



## Town Council Opening Remarks January 4, 2022

*(The following remarks were delivered by Mayor Brindle at the January 4, 2022 Annual Town Council Organization Meeting.)*

Happy New Year everyone, and welcome to the annual organization meeting of the Westfield Town Council. Thank you all for tuning in, and to those who chose to attend in person tonight.

I speak for all of us on the Town Council when I say what a privilege it is to serve our community. I would like to extend my personal congratulations to Town Councilpersons Linda Habgood, Mike Dardia, David Contract, and Dawn Mackey for being re-elected to a second term, and gratitude to Councilmen Mark LoGrippe, Jim Boyes, Mark Parmelee, and Scott Katz for their support, and to all for their volunteer service, especially the past two challenging and unprecedented years.

Additionally, I want to thank the resident volunteers who will be appointed tonight to serve on Town Boards and Commissions, as well as the numerous volunteers who have been asked to serve on the Mayor's Advisory Councils. And to those who just completed their terms, thank you for your contributions and service to Westfield.

Once again, I'd like to acknowledge our indefatigable and committed Town Administrator Jim Gildea, who continues to lead with a steady, professional hand. Jim's contributions over his long career with Westfield are immeasurable and are only exceeded by his love and dedication to our Town as a lifelong Westfielder.

I'd like to also express our gratitude to our amazing Town Clerk Tara Rowley, who works primarily behind the scenes, but make no mistake she is the heartbeat of Town Hall. And to our former Mayor and current Town Attorney Tom Jardim, thank you for keeping us on track, enabling us to make substantial legislative progress in spite of our many pandemic related challenges.

I'd like to also acknowledge Town Planner Don Sammet, who has been instrumental in this past year's planning progress, leading our critical redevelopment efforts. We are the beneficiaries of the breadth of his knowledge, attention to detail, and commitment to Westfield in leading some of our most important initiatives.

Additionally, Westfield Police Chief Chris Battiloro, Fire Chief Tony Tiller, DPW Director Greg O'Neil and their departments deserve special kudos for their ongoing professionalism to keep us safe and operating, not only during COVID, but in their extraordinary response to Tropical Storm Ida. Kim Forde, our Public Information Officer, proved once again to be a critical member of our emergency response team by keeping us all informed.

The commitment of our Westfield Regional Health Department, led by Health Director Megan Avallone, has been unparalleled. Their vast efforts to get our community vaccinated were extraordinary, and they

are directly responsible for Westfield's 98% adult vaccination rate – in addition to their ongoing and substantial work of contact tracing, communicating public health policy, and consulting with our schools as we continue to navigate this pandemic.

There are, of course, too many Town employees to list individually – all of whom have worked tirelessly this year to deliver for our residents, and they each have my heartfelt gratitude for their dedication and professionalism.

And lastly, thanks to our families, including my own, for their ongoing support of our volunteer service. We couldn't serve without them.

Let us now move on to tonight's business and appointments, which I'll follow with additional remarks in my State of the Town address.