



2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

To be entered upon the *Journals of the City Council of the City of Gardner* in accordance with guidance provided under Section 23 of *THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF GARDNER*.

In accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the City of Gardner and Section 17 of Chapter 43 of the General Laws, the Mayor-Elect, Councillors at-Large-Elect, Ward Councillors-Elect, and School Committee Members-Elect, assembled in the City Council Chamber on Monday, January 3, 2022 at 10:00 o'clock in the forenoon, to be sworn to the faithful performance of their duties.

CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION & RESULTS OF VOTES CAST

The CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION and RESULTS OF THE VOTES CAST were declared by City Clerk Titi Siriphan and entered into the journals of the City Council, as follows:

As a result of the votes cast at the City Election held on November 2, 2021, the following persons were declared elected:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| MAYOR | Michael Joseph Nicholson |
| COUNCILLORS AT-LARGE | Elizabeth J. Kazinskas
Judy A. Mack
George C. Tyros
Ronald F. Cormier
James S. Boone
Craig R. Cormier |
| WARD COUNCILLORS | James M. Walsh, Esq. (Ward 1)
Dana M. Heath (Ward 2)
Nathan R. Boudreau (Ward 3)
Karen G. Hardern (Ward 4)
Aleksander Dernalowicz, Esq. (Ward 5) |
| SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS | Jennifer Zlotnik Pelavin
Anne F. Hurst
Shannon M. Ward-Leighton |

City Clerk Titi Siriphan called the Roll of Officials:

- PRESENT:
- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| MAYOR | Michael Joseph Nicholson |
| COUNCILLORS AT-LARGE | Elizabeth J. Kazinskas
Judy A. Mack |

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

George C. Tyros
Ronald F. Cormier
Craig R. Cormier

WARD COUNCILLORS

James M. Walsh, Esq. (Ward 1)
Dana M. Heath (Ward 2)
Nathan R. Boudreau (Ward 3)
Karen G. Hardern (Ward 4)
Aleksander Dernalowicz, Esq. (Ward 5)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEMBERS

Jennifer Zlotnik Pelavin
Anne F. Hurst
Shannon M. Ward-Leighton

ABSENT:

James S. Boone

INVOCATION

The Invocation was offered by the Reverend Father Miguel Pagan, Parochial Vicar of Annunciation Parish.

Lord of all goodness and kindness, we bless you and we praise you.

We thank, Lord God, you for the New Year 2002 you have granted the world and the noble City of Gardner. We thank you, Lord God, for the gift of life on the world. Through your gift of life, you manifest your glory.

We thank you for all you have done for us, as a sign of faithfulness for your people.

Help us, oh Lord, to accomplish your divine will -every day of our lives this year- → for to follow your divine designs is life itself.

We thank you, Lord, for your raise leaders among us, men and women, who tend to the needs of their brethren in public service.

Through them oh Lord you provide the necessary leadership to guide and lead the future, betterment, and wellbeing of your people.

We especially entrust to you Mayor Michael Nicholson, -a son of this noble city, and whom you have called to public service-, → as he begins another period of municipal duty today.

We ask you, Lord God, to bless him and endow him with the gifts of your Holy Spirit → for the work ahead of him. Pour upon him your gifts of: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, Fear of the Lord → so much needed for the years ahead.

Bestow your gifts, also Lord, upon all those who work for the City of Gardner (the City Council, the School Committee, other public officials, and employees for the city), who will assist our Mayor daily throughout this new period of dedicated public service.

We pray also for all others entrusted to guard our political welfare. May they be enabled by your powerful protection to discharge their duties with honesty and ability.



2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

And we likewise commend to your unbound mercy all citizens of the United States of America -especially the residents of the City of Gardner- that we may be blessed in the knowledge and sanctified in the observance of your holy law.

May we be preserved in union and that peace which the world cannot give.

And, after enjoying the blessings of this life, be admitted to those which are eternal.

We pray to you, who are Lord and God, for ever and ever. Amen.

“GOD BLESS AMERICA”

The Gardner High School Select Choir, under the direction of Mrs. Joanne Landry, performed “God Bless America.”

OATH OF OFFICE
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Worcester, ss.

Gardner, Massachusetts

January 6, 2022

I, Titi Siriphan, City Clerk of the City of Gardner, in witness thereof, certify that on the 3rd day of January, 2022 at 10:00 o’clock in the forenoon, at a meeting of the Mayor-Elect, Councillors-at-Large-elect, Ward Councilors-elect, and School Committee Members-Elect, I administered the oath required by the City Charter to the following:

SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEMBERS

Jennifer Zlotnik Pelavin
Anne F. Hurst
Shannon M. Ward-Leighton

COUNCILLORS AT-LARGE

Elizabeth J. Kazinskas
Judy A. Mack
George C. Tyros
Ronald F. Cormier
Craig R. Cormier

WARD COUNCILLORS

James M. Walsh, Esq. (Ward 1)
Dana M. Heath (Ward 2)
Nathan R. Boudreau (Ward 3)
Karen G. Hardern (Ward 4)
Aleksander Dernalowicz, Esq. (Ward 5)

Who severally solemnly swore that they would faithfully and impartially perform the duties of the office for which they have been elected in the City of Gardner according to the best of their ability and in conformity with law.

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

In testimony of all of which is required by the City Charter, I make this certificate to be entered on the journals of the meetings of the City Council.

/s/ Titi Siriphan, City Clerk

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Worcester, ss.

Gardner, Massachusetts

July 13, 2020

I, Titi Siriphan, City Clerk of the City of Gardner, hereby certify that on the THIRD DAY of JANUARY, 2022 at TEN o'clock in the forenoon, I administered the oath required by the City Charter to Mayor-elect **Michael J. Nicholson** for the term expiring January 1, 2024.

Michael J. Nicholson solemnly swore that he would bear true faith and allegiance to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and would support the Constitution thereof, so help him God.

And,

Michael J. Nicholson solemnly swore and affirmed that he would faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent on him as Mayor, according to the best of his abilities and understanding, agreeably, to the rules and regulations, of the Constitution thereof, and the laws of this Commonwealth, so help him God.

And,

Michael J. Nicholson solemnly swore that he would support the Constitution of the United States, so help him God.

In testimony of all of which is required by the City Charter, I make this certificate to be entered on the journals of the meetings of the City Council.

/s/ Titi Siriphan, City Clerk

REMARKS:

The Honorable Michael J. Nicholson, Mayor of the City of Gardner, thanked those present who assisted in setup for the event and reminded those in attendance of the regular Inauguration Ceremony on Thursday.

BENEDICTION

The Benediction was offered by the Reverend Father John Nicholson, Retired Priest of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Worcester.

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

Almighty and Gracious God, great is your kindness toward us even on this cold January morning as Michael Nicholson is inaugurated as the mayor of the great City of Gardner. Your word says every good and perfect gift comes from the Father of Light. Our mayor Michael Nicholson has never claimed to be perfect, but he is a good man, good to those who know him well, good to his country which he loves, and good to the community which he leads. Though we begin this day with a prayer of thanksgiving for him and are grateful for his presence, father we set him apart from us now for the task of his leadership be with him. Establish the work of his hands, allow him to keep his heart of service even when some don't want to be served, empower him to keep this his tongue of eloquence even when critics are harsh and show his heart to be full of hope even when the malaise of divisiveness is so prevalent in our world today. Almighty God your word has shown us that good leadership demands good character. We thank you for our elected Mayor Michael Nicholson whose heart is full of integrity and service to you even in this day and age when values of pessimism exist. Keep his mind on true public service. Father give this mayor not only a soft hand but a stiff backbone, not just him father but be with us as well serving as voices of encouragement that drown out the voices of pessimism. It's all loved in a way that challenges the powerful and comforts the downtrodden, and finally, most importantly, almighty God provide him with the strength, the courage, the grace of God to face the challenges of today and look forward with hope to a brighter tomorrow as we pray in the name of Jesus, amen.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councilor Nathan Boudreau, and seconded by School Committee Member Shannon Ward-Leighton, it was voted fifteen (15) yeas, Mayor Michael Nicholson, Councillors Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Ronald Cormier, Aleksander Dernalowicz, Karen Gardner, Elizabeth Kazinskas, Judy Mack, George Tyros, and James Walsh, School Committee Members Jennifer Zlotnik Pelavin, Anne Hurst, Shannon Ward-Leighton, and Robert Swartz, to adjourn at 10:27 a.m.

PERFORMANCE

The Gardner Middle School Bobcat Chorus 5th Grade students, under the direction of Mr. Larry Zuaro, performed "Hot Chocolate," while people exited the Council Chamber.

Accepted by the City Council: February 22, 2022

**2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES**

CEREMONIAL INAUGURATION

On the 6th day of January in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-Two at 6:00 o'clock in the evening, officials and guests assembled in the Honorable Fred E. Perry, Gardner City Hall, 95 Pleasant Street, to bear witness to the administration of the ceremonial oath of office to the Honorable Michael J. Nicholson, Mayor of the City of Gardner, members of the City Council, and the School Committee.

WELCOME AND PROCESSION:

Mr. Colin D. Smith, Executive Aide to the Mayor and Chair of the Inaugural Planning Committee, welcomed guests to the 54th City Inaugural Exercises and announced the entrance of the City Councilors-Elect and School Committee Members Elect.

“WHEN TWILIGHT SHADOWS DEEPEN”

The University of Massachusetts Minuteman Marching Band, under the Director of Dr. Timothy Todd Anderson, performed “When Twilight Shadows Deepen” as the City Councilors- Elect and School Committee Members- Elect entered the auditorium.

ENTRANCE OF THE MAYOR AND GOVERNOR

Mr. Colin D. Smith, Executive Aide to the Mayor and Chair of the Inaugural Planning Committee, announced that as had been done at the City’s first inaugural exercises in 1923, the Mayor would be escorted into the Ceremony by Chief Gregory Lagoy of the Gardner Fire Department and Chief Richard Braks of the Gardner Police Department.

Mr. Smith then announced the entrance of his Honor, Michael J. Nicholson, 20th Mayor of the City of Gardner and His Excellency, Charles D. Baker, 72nd Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

“GOD BLESS AMERICA”

The University of Massachusetts Minuteman Marching Band, under the Director of Dr. Timothy Todd Anderson, performed “God Bless America” as Mayor- Elect Nicholson and Governor Baker entered the Auditorium and took their place on the stage.

WELCOMING REMARKS

Master of Ceremonies, Mr. John Gardella, retired Gardner High School history teacher, opened the Inaugural Exercises by welcoming officials and guests in attendance.



2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

“Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen, I am John Gardella and I’m honored, I’m actually more than honored, I’m thrilled to be up here. Mayor Nicholson told me that half of the elected officials are my former students, so if you have somebody to blame, you know who to who to call, but I’m honored to be here at the 2022 inaugural exercises. I was a teacher of history and United States government and politics at the AP level at Gardner High School for 25 years and I told my students that I had several goals for them during their time in my class. The first, of course, is learning the content, learning the material, but then I really wanted them to develop critical thinking skills and we worked hard on that so that they'd be able to solve problems in their life and their community going forward. In addition I asked my students, I kind of challenged them to this, that after they went off to college or university that they would come back to the city and start a business or run for office. These students took me up on it and I’m really excited that they did so. I’m more than over the moon to be here, both to participate and to witness. It's actually six of my students, including your mayor, four city councilors and a school committee person up on stage, so that's just terrific. Now we have a few special guests here. We have Mayor Stephen DiNatali of Fitchburg, we have Michael Owens, former city councilor of Braintree, Timothy Toth, Vice Chair of the Templeton School Committee, State Representative Megan Kilcoyne, I’m not sure if she made it yet, and certainly State Senator Anne Gobi welcome. In addition I’d like to recognize Mrs Rachel Cormier of the Gardner School Committee who is with us this evening. Mrs Cormier was elected to her current four-year term in the previous municipal election and is not being sworn in this evening but she is here and welcome and congratulations to her.”

PRESENTATION OF THE COLORS

The National and City Colors were presented and posted by Troop 9 and Troop 49 of the Boys Scouts of America

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Emmanuel M. Baczewski, of the Troop 9 of the Boys Scouts of America, led the Assembly in the “Pledge of Allegiance.”

“THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER”

The University of Massachusetts Minuteman Marching Band, under the Director of Dr. Timothy Todd Anderson, performed “The Star Spangled Banner.”

INVOCATION

The Invocation was offered by the Reverend Katie Kamenski, of Higher Ground Ministries.

Let's all bow our heads as we pray tonight

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

Dear Heavenly Father we come before You this evening with grateful hearts. We are blessed and honored to come together tonight to witness the inauguration of our Mayor for the great city of Gardner.

We thank You for what You have already done through his leadership in years past

—
And now as we look forward to what lies ahead of us as a city, we are blessed to declare what Your Word tell us- That you are FOR us not against us. That every weapon formed against us cannot prosper because You Father place your Hand upon us.

We ask You Lord for a special blessing upon our Mayor as he steps into this next season of leadership. May he lean on You and not his own understanding. May You give him the wisdom and knowledge and discernment when making decisions about the future of our great city. As You have said in the book of Isaiah chapter 55 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord.” May we the people lock arms with him and lift him up daily in our prayers and shut down any evil talk we may hear about him or see about him on social media.

We declare what it says in Luke 1:37 NKJV

“For with God nothing will be impossible.””

We pray you guard his heart, his spirit, his soul, and his mind as he leads us and continues to have such a kind compassionate heart for the people of our city and beyond.

We ask You God to surround him with people who will encourage him, help him, not hinder and those who will support the vision for this great city.

Thank You Lord for the city council and school committee members who are placed in position to help lead our city alongside our mayor.

Lord we say what you said to the prophet Jeremiah- Before you were formed in your mothers womb, I knew you.

Lord you knew Mike would be the leader of this city for this time and season before he was even formed in his mothers womb. Thank You for calling him to this position for such a time as this.

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.””

Isaiah 6:8 NKJV

We are so grateful our mayor has answered the call and has been sent to this great city!!

And every morning as he prays and reads through 1 Timothy 4:12 “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

We thank You Lord our mayor is a good example to all of us.

And he can lean on Philippians 4:13 NKJV

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

We pray for his family – that the love of God would surround them and they would be rewarded for the many times our Mayor has missed out on family time because



2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

he was leading our city. And for the future family times he may miss, we ask you to redeem the time and reward them for sacrificing their time with our Mayor.

We declare Psalm 91 over our city tonight –

A portion of that chapter reads this :

“If you make the Lord your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your home. For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go. They will hold

you up with their hands so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone. You will trample upon lions and cobras; you will crush fierce lions and serpents under your feet! The Lord says, “I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation.”” Psalms 91:9-16 NLT

We thank you Lord in 2022 according to Ephesians 3:20 & 21

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

“to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” Ephesians 3:21 NKJV

We thank You for all of this in the mighty matchless powerful Name of Jesus Christ- AMEN

CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION & RESULTS OF VOTES CAST

The CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION and RESULTS OF THE VOTES CAST were declared by City Clerk Titi Siriphan and entered into the journals of the City Council, as follows:

As a result of the votes cast at the City Election held on November 2, 2021, the following persons were declared elected:

MAYOR

Michael Joseph Nicholson

COUNCILLORS AT-LARGE

Elizabeth J. Kazinskas
Judy A. Mack
George C. Tyros
Ronald F. Cormier
James S. Boone
Craig R. Cormier

WARD COUNCILLORS

James M. Walsh, Esq. (Ward 1)
Dana M. Heath (Ward 2)
Nathan R. Boudreau (Ward 3)
Karen G. Hardern (Ward 4)
Aleksander Dernalowicz, Esq. (Ward 5)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Jennifer Zlotnik Pelavin



2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

MEMBERS

Anne F. Hurst
Shannon M. Ward-Leighton

City Clerk Titi Siriphan called the Roll of Officials:

PRESENT:

MAYOR

Michael Joseph Nicholson

COUNCILLORS AT-LARGE

Elizabeth J. Kazinskas
Judy A. Mack
George C. Tyros
Ronald F. Cormier
Craig R. Cormier

WARD COUNCILLORS

James M. Walsh, Esq. (Ward 1)
Dana M. Heath (Ward 2)
Nathan R. Boudreau (Ward 3)
Karen G. Hardern (Ward 4)
Aleksander Dermalowicz, Esq. (Ward 5)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEMBERS

Jennifer Zlotnik Pelavin
Anne F. Hurst
Shannon M. Ward-Leighton

ABSENT:

James S. Boone

MUSICAL SELECTION

The Gardner Middle School Bobcat Chorus 7th and 8th Grade Students performed its rendition of “Of Thee I Sing, America,” under the direction of Mr. Larry Zuaro

OATHS OF OFFICE

The Honorable Mark Goldstein, First Presiding Justice of the Gardner – Winchendon District Court administered the Oaths of Office to City Councilors and School Committee members.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Worcester, ss.

Gardner, Massachusetts

January 6, 2022

I, Titi Siriphan, City Clerk of the City of Gardner, in witness thereof, certify that on the 6th day of January, 2022 at six o'clock in the evening, at a meeting of the Mayor-Elect, Councilors-at-Large-elect, Ward Councilors-elect, and School Committee Members-Elect,



2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

The Honorable Mark Goldstein, First Presiding Justice of the Gardner – Winchendon District Court, administered the oath required by the City Charter to the following:

SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEMBERS

Jennifer Zlotnik Pelavin
Anne F. Hurst
Shannon M. Ward-Leighton

COUNCILLORS AT-LARGE

Elizabeth J. Kazinskas
Judy A. Mack
George C. Tyros
Ronald F. Cormier
Craig R. Cormier

WARD COUNCILLORS

James M. Walsh, Esq. (Ward 1)
Dana M. Heath (Ward 2)
Nathan R. Boudreau (Ward 3)
Karen G. Hardern (Ward 4)
Aleksander Dernalowicz, Esq. (Ward 5)

Who severally solemnly swore that they would faithfully and impartially perform the duties of the office for which they have been elected in the City of Gardner according to the best of their ability and in conformity with law.

In testimony of all of which is required by the City Charter, I make this certificate to be entered on the journals of the meetings of the City Council.

/s/ Titi Siriphan, City Clerk

INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT ELIZABETH KAZINSKAS

Mr. John Gardella, Master of Ceremonies, introduced the Honorable Elizabeth J. Kazinskas, to deliver an address following the Oaths of Office:

It is now my honor to present to you a former student of mine and this young woman is really amazing. She was a leader in school, she was a leader at university, and she's certainly a leader for the City of Gardner and if I can just, I hope I'm not stealing any thunder here, but on election night I went to the American legion to see the votes come in and Lizzy got up and spoke very briefly but what she said i thought was so important. She said what we do is we identify a problem, we work to fix it, we just do the right thing, and that impressed me so much because that's what government's about, that's what democracy is about, and I'm so proud of her, so without further ado Elizabeth Kazinskas, your City Council President

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

ADDRESS OF THE CITY COUCNCIL PRESIDENT

The Honorable Elizabeth J. Kazinskas, City Council President of the City of Gardner, delivered the following Address:

Thank you Mr. Gardella! It's been 22 years since i was in his classroom but i can't call him John - he's Mr. Gardella still.

Good evening on behalf of the Gardner city council. Thank you all for attending this evening - Governor Baker, Senator Gobi, Representative Zlotnik - thank you for being great state partners to our city and for your dedicated work and service to the Commonwealth. Vice Chair Pelavin and members of the School Committee, I want to thank you for your partnership and service to our schools.

Mayor Nicholson, thank you for being a partner to the City Council. You are professional and thorough, and your strong commitment to transparency is appreciated. We look forward to the next two years working alongside you and our city government. Judge Goldstein, thank you for administering the Oath of Office to the City Councillors this evening and for the important work that you do in our community at Gardner District Court. To the Umass Minuteman Marching Band, thank you for being here. I am a 2006 Umass Amherst alumnus of the Eisenberg School of Management and i went to the Umass football games, truthfully, to watch your band perform. Now i wasn't a band member, but that doesn't mean you can't be City Council President one day.

To the citizens of Gardner, thank you for giving the City Council the opportunity to work for you. Our role in serving you is an important one and we recognize that your role in putting us in place to do so is equally as important.

To my fellow City Councilors, thank you for your unanimous vote to elect me as your Council President. Your confidence in me to be successful in this role and serve it in the best interest of the Council and city we represent is humbling and appreciated. Thank you very much for this opportunity. To city clerk Titi Siripahn, thank you for being the backbone of the City Council and we look forward to working with you this term. To our families, the work that goes into City Council business many times takes away from time with you. Thank you for your support and allowing each of us to pursue our desire to serve Gardner. On a personal note, I would like to thank my parents John and Victoria Kazinskas and my sister Stacy Kazinskas. They have showed up and supported everything I have ever done in my entire life. They have encouraged me to believe in myself and others and to pursue what i believe is right and that encouragement has come in extremely handy in public service. The last time I had the opportunity to thank them publicly was 20 years ago during my graduation speech as vice president of Gardner high school's class of 2002. If you're interested in hearing that speech feel free to ask my dad. He's watched it many, many times and even had it converted from a VCR tape to a DVD when I was 34 years old.

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

Thank you to my family for being here this evening and always being there for me wherever “there” may be. You inspire me and you're the best. Also I'd like to acknowledge and thank my 97 year old grandmother Gladys Hunter.

She turns 98 in just a few months. She is watching at home tonight and would be here if she could. She has lived in Gardner all her life and has resided at Hunter Farm for the past 65 years. She and my grandfather Hugh Hunter owned and operated Hunter Farm ice cream stand in Gardner for 22 years. I'm sure some of you might remember. She is very proud of me and this year's inauguration is particularly meaningful as I was sworn in as a Councilor At Large like my grandpa Hugh who served on the Gardner City Council for three terms. My grandmother watches every City Council meeting. She asks me questions about city issues and offers advice. For example she reminds me to speak slowly and loudly and that I need to wear the right outfit and just the right amount of makeup and jewelry at the meetings and if I'm not, don't worry, she'll let me know. Thank you babchi for watching tonight and to you and grandpa Hugh for your influence.

During this next term I look forward to the City Council working together to carry out our responsibilities as a legislative body of the city in a reasonable and responsible manner and in the best interests of those we represent. Our work is important in managing city affairs and I'm confident in this council's understanding of that role. We may vote differently and debate items before us from opposite sides at times, but we will work as a team for the greater good of our citizens and our community. Dana Heath is taking over my previous role as ward 2 councilor. He's the only new addition to the council this year just as I was when first elected four years ago. Ward 5 Councilor Alec Dernalowicz, Councilor at Large Judy Mack and Councilor at Large George Tyros are serving their second term. Their first term was wild, especially the first year. They attended meetings for about three months in the City Council chamber and then attended from zoom for the next 15 months. Their first government portrait was rescheduled at least half a dozen times and they voted in three Council President elections in one term. They still managed to do great legislative work, connect with our community and their constituents and were successfully re-elected to serve their second term.

Ward 3 Councilor Nathan Boudreau and At-Large Councilor Craig Cormier bring multiple terms of experience as City Councilors and have also served, and will continue to serve, as standing committee chairs. Ward 4 Councilor Karen Harden and At large council elect James Boone also bring multiple terms of experience and have served on many of our standing committees. At large Councilor Ronald Cormier, the city's longest serving City Councilor, and Ward one counselor James Walsh bring experience and knowledge to the City Council that is valuable and greatly appreciated. Each has more experience in city government than the rest of us do combined, with Councilor Cormier at 36 years and Councilor Walsh at 33 years. After this term, that is give or take three years younger than me. Our City Council is a reflection of the population of the citizens living in Gardner. Some members bring new perspectives, some bring years of experience and together we bring a diverse perspective. To say I'm excited to lead this council and look forward to the great work we will accomplish together is an understatement. Thank you all again for attending this evening. The City Council is prepared to serve, grow and move Gardner forward over these next two years. Thank you



2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

PERFORMANCE

The Gardner High School Cheerleaders then performed under the direction of Ms. Jill Markley. Mr. John Gardella, Master of Ceremonies, then wished them luck on behalf of the City as they travel to the National Cheerleading Competition in Dallas, Texas the following week.

INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNOR BAKER

Mr. John Gardella, Master of Ceremonies, introduced His Excellency, Charles D. Baker, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to deliver remarks to those present:

Now this is a true honor for me today. It's really an honor for all of us and for the city to have Governor Charlie Baker here with us as our keynote speaker for the celebration. Governor Baker has served as the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts since 2015 and has been a friend to the City of Gardner ever since having come to the city on several occasions, awarding Gardner millions of dollars from programs that he had developed. Prior to being Governor, he served as Secretary of Human Services under Governor Weld, Secretary of Finance for Governors Weld and Cellucci and CEO of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care. He is a former Selectman of the town of Swampscott as well, and just before I bring him up, my 96 year old mother, as I was leaving tonight, she said you tell Charlie Baker he's doing a great job, so ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Governor Charlie Baker.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

His Excellency, Charles D Baker, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, delivered the Keynote Address.

It's going to be very hard to wipe this smile off my face after hearing, John, that your 96-year-old mom thinks I'm doing a good job. So my late mom, god rest her soul, was a Democrat and my father who's 93 is a Republican and I talk all the time about the fact that I grew up in a mixed marriage household and I learned how to speak both languages at our dinner table. I had a lot of friends who actually didn't want to come to dinner at our house with my parents and my brothers more than once, because if you came to our house you were expected to play, and the conversation at our dinner table was aggressive. But it was all about how do you make that work, how do you do that better, why do you think that would be the right way to go, what if we went this way. 60 years my mother and father were married and their marriage was a spectacular example to their three boys about what it meant to truly commit to somebody else. And yet in those 60 years we're pretty sure they never voted for the same person. I remember when I was running in 2014 my mother was not in a position to be able to vote but in 2010 which was an election I ran and lost in, we always learn a lot more when we lose than when we win, we should all remember that right, but I remember saying to her after that election so was this the first time

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

you and dad voted for the same person, and my mom looked at me and she said well honey it is a secret ballot.

I didn't mean to go there, but John gave me the opening with your mother. Okay, let me say first of all that Lieutenant Governor Karen Polito and I both served on our Select Boards, she in the Town of Shrewsbury and me in the Town of Swampscott. We both also served in state government. She served 10 years in the legislature in the House of Representatives and I served, as was noted, for eight years in the Cabinet of Governor Bill Weld and Governor Paul Cellucci and we have both always loved the opportunity to participate in or observe the swearing-in of local officials. We've both spent a lot of time over the past few days going to as many of these events as we possibly could because, among other things, one of the great lessons we both learned by serving in local government is the nature of accountability that comes with serving within your community. Let's start first of all with the fact that you will never be as well known by the voters as you will be known by the community in which you live. In addition to that everybody pretty much knows where you get your coffee on Saturday morning, they know if your kids are still home, what sports they play or what theater groups they're in or what cheer group they're part of, and where you're going to be. They're likely to know where you drop off your dry cleaning and when you tend to do that they'll even probably know what restaurants you tend to go to on Friday night. And the reason that matters is they will not be afraid to tell you exactly what they think about the job you're doing, because they see you on cable TV every week when you participate in City Council meetings or School Committee meetings and I used to say all the time that during my time in local government there was no place to hide. It's your friends, it's your neighbors, it's your kids friends and neighbors. It is in many respects the most familiar role you will ever serve in elected politics and that will come with some intensity because, let's face it, you know the old line about nothing's more intense than the argument between people who live next to or near each other, or know each other best, but the flip side of that one, and you talked about it a little bit earlier, is it is a shared experience. Now you can all debate your own point of view, and your own sense about what the right way to go is, but the point i was trying to make was there is something about serving in local government, there's something about serving the people you live with and you're closest to, there's something about that that makes it feel communal in the best sense of that word, and one of the things the Lieutenant Governor and I have talked a lot about over the course of our seven years in office has been that the Commonwealth is really 351 cities and towns and our job is to do everything we can to make sure all 351 cities and towns feel like they're heading in the right direction.

It does not bother me to watch a guy wearing future hall of famer jersey Kevin Garnett walk past me with an armload of pizza.

And I wish that some of that familiarity, some of that sense of community that's so much a part of what you are about and what these folks up here are about, played out a little more in our national politics. And I think one of the things that makes this kind of government so important to me is because it comes with the sense that we are all in the same boat, like it or not, and whether we agree or disagree on this thing or that, and believe me i grew up in a household as i said where people loved each other but didn't necessarily agree on very much at all when it came to politics, this is the form of government that in many ways creates the best and most significant opportunity for people to make a really big difference in the community they live in. And I think



2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

in some ways it should be valued that way, and one of the reasons the Lieutenant Governor visited all 351 cities and towns, which has never been done before, and I have visited over 250 over the course of our time in office, is because we really believe that if communities are great the Commonwealth's great, it doesn't work the other way around. You can't have a great Commonwealth if your cities and towns and the people who live in them don't feel like things are going in the right direction, don't feel like there are things happening in their community that are positive and forward-looking and present a huge opportunity for them and for their families to grow and succeed and do better, and that's why coming to these kinds of events are important to me and important to her because we value this kind of government, we believe in this kind of government, we've served in this kind of government.

And I think sometimes in the midst of all the hoo-ha that dominates a lot of what passes these days for national debate, especially on this day in particular, we forget that a lot of the most important governing that goes on across this great nation of ours happens in places like this every single day, 365 days a year, where people put themselves before their neighbors and their friends and their co-workers and their colleagues and make the case about why they would be the right person to serve on your behalf.

And that accountability, that presence, that closeness, I think it's an incredibly important part of why I think this kind of governing succeeds. There's no place to hide but there's also this sense that we are, for better or worse, in this together, which I think often gets lost the farther away the elected official gets from the people who actually vote on them. So my big message to you all tonight is, first of all, thanks for being here. Your presence speaks to the importance you place on what goes on in your community.

To the newly electeds, thanks for standing up and playing a part in what is an incredibly important part of the lives of the people who make up this great city. You will make decisions that matter and those decisions will make a difference, not just for the people who are here tonight but for the people who follow you in these roles and the folks who follow the folks in the audience. This is a generational exercise that we pass from one to the next and the work you do will make a difference in the lives of those who come after you.

I just wish you good luck and Godspeed.

My final comment is to you folks in the Umass Band. I've had the pleasure of seeing you play a number of times over the course of the last seven years and you are marvelous inside in the balcony in place but you are rock stars when you get a chance to march at the same time you play.

My final comment is I really do hope at some point, and I did this before I was Governor, because I was friends with former Mayor Mark Hawke, I really hope I get a chance to come back and watch a chair luge here in Gardner! God Bless!

OATHS OF OFFICE



2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

The Honorable Serge Georges, Jr., Associate Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court administered the Oaths of Office to Mayor-Elect Michael J. Nicholson.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Worcester, ss.

Gardner, Massachusetts

January 6, 2022

I, Titi Siriphan, City Clerk of the City of Gardner, hereby certify that on the SIXTH DAY of JANUARY, 2022 at six o'clock in the evening, the Honorable Serge Georges Jr., Associate Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, administered the ceremonial oath to Mayor Michael J. Nicholson for the term expiring January 1, 2024.

Then,

Michael J. Nicholson, who solemnly swore that he would bear true faith and allegiance to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and would support the Constitution thereof, so help him God.

And,

Michael J. Nicholson, who solemnly swore and affirmed that he would faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent on him as Mayor, according to the best of his abilities and understanding, agreeably, to the rules and regulations, of the Constitution thereof, and the laws of this Commonwealth, so help him God.

And,

Michael J. Nicholson, who solemnly swore that he would support the Constitution of the United States, so help him God.

In testimony of all of which is required by the City Charter, I make this certificate to be entered on the journals of the City Council.

/s/ Titi Siriphan, City Clerk

MUSICAL HONORS

The University of Massachusetts Minuteman Marching Band, under the Director of Dr. Timothy Todd Anderson, performed musical honors with "Four Ruffles and Flourishes," followed by the ending of "God Bless America."

INTRODUCTION OF REPRESENTATIVE JONATHAN ZLOTNIK

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

Mr. John Gardella, Master of Ceremonies, introduced the Honorable Jonathan D. Zlotnik, State Representative of the 2nd Worcester District, to welcome Mayor Nicholson:

well continuing with the theme this evening i'd like to introduce to you another former student of mine

justice we were pretty lucky yeah and all of these all of these officials that were my students were really bright people on the city of gardiner are so fortunate please welcome representative jonathan zlotnick to the podium

REMARKS BY REPRESENTATIVE JONATHAN ZLOTNIK

The Honorable Jonathan D. Zlotnik, State Representative of the 2nd Worcester District, to welcome Mayor Nicholson, with the following remarks:

First I want to thank Governor Baker. He has been a reasonable and genuine partner over the last 7 years, and his administration has made many positive impacts over that time, that we will benefit from for years to come. So I want to thank you for that and, more importantly, the way you governed.

The first time Mike talked to me about running for Mayor was a few days after my first election in 2012. I had been elected at a young age, and Mike wanted to do the same. Luckily for us both, he was interested in a different office.

It would be a few years before he got his chance and over that time we became good friends as he worked in my office and a couple other offices in the State House before going to work for Mayor Hawke. In that time, the education he pursued, and the jobs he took were all aimed at gaining the experience to run the City of Gardner.

This is the beginning of his first full term and although he's only been in office a year and half it feels like he's been at it for a long time. It's in part due to the presence he already had there, but it's really because few people enter that role as well prepared as he was. And we have been the beneficiaries of that.

In Mike, we have a partner ready and able. I look forward to continuing to work together.

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

So with that, it is my pleasure to introduce My Mayor, Your Mayor, Our Mayor, Michael Nicholson.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

The Honorable Michael J. Nicholson, Mayor of the City of Gardner, delivered the following Inaugural Address:

Good Evening,

Reverend Clergy, Governor Baker, honored guests, elected officials, members of the City Council and School Committee, family, friends, and my fellow Gardnerites - thank you for being here with us today to celebrate all we have been able to accomplish together over the past few years, and launch our mission for the next two.

I would also like to give a special welcome to those who have stood at this podium before me who are with us this evening, Former Mayors Stephen Erickson, Alan Agnelli, Charles Manca, Daniel Kelley, and Mark Hawke.

To my family- I cannot thank you enough for always having my back. The gratitude I have for the love and support you have shown me is something I'll never be able to express in words alone.

To my sister Jackie, you continue to push me to be better each and every day. The commitment you have for this City, particularly with the amount of hours you put into making sure those who attended the City's vaccination clinic last year had as smooth an experience as possible, is something that still leaves me inspired.

Dad- I know you're counting down the days until your upcoming retirement, but no matter how exciting retirement may be, the example you've shown me of what it means to work for your community helped get me here today. And while there may still be 85 days left until you officially retire and get to spend time with our dog, Blue, at home, I want to thank you for your 35 years of service to this City.

Mom- you have been my biggest supporter since day one. The stories you've shared about your life growing up in your native Nicaragua, living through an earthquake where the house caved in around you all, two violent wars, moving to a new country, starting a new life, and everything else are stories I carry with me and remind myself of every day. As important as the oath I took here today is, it is not lost on me that the first oath I "witnessed" took place on May 26, 1994 at Faneuil Hall, when while pregnant with me, you officially became an American.

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

A mi familia nicaragüense, cada oportunidad que he tenido durante mi vida ha sido por las oportunidades que se sacrificaron ustedes para que la generación menor de la familia tuviera una vida mejor. Espero que se sientan orgullosos de mi y que sea digno de todo lo que se sacrificaron para que pueda estar en ésta posición hoy.

To my cousin Wanda, thank you for sharing your talents with us this evening. I have to wonder if when our relatives left the Herberdies Isles in Scotland if they ever would have thought that someone in the Nicholson family tartan would lead the colors of freedom into a ceremony such as this one day.

Governor Baker, thank you for joining us and for your continued commitment to helping to build a stronger commonwealth by giving cities and towns the resources they need to be successful. From helping us with different programs that have come up in the City, to attending the Chair Luge, you have always been a great friend to us in Gardner. This also means a lot to me as someone who interned in your office back in 2015. Sitting in that office in Springfield, answering calls about the massive amounts of snow that came shortly after you first took office, I never would have anticipated how often we'd work together between then and now.. I look forward to us continuing to work together during your last year as Governor. In particular, I would like to thank you for your leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. No one had a playbook for how to handle this situation, and as difficult as it was for us on the local level, I can't even imagine everything you, Lt. Gov Polito, your cabinet, and everyone else went through on the state level. There is no other governor I would have rather have started my time in local government with.

Judge Goldstein- the pride this City had for you when you were first appointed for a judge was great, but immeasurable when it was announced that one of Gardner's own would be leading the Gardner/Winchendon district court as its First Presiding Justice. Since everything was shut down when you were appointed, please allow me now to publicly congratulate you and thank you for the work you have been doing for this region. From participating in the different substance abuse recovery efforts of the city, conversations regarding domestic violence, and more, you have truly brought a community lens to your role.

Justice Georges- Thank you for being a great mentor to me for the past five years. I still remember the evening in August 2017 in St. Paul's Cathedral in Boston when you administered the Oath of Professionalism to my class before our first day at Suffolk University Law School. I have truly appreciated the genuine care you have for those you meet and the compassion you have for those you work with. I'm honored to have been sworn in by you again this evening..

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

Dr. Anderson and the members of the University of Massachusetts Minuteman Marching Band, welcome to Gardner! I am thrilled to be able to have you all with us this evening. Since 1990, eight Gardnerites have served as drum majors of the band, several dozen others as field staff, and currently all band staff in our school system are graduates of the UMMB- Doug Lepisto at the High School, Jon Schmitt at the Middle School, and Michelle Heffner at Elm Street..

Mr. Gardella, thank you for serving as the Master of Ceremonies this evening. They say at events like these you should talk about people who have influenced your life to help get you here. John- Half of the elected officials on this stage are your former students from when you were a history teacher at Gardner High School. Your assignment during senior year to either write a research paper or work on a local campaign or local government office was how I found my way into interning for Mayor Hawke, and as they say “the rest is history.”

Representative Zlotnik- thank you for being a friend and mentor to me. I really appreciate the care and attention you bring to our region, always checking in to see how things are going and how new partnerships or programs can be made.

Senator Cronin- thank you for all you have done for our city during your time in the Senate, and Senator Gobi, welcome to Gardner as our new state senator.

To our City Councilors, and School Committee Members, the working relationship we have in this City is something many other locations can only dream of having. The climate of collaboration we have here is exactly how the government should operate- working together for the best of those that put us into the seats we now hold.

Lastly, scattered throughout the hall this evening are our city department heads, employees, and first responders. Please join me in a round of applause for these individuals who tirelessly work every day to provide top quality services to all of our residents each and every day.

In a particular way I would like to thank my direct staff Rachel Roberts and Colin Smith for the help they provide me every day. My office would not run as smoothly and efficiently if it wasn't for them.

While I only mentioned a few people, as hard as the past few years have been, there have been people who have helped us become stronger than we ever thought possible and made us better for it. This celebration is a celebration of all of us- our city and everyone who helped us get her today- and we are forever grateful.

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

While we hold this inauguration ceremony every two years, this one is quite historic for the City of Gardner.

We have just sworn in the youngest and most diverse government in the City's History.

On this stage are the City's first Latin American and African American elected officials.

We have the most women elected to our City's government. The majority of us are under 50 years old, for the first time in the City's history, a woman has topped the Councillor-at-Large ticket in an election and two women were elected to the leading positions in the government- City Council President Elizabeth Kazinskas and the Vice Chair of the School Committee Jennifer Pelavin.

In the past 10 years, our city's population has grown by over five percent, and that trend is continuing. I think our City's government and the work we are doing are both reflective of that growth and the best interests of the people.

It is no secret that over the past two years, the largest issue facing our city, and our world, has been the COVID-19 Pandemic. I don't think anyone attending the City's last full inauguration ceremonies on January 3, 2020 would have expected that a virus would create a situation necessitating two acting mayors, four delayed elections, the closing of public buildings and businesses, masks, reopening plans, mass vaccine clinics, and everything else that COVID brought with it.

Since March of 2020, 4202 members of our community have tested positive for the virus, and we have lost 68 of our neighbors.

But yet we stood strong, faced the challenges of the world with renewed vigor, and worked toward a better, safer, and healthier tomorrow.

Working with our partners at the State and with our local healthcare community - Heywood Hospital and Community Health Connections, we were able to vaccinate thousands in our region. Our first responders delivered vaccines to people who were homebound. Mobile and school clinics were and continue to be set up. And our regional vaccination clinic done in partnership with the City, Heywood Hospital, and the Polish American Citizens Club vaccinated close to 35,000 people between February and June of last year.

We will forever be grateful to the countless individuals who dedicated their time and efforts into making those vaccination events possible. The staff in the Board of Health and Heywood

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

Hospital, those who oversaw and worked at the registration call center, our IT staff for designing the registration system, the volunteers who helped at the clinic, and more.

Despite the impact of the Pandemic, we were also able to accomplish much to improve our students' experiences in Gardner Public Schools.

After almost a full year of remote learning, our students are back in the classroom. Our teachers are utilizing newfound tools to move our curriculum firmly into the future. With funds from the State, we were able to purchase enough chromebook laptops so that every student in Gardner Public Schools has their own device.

Over a decade since it fell victim to budget cuts due to the Great Recession, we have reinstated the elementary school beginner band program. Music education is so important to the experiences of our students, and I am proud to say that there are currently 158 students at Elm Street School participating in the new band program in its first year.

We have also launched new innovative pathway programs at Gardner High School in Healthcare, Business, Finance, Information Technology, and Manufacturing. These state sponsored programs are designed to give students coursework and experience in specific high-demand industries. Students in the Healthcare, Business, Finance, and IT pathways all leave with college credit. Students in the manufacturing programs graduate with industry credentials, OSHA certificates, and more. In doing so we give our students real world experiences as part of their every day education.

Large strides have been made in investing in our infrastructure as well. By investing in ourselves, we set the example for others to invest in us.

In the past year we have paved more miles of roadways than we have since 1990.

We've installed new sidewalks, crossing signals, lighting fixtures, banners, and flags in the downtown to breathe new life into the area.

Working with different state programs, we have begun to expand our bike trails and lanes in the City to connect Winchendon to Hubbardston through the downtown.

Finally, there is the new bridge over Route 140 that will be constructed by the Commonwealth during the next two years to connect the bike trails of Gardner and Winchendon, similar to the bridge recently constructed over Route 2 in Leominster.

As a city, we are also doing more in terms of outreach.

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

Gardner is now running the Veterans Service operations for Gardner, Ashburnham, Westminster, and Princeton. In doing so, we are leading the region in making sure that those who have served our country receive the benefits that they have earned and deserve.

For the second year in a row, we offered free summer meals - breakfast, lunch, and dinner - to all students in the City, regardless of whether they were enrolled in Gardner Public Schools or not. We are also continuing to provide free meals to our students in our schools. With all the changes that our students have experienced, hunger is not and will not be an added burden for them.

We were recently awarded a grant from the Stanton Foundation to reinstate the police department's K9 Unit. This will help increase the department's efforts in drug trafficking prevention, lost people patrols, and more.

While we have accomplished a lot, there's still a lot left for us to look forward to.

We are updating and improving our school facilities to help provide our students with a modern learning environment that meets their needs. Renovations to the gym and auditorium at Gardner High School are already underway, new lockers are being installed at Gardner Middle School, and in the coming school year, our students will walk through the doors of our newly constructed Gardner Elementary School.

Within our schools, we are also working to improve our students' experiences. Working with the Gardner Middle School Equity and Engagement Committee, we have begun a diversity audit of the books in the school's library to make sure that all of our students can find their stories on the shelves. The demographics of our students have shifted in recent years. Approximately one third of our students speak Spanish at home, with Arabic being the third highest language spoken by students besides English. Our schools not only teach students traditional reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also how to find themselves and grow into the people they are destined to be. So it only makes sense that as we change so must the things we offer our students, so that they know they are home in our schools and in our City.

Our economic development opportunities in Gardner continue to grow. Gardner will look a lot different when the next inauguration is held because of the projects we are ready to undertake in the next two years.

Our healthcare opportunities are expanding. Heywood Hospital has begun constructing a new surgical pavilion at their facility on Green Street. This will update their operating rooms to a modern facility and expand what this hospital is able to offer to its patients.

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

On the other side of the City, Community Health Connections is constructing their second facility on Timpany Boulevard that will house family and medical practices, dental offices, urgent care, and behavioral health services.

Gardner received the largest awards from the State's MassWorks and Underutilized Properties Grant Programs to completely change the face of our downtown. This will allow us to construct a new event plaza and parking lot on Rear Main Street and work with EA Fish Construction and Mass Ave Realty to construct new housing units in the Downtown on Rear Main Street and the old Temptations and Ryan Block Buildings. This will help draw more people into the downtown to attract new businesses into the area. We have also begun discussions with bike share and scooter share companies about setting up locations near these new developments.

The Timpany Crossroads property continues to develop with Starbucks thriving here after their first few months and Edward Jones and other companies soon to be opening their doors.

In order to keep this momentum going, we need to increase the resources we have available to us and our business community. During the next term, proposals will be submitted to the City Council regarding outdoor eating and seating options for restaurants, financing improvements to the Downtown and Mill Street urban renewal districts, and revamping our nuisance, vacant, and abandoned building ordinances to make sure our City Departments have the tools they need to deal with issues that already exist and prevent new issues from arising.

Everyone in the community, myself included, have grown tired of hearing a notification go out that a water main break has occurred in the City. On August 3rd of this past year, we lost close to 4 million gallons of water due to a water main break in a pipe with shut off valves that were installed well over 100 years ago, which failed causing an 18 hour issue in the City.

In the past year we invested \$11 million out of our water enterprise account to replace all water utility lines and shut off valves in the City that were installed between 1870 and 1935. We are hoping to continue that work with the different state and federal infrastructure funds that will soon become available.

Working with Representative Zlotnik and Congresswoman Trahan's offices, we have also been able to obtain funding to bring broadband internet access to the last few streets in the City that are without it. In 2022, every resident of Gardner will have access to high quality internet.

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

With all of the progress mentioned above, we cannot ignore the ways in which the City is also contributing to the same blight problem that we are working to fix. It makes no sense for someone to make statements about wanting to improve the look of our downtown, fight absentee landlords, and remove blight in our city, but then turn a blind eye to a city building at the entrance of our downtown where the roof is quite literally caving in on itself.

The issue of the Greenwood Pool is not a problem that anyone on this stage started, but it's ours to fix. The longer we wait to do something, the more the price tag goes up, and the bigger burden we place on our taxpayers. I plan to put forward a proposal in this next term for the demolition of the indoor pool building, and the revitalization of the area to a place that attracts people to the City, instead of causing embarrassment.

Our job as City officials is to build a place that people are proud to call their home. To make Gardner a destination for people. We are at a moment where we can have a greater impact on this City than we ever thought possible.

The COVID-19 Pandemic is still with us. Our Residents must continue to take this virus seriously and follow the precautions and best practices we have learned over the past two years. Testing rates are still high and many of our residents are dealing with the side effects of what is now being called "Long COVID." But even with all we have faced, we are stronger than ever.

Next January, we will celebrate our 100th year as a City. You have to wonder whether those who drafted our charter 100 years ago would have expected any of what we have seen, developed, evolved, and adapted to over the past century.

It is now our time to move forward, carry the torch they lit for us into a new future, and bring about a new era for this place we call home.

God Bless you all, God Bless America, and God Bless this City.

MUSICAL SELECTION

The University of Massachusetts Minuteman Marching Band performed their rendition of Frank Sinatra's, "My Way," the signature closing performance song of the band.

BENEDICTION

The Benediction was offered by the Reverend Father Stephen Lundrigan, Pastor of Annunciation Parish.

2022 CITY INAUGURAL EXERCISES

Let us be aware of the presence of God among us.

Heavenly Father we give you thanks for all the many gifts you've given us, the gift of our life, the gift of prosperity, the gift of protection over these past two years, especially tonight the gift that you give us of self-governance. We ask you to send your blessings down upon these elected officials, upon our Mayor, upon the members of our City Council, upon the members of our School Board. Give them minds of wisdom, lips that speak truth and honesty, hearts of compassion, hands which are made for the hard work ahead of them. Let them remember our lord's admonition that those who aspire to greatness, those who desire to lead, must be the servants of the rest. Help them always to put purpose over personality, public good over self-advancement, peace and concord over division. Heavenly Father we ask you to help all of us citizens of Gardner to work with these officials to support them, to encourage them to work together to build a community of peace and justice in line with your divine will. We ask all this through the name of our lord Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit God for ever and ever. Amen.

RECESSION OF OFFICIALS

Officials recessed from the Auditorium accompanied by a Musical Selection of "The Rowan Tree" and "Wings" by Mrs. Wanda Nicholson, Bagpiper.

Accepted by the City Council: February 22, 2022

A True Copy, Attest:

Titi Siriphan, City Clerk