

2017 MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

1/9/18

According to City Code, the Mayor is to present an annual report at the first Council meeting of the New Year and I am thrilled to be able to do that for the first time tonight. The City will be releasing a comprehensive 2017 annual report in the coming months but I'd like to take a few minutes to mention several highlights from the last 12 months before we start focusing on our to-do list for 2018.

2017 was a Citizen Survey year and the results from this random survey were very positive. Citizen satisfaction with City services and customer service received has improved greatly since the last survey in 2014. We are proud of these results and I encourage the community to look at the report on the City's website and to let us know how we can better serve you.

From a financial perspective, the City is in a great position. In 2017 – for the 4th consecutive time - we received the GFOA's highest honor for government budgeting, the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award; and to show how your tax dollars are spent, ended the prior fiscal year with a “clean” audit with no material weaknesses or findings of mismanagement. The City's Triple-A bond rating was also reaffirmed in 2017 by Standard and Poor's. All of these accomplishments prove that the City has strong financial management policies and practices and is fiscally responsible with its tax revenues and expenditures. Congratulations to Council,

Eden, our Finance department, and the entire staff for guiding the City toward achieving and maintaining these impressive distinctions.

2017 was another successful year for our beautiful downtown. Activities and events in Old Town continue to grow and contribute to Old Town being the vibrant gathering place for residents and visitors of all ages. In addition to all the activities in Old Town, many new businesses opened last year adding to the wide variety of options you can now find downtown.

The City welcomed our new Chief of Police, John Piper, to the team. Since Chief Piper's arrival, WPD has started several new community outreach programs including Coffee with a Cop and Color with a Cop. In addition, as lead applicant, the City and surrounding jurisdictions secured a large regional grant that will purchase body-worn cameras for our law enforcement professionals. We look forward to implementing that program in 2018.

The Winchester Fire & Rescue Department received the "Gold Level - Mission: Lifeline" award from the American Heart Association for their commitment to quality patient care. WFRD also successfully completed the third annual Stuff-A-Truck program for local organizations that serve our residents in need. These are certainly achievements to be celebrated! Keep up the great work.

Some important capital projects completed in 2017 include the mandated renovations to the Joint Judicial Center and Phase II of the Green Circle Trail off Kent Street. The City Hall renovation project also got underway in 2017 and is

progressing nicely. This is just a sampling of projects completed during the year. We also began planning for projects that will be completed in the coming years.

During 2017, we launched several new mobile apps including the City of Winchester app, RouteShout for public transit, which lets riders know when to expect their bus; and ParkMobile which allows customers to use their smartphone to pay for downtown parking meters.

As indicated in the citizen satisfaction survey, maintenance of streets and sidewalks is a top priority for the City. In 2017, the City continued its sidewalk and street maintenance master plans and added or replaced sidewalks and repaved approximately 9.5 lane miles on 22 different streets. Planning for more sidewalk and street improvements continued last year and more projects will be coming soon on Valley Avenue, Hope Drive, Tevis Street, Wentworth Drive and others.

Winchester continues to set an example for other small cities – and it shows. In 2017, Winchester was again recognized nationally as a great place for businesses and careers and also as a great place to start a business by several organizations. This includes Forbes who ranked Winchester as the top small metro area for business and careers in Virginia and 13th best in the country. As a retirement destination, Winchester continues to be in demand. In 2017, the City was included in a list of the “10 Best Small Towns in America to Retire” as published by Readers Digest . Winchester was ranked in the top 50 most popular small cities in the U.S. by

MoveBuddah. But we already know what a great place Winchester is and we work hard to continue moving the city forward in a positive manner.

The accomplishments I've mentioned tonight are only a fraction of what the City has achieved over the past year. I personally have had an exciting first year as Mayor of this great city, have met a lot of wonderful people, and look forward to another productive and successful year. In 2018, may we all continue to grow and move forward, remember our neighbors who are less fortunate than we are, and unite as one for the greater good despite our differences. Winchester is special because of the people and businesses that call the city home and I am proud to be your Mayor.

Happy New Year!