

Re-Org 2025 Remarks

Thank you all for joining us today as we start the business of governing Haworth for the year 2025. I thank our honored guests and members of the public who join us today. I am honored that you're here.

First, my heartfelt congratulations to both Glenn and Michele on taking the oath for another term on Council. You have been wonderful representatives for our residents, and we are lucky to have you. You serve with excellence, intelligence, compassion and stamina. I thank you for your continued service.

Glenn, I'm especially happy to see you're still on track to break the record. Two decades is no joke and I am grateful for your commitment and personally, your patience and counsel.

And I'd like to give a warm welcome to Peter and my heartfelt thanks to him for stepping up when service was needed. An appointment may be easier than an election but the work is the same. Congratulations and thank you for taking this important step with us.

Local government is the most immediate and intimate form of public service. Your constituents see you regularly, know you, know your families and friends. They live on your street. In my opinion, it's the epitome of democracy. We are empowered by the people we see everyday and we endeavor to represent them well—with access, responsiveness, transparency and trust.

None of our work can be done without a dedicated staff. One year ago we were still in the midst of an unprecedented turnover in core staff. Today, I could not be more proud of the team we have at Borough Hall, their diligence, demeanor and ability to get the work of the people and Borough done efficiently. I thank all of you. I especially thank Greg Zagaja so enthusiastically and with such diligence and good humor. We're thrilled to have you.

The Borough staff also includes our Police Department, DPW and Library. Again, these groups are remarkably talented, dedicated and reliable. I thank you all for the work you do keeping us safe, beautiful and literate. And to our Borough Attorney, Bob Regan, I can't thank you enough for always taking my calls. And calming me with your sage council. It helps with everything we do.

Haworth does not exist as we know it without volunteerism. Starting with our Fire and Ambulance departments and the Police Auxiliary all the way to committee members who tirelessly bring us entertainment, leisure activities, public health measures and advocate for our environment—this is the heart of Haworth. We are indebted to our volunteers and I thank you tremendously for your passion and commitment.

Finally, my Council colleagues. Having worked as part of this body for the past 6 years, I can say with certainty that this is a unicorn group of public servants. No infighting, no drama. Just a tireless commitment to helping Haworth thrive. I believe the residents have no idea how fortunate they are to have people who are here strictly for what they can give—proactively and collaboratively.

In the two years I've been mayor, we've added sidewalks, pickleball courts, play areas, bike trails, bridges, safer signage and maintained our roads. The large majority of the costs of these projects were paid with grant money. We've implemented controls for construction density and tree removal. Our businesses are thriving as Haworth has become a destination in the Valley to dine, shop and seek wellness. We will continue to plan and improve this year all while grappling with the changing scope of Affordable Housing demands placed upon us by the state. I hope you will participate in the process by attending Council meetings. We welcome feedback.

Before closing, I'd like to acknowledge the passing of a singular Haworth character, Bob Sconfienza. A lifetime proprietor of Haworth Hardware, first helping his Dad and then taking it over, Bob personified what's special about small town life. He will be missed.

Happy new year and thank you. Lets get to work.