. Thank you.