

**Q: I'm curious why you ended up in government since you started out in journalism.**

**A:** My first job in television was when I was in college. I went to St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York, and when I was a sophomore, I met someone, a colleague at a summer camp I was working at, who was interning at the local television station in Rochester, and so I was able to get an internship at that TV station, which turned into a part-time job. I was an associate producer on the morning show, which was 3:30 to 7:30 am Monday through Friday, during my junior year in college. So when a lot of my friends were going to bed at 2, 3 in the morning, I was getting ready to go to work. And I basically sacrificed my junior year because I thought that was a wonderful opportunity to get experience in television – I was a communications major – and out of that, I wanted to be a reporter, but in a media market of that size, that station would hire reporters from smaller markets, and so, I had a friend of mine who got a job in Binghamton, and so I sent him a copy of my tape, and he brought the tape to the news director at Channel 12 at the time, and I ended up getting a job interview, and ultimately a job as a general assignment reporter. I was a producer and a reporter on the night times.

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**Q: Had you ever been to Binghamton before?**

**A:** I had. I had family actually that was from Binghamton. So I had actually come to Binghamton as a young child to visit my mother's uncle, so it would have been my great-uncle actually worked at Harpur College at Binghamton University in the English Department. He was actually one of the people who was on the committee to hire Lois DeFleur, the president, who was the president before Harvey Stenger. So he lived on the corner of Bennett and Beethoven, so my experiences in Binghamton would be going to visit him and his family, and going to Recreation Park, and collecting garbage as the entrance fee to the carousel.

That's how those parks are supposed to work is that they're free to children but you're supposed to, but your price of admission is not a dollar or a quarter, it's –

**Q: It's labor.**

**A:** -- it was a piece of garbage. You know a gum wrapper or something like that, and that's how the city tried to keep the parks clean. So those were some of my earliest experiences in Binghamton.

So I started at Channel 12 in November of 1998. I remember November 3<sup>rd</sup>...to April 3 of 2000. I started with the city April 3 of 2000. So how I got to government was really as a reporter, I had gotten to know Mayor Bucci, was the mayor at the time, Rich Bucci, and I had gotten to know the members of his staff certainly as a reporter, I would call the mayor's office to set up interviews with the mayor. And there was a position – it doesn't exist anymore – but it was called director of community relations – and it was constituent services, it was communications, it was public relations, it was dealing with the media –

**Q: Is it analogous to Megan (Brockett, assistant to the mayor for neighborhood and youth affair)'s position?**

**A:** No. I'd say no. What happened was, and I'll get to this, I guess, when I was promoted to deputy mayor, those two positions were merged together. So the deputy mayor position pretty much did the deputy position, and the director of community relations. There's probably some aspects of it that are in this new position, but for the most part, I'd say a lot of it – the positions were combined.

And so what happened was, is the director of community relations ended up taking another job in the city, in the clerk's office. And I remember the news director at the time at Channel 12, her name was Darcy

Fauci, and she's still around, she works at Binghamton University now, she was just talking about it in the newsroom with somebody else, and said, "Hey did you hear that Steve Jensen is moving to the clerk's office?" And so I called Steve, and I said, "I heard that you're leaving the mayor's office, and you know I just have some questions about your job, about what you do. I ultimately know the media part of it because I interact with you, but what else do you do at City Hall?"

And so this kind of went back and forth for a while. He ultimately said, "It sounds like you have some questions about this job, why don't you come in, you can talk to the mayor, myself, and some other department heads, and we have some questions on how we can enhance media relations at city hall." So it was somewhat of an informal meeting, and I met with the director of economic development, the deputy mayor, the mayor, and the director of community relations. And I remember literally a couple of weeks later, I was downtown on Court St. doing another story for Channel 12, and I saw the mayor, Mayor Bucci, and he came up to me and said, you know, "What would you think about joining the team at city hall?" And you know, he, in essence, offered me the job, and I recall on the spot, basically saying, "Yes, I'd like to," and I think among the primary reasons were, I thought he was a good mayor trying to do good things for the city, and I wanted to be part of a team that was working for the betterment of the community.

I thought it was a great opportunity to give back, I thought it would be very personally and professionally rewarding and fulfilling. I enjoyed my experiences as a reporter, but I guess I wanted more from a personal and professional standpoint. And you know at the time, I was doing basically the same types of stories that they're doing today – house fires and homicides and spot news. And I was thinking about how long did I want to do something like that for.

7:07

**Q: How old were you at this point?**

**A:** I was in my early 20s, I was maybe 22 or 23, I mean I'd have to look at the calendar, but I was approximately 22 or 23. And I just thought, you know, this is a good learning opportunity, and I liked what that team was doing. I knew a lot of the department heads and people that were working in the administration. I just thought they were good people trying to do good things for the community, and I wanted to be part of the team.

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**Q: What was your engagement with politics like up to that point?**

**A:** Well, certainly as a reporter, I would interview elected officials pretty much at all levels. I had a lot of interaction with the county executive at the time, who was Jeff Kraham, and I had interviewed him repeatedly. Sheriff Harder I remember interviewing repeatedly, Congressman Hinchey was the congressman at the time, Maurice Hinchey, Mayor Bucci, there were two assembly members at that point in time, Bob Warner and Jay Dinga, the, uh...there were nine members of city council at that time, and so you had Democrats and Republicans basically in all of those positions. So while I was in Binghamton, I mean, I covered a lot of local and state government stories, but it's certainly, it's certainly very different when you're covering stories versus, you know, you're part of the local government, um, day-to-day operations component.

And so, you know, prior to that, I was in college, and high school, so, I mean I certainly followed politics in high school. When I was in high school was around the time of the Gulf War and when President Clinton was running for president. I remember at the time being really just amazed by Bill Clinton and the

concept of Bill Clinton just being this relatively young, hip individual, a breath of fresh air. I remember vividly, you know, that scene of him playing the saxophone at the Arsenio Hall Show. I mean that was right when I was in my high school years, and so, just the contrast between – you know, it wasn't Democrat, Republican, it was the contrast or the concept of these kind of, you know, these older conservative staunch elected officials at the federal level, and then like a breath of fresh air that just really mobilized or energized the youth of that time, which I was a part of. You just, you just didn't see that in the previous decade with George H. W. Bush. I think you probably did with Ronald Reagan to a certain extent, but not in the same way that Bill Clinton just brought together so many different segments and demographics. So that, I think, was watching – and of course that was, the way that that was televised, and you didn't quite have the social media that you had today, but it was certainly something that got the attention of young people in high school and college. And so that was really more when I was in high school when I started paying much more attention, that was going on really more at the national level because when you talk about war and things of that nature.

**Q: Did you identify with a party at that point, or was it, were you...**

**A:** You know, that's an interesting question because I would say, no, that I didn't identify with a party at that point, and it's primarily because, you know, my parents are of each party. So you have my father, who is a doctor, a retired doctor, and I would say that he is a conservative Republican, and you have my mother, who is a college professor, she was the chair of the social work department at Nazareth College, and I'd say that she was certainly a liberal Democrat.

**Q: Right.**

**A:** So I grew up on both sides of it, and without question, there are both parts of each platform and agenda that I agree with, and support, and so when I had to make – and actually I think that there are a lot of people who fall into that category where most people, where you're in the middle but there might be one or two things on one side or the other that just pulls you either to the Democratic side or the Republican side, at least when I was growing up. Now I think there are a lot more people that might identify as Independents, and say you know there are portions of each philosophy or agenda that I embrace. But I think it wasn't probably until college and my early career working in Binghamton that I really identified probably more with the republican platform.

12:14

And I think that's primarily based on being a fiscal conservative with regards to, you know, the budget and a handful of other things.

**Q: Where would you place – you were talking about, you can see the different philosophies of your parents reflected in different parts of your beliefs – where would you....I guess if you put conservative philosophies on your ideas about budgets, fiscal policy, where would you...where in your political thinking is, kind of, the more liberal leaning side?**

**A:** As far as how I govern as mayor of the city?

**Q: Yeah.**

**A:** Certainly with regards to, I think, the budget and the role of government, whether it's regulation or intrusion into your life, but without question, I think from a financial standpoint – and I think that's also based on the fact that I was a small business owner and a property owner, so I can identify with the struggles that a lot of people have with regards to taxes. And you know, why taxes keep going up, what

are we paying for, the types of services we're getting, and the role, I think, that government regulation plays with regards to businesses' ability to function, and whether it's the state of New York or across the country. So those are I think some of the things that are at the core of why I focus on, you know, as mayor, why I focus on tax relief so much, why I look at cost-savings strategies, how do we shrink the budget, how do we reduce you know water and sewer rates, how do we leverage other public and private money in the city of Binghamton to provide relief for taxpayers.

**Q: What about the – sorry, I don't know if I asked it clearly enough – the liberal...kind of, let's say your mother's political leanings – where do you see that reflected in –**

**A:** Well, some of the sustainable initiatives, for example. I think when I talk about LED lights, when I talk about the microgrid, when I talk about hydroelectric dams at Rockbottom, when we talk about solar panels on our parking kiosks, we talk about the fact that Binghamton is a leader in energy initiatives, in green initiatives, and sustainability, people would assume that Binghamton would have a Democratic mayor because those are among, I think, the platform of the Democratic Party. And, you know, my attitude is a good idea is a good idea regardless of where it comes from. Neither party has a monopoly on change or a good idea or a specific initiative, and so I think that administrators that are successful, you know, don't just stick to one sort of philosophy of governing. I think there are a lot of really good aspects of the different platforms that are out there. And what I want to do is what's best for the city of Binghamton, and so – and I know you've heard me talk about some of these things before is that, I also try not to get involved in certain state and federal issues because I want to do what's best for Binghamton in the sense that, you know, there's not a political way to collect your garbage or collect your recycling or fix your street, or things of that nature. And so Binghamton is a Democratic city with a Republican mayor.

And the only way for that to happen is people cross party lines to support me. People that agree that the person, at least at the local level, that the person is more important than the party, it's about who's the most qualified, who has the experiences, who is in the position to best deliver results for the residents of the city. And so, I'll work just as hard on tax relief as I will on poverty and unemployment. You know, one of the things we're working on right now is a poverty initiative with United Way. Half of the children in the city of Binghamton live in poverty, and a third of the families live in poverty. That's typically not an area that you hear a lot of Republicans talk about. I talk a lot about public safety, infrastructure, economic development, parks and neighborhoods, taxes – that's primarily what I've focused on. But I also am focusing a lot on sustainability, green initiatives, I'm focusing on poverty as well. You know, local government can be a catch-all for a lot of different things. And that's why I think that the people are really pleased with what they're seeing because they don't feel that there's many areas that aren't being focused on because of a specific political affiliation. And I think that's not – I think that's actually rare in government. I think it's refreshing locally for people to see that.

17:31

**Q: When you moved from being a TV reporter to going into government, what were some of the things that surprised you about how city government works? So if you're – what is something, let's say, that I would not understand about how city government works. You know, I've never worked in it, I observe from the outside.**

**A:** It's a good question. I got to think about what do I really want you to know about what happens at – No, um, I think that – what do I think that you'd be surprised by what happens at city hall? I think that people would be surprised by the hours the people put in. I think people would be surprised by how difficult it actually is, and so one of the things that I say, and I don't say it to be flippant, but I think that

there are times when this administration makes it look easy because you know every week, we may be sending out a series of positive announcements. We've either gotten a grant for this, or we're starting a project for this, and there's just a lot of things happening, and I think it creates a false perception that anybody can do these jobs. And you have no idea how many hours, whether it's myself or the administrative team or the department heads put in on a regular basis. You have no idea what kind of sacrifice is involved from probably like a personal standpoint with regards to your time, and these are things that I know before I took the job. My eyes were, you know, I went into this with my eyes wide open, it was something that I was willing to do. I do think that the way things are right now in Binghamton, there's a wave of positive energy and momentum, and certainly we have areas that we need to focus on as well. There are everything certainly is not perfect, the way that it is right now. And there are areas in need of improvement, and we're focusing on those, but I think people would be surprised if they actually knew how difficult and complex some of these issues are, and actually what it takes to bring all of these stakeholders together, to get everybody on the same page, to try to get people to leave their egos and political affiliations at the door for the good of, in this case, the city.

20:11

**Q: What is your typical day like?**

**A:** Wow, I mean I –

**Q: I assume there is not –**

**A:** Well, what most people say is, "I don't have, there's no such thing as a typical day," and I don't want to give that answer because I'd like to try to give you a bit more specifics about it, but I think it's a combination of a couple different things. One, I'm constantly meeting with the department heads with regards to some issues or decisions that they need made in their departments. And also advancing the initiatives that I want to advance on any given day. I mean, obviously, you were at my State of the City, you know right now some of the things that I'm focusing on that will soon come to fruition have to do with the North Side shuttle, the license plate reader initiative, the Rockbottom Dam, different waves of demolitions, housing projects, so just using those as a couple, using those as examples, we're basically shepherding those projects through.

So literally every day, I'm checking in on all of these things, and making sure what needs to be done is being done. There are certain things I need the city attorney to do, there are certain things I need the chief of police to do, there are certain things I need the engineer to do, there are certain things I need my deputy to do, so it's making sure that all of these parts are moving forward, so that these projects get done. And these are just the things that I've identified. Then there's the regular day to day operations of city hall, whether it's the clerk's office, or the finance office, or things of that nature. How do we improve efficiency, improve operations? There are department heads that need answers, there are always personnel things that pop up, there are always a whole host of things that I would say are just unplanned, that I may need to devote time to respond to something. There's always someone throwing out misinformation or trying to attack the administration that you have to respond to. I end up going to Albany and New York City, whether it's the comptroller or the governor.

**Q: How frequently do you do that?**

**A:** New York City I think is only maybe once or twice a year. That's primarily because the comptroller – I mean the comptroller has offices all over the place, but it's either for a New York conference of mayors or for – to see the comptroller, we'll go to New York City. Albany I'd say is much more frequently. I just

came back from a conference in Saratoga Springs, which was the annual New York Conference of Mayors annual meeting. We're talking about our agenda for the upcoming year. I'm now on the executive committee, so I have more responsibilities with regards to that statewide organization. But – see, a lot of the mayors go up because that's where they will meet with their state representatives. I think I'm probably in more of a unique situation because I have a very good relationship with our state senator, Fred Akshar, and I think I have a good working relationship with Donna Lupardo. So I won't necessarily go up there for the lobbying days to talk to them because I can pick up the phone and get them on the phone on any given day to talk about a specific project or ask for assistance on something, and I do that all the time.

23:41

But I want to go back to one of your previous questions, is, what you'd be surprised about. None of these elected officials, whether it's county executive, state senator, assembly, mayor, council, legislative – none of them can unilaterally move any sort of initiative forward. I mean, there's probably some exceptions, but if you're talking about the big ticket items that are going to make a significant impact on the city or the county or the region, all of those require people working together. And one of the things that I think that I and this administration have been very good at is bringing key stakeholders together of different party affiliations to get something done. And I don't give this example because I want to criticize my predecessor, but I think it's a pretty glaring example that even he himself has talked about at points in time, which is that he had a very poor relationship with the governor, and when Matt Ryan was out of office, he would talk on the Bob Joseph show, about how poor that relationship was, and he would call the governor a bully. And I'm quoting the former mayor.

And I've had conversations with the governor about the city's relationship with the state prior to me being elected, and that being a goal of mine to want to have a better relationship, and I think when you look at all the sorts of state grants that we're getting now over the course of the last three and a half years are significantly more than during that eight-year period of time. So I think we've worked to elevate Binghamton's profile at the statewide level. We have much better relationships with the governor, and even, the county executive and the state senator. You know, my predecessor obviously had a very poor relationship with the state senator, poor relationships with two county executives, poor relationships with city council, and with the Broome County Legislature, and that had a negative impact on the city of Binghamton.

25:53

It limited his ability to get things done on behalf of the residents, and we don't have that now. As I indicated, Senator Akshar has funded many of the initiatives that I have advanced, the chairman of the legislature Dan Reynolds is a huge proponent of any of the initiatives that, or partnerships between it really was the former county executive and the city. The state has provided significant funding and grants for a variety of different initiatives, so these sorts of things didn't happen in the past, and it's not a coincidence that it has taken time to build and forge those relationships, and I think that people think, "Well, you know, if there's a mayor or a county executive, that they unilaterally can do all these things by themselves," and that is certainly not true. The most successful elected leaders are ones that can build coalitions of support among key stakeholders. Binghamton didn't even have a seat at the table at the Regional Economic Development Council. That's one of the things that I went to the governor about, and said, and the reason Binghamton wasn't on there is because the city and the, the previous administration and the governor didn't have a good relationship. You change the mayor, the mayor got a seat at the table. So forging those relationships has been very positive and productive for the city, but that's all things that

have occurred behind the scenes that probably, people aren't aware of, but, and would probably be surprised to hear how those changes in that coalition has benefitted the city.

**Q: So I'm going to go back cause I asked about what your typical day is like, and you know, there probably isn't, but yesterday – walk me through your yesterday. You got in the office at –**

**A:** Well, but I was at, I was coming back from a conference though.

**Q: Oh, shoot. Umm...sometime, like, last week. Kind of a step by step – you got in the office at what time, then you had a meeting at what time.**

**A:** Ok. Well, usually I get to the office around 8:30, and I will leave 7, 7:30, typically. And in the morning, I try to schedule the meetings with the department heads, or any individuals or organizations from the outside that want to meet with the mayor. I certainly will have meetings outside of the office, meetings in the office, the afternoon, I mean it really is still mostly meetings. After 5 o'clock is really when I get to focus on the stuff that I want to focus on because there are certainly fewer people. But yesterday for example, or Monday, I'll, um – When is this going to run? Because I'm going to tell you something, but the answer to that depends on when I'm going to tell you.

**Q: Um, I actually don't know when it's going to run. When are you willing to have it out? (When are you announcing it?) That is the question. Because I can just take it out for the interview (go off the record).**

29:01

**A:** Ok, so I'll speak generally about this. But it'll give you a – it'll help answer your question. So I'm at a conference on Monday, and I end up leaving some of the, one of the sessions because I got word that a major project that Binghamton had been (championing)...So the major project that we had been advocating for, we got word that it was going to be funded. But for whatever reason, the governor's office wasn't announcing it like they do a whole host of other announcements. You know sometimes the governor will make an announcement that these X municipalities get money for X, sort of thing. And so we got some really positive news on that.

(David is referring to a project announced the following week, an [\\$11 million affordable housing project](#) on the West Side of Binghamton.)

**Q: Is this something that's been covered before as –**

**A:** Uh, not really.

**Q: Ok.**

**A:** I mean, it's probably an area that you've heard, it's not something that's been talked about, I think, a lot. So part of it was, there were multiple groups that had applied locally for this, so I had to figure out what the status of the other ones were, had to try to talk to, figure out from the governor's staff were they going to make an announcement, is it alright if the city makes an announcement. There were also some things going on at city hall that they needed answers for. So, sometimes when you're out of town or at a conference or something like that, a lot of these things will converge. It's never when you're out of town, you know, things are kind of quiet. There's always a lot going on, which is kind of why I'm reluctant sometimes to go to a conference or something like that.

31:00

But I would say that I like to try to balance things where I like to be in the community, whether it's at community events or public events, or events involving the school district. I have to focus a lot of my attention, obviously, on the day-to-day operations of city hall, and then I also need to focus not only on the initiatives that I have announced and are currently working on to come to fruition, but also what are some new things that we want to implement. And so what I don't want to have happen is I announce something that doesn't come to fruition, right, because I think too many government officials do that, and I think that's one of the reasons why people have a distrust in government is because a lot of times people are all talk, no action. And it's a theme of mine where I want to make sure that we deliver results and we make good on what we do. So there really just is not any standard day, but I can tell you that one of the things that I focus on the most is just making sure that my department heads and the staff are doing what they're supposed to be doing. One of the things that frustrates me is when things just kind of linger, and I have to keep following up, you know, "What's the status of this, what's the status of this?" My attitude is, let's get it done, off the drawing board and move on to the next thing. You know, "What's next?" So, um, you know –

32:25

**Q: How would you describe your management style beyond, beyond the, "I don't want things to linger?"**

**A:** Well, I would say that I'm a, I would not say that I'm a micromanager, but I am somebody that is certainly hands-on. And I'll give you an example. Take the police department and the fire department, for example. I generally believe that the most important function of local government is public safety. Because I think that if you don't have a safe community, then all of the other things that you're focusing on can't come to fruition. That residents and business owners and visitors, etc., don't want to live, work, or raise a family in an area that is unsafe. So that first foremost is a top priority. Of course I talk about taxes and jobs and blight and all those things, but at the core, that's very important. So when it comes to hiring new firefighters or police officers, I will do independent reviews with all the candidates. The police and fire administration, they do their own interviews, but when they're done with the interviews, when they are done with their interviews, I will have my own interviews with the candidates in my office, and I don't include anybody from police or fire. It's a one-on-one interview with those candidates. I'm less concerned about what their test score is and how many sit-ups or push-ups they can do. I more want to find out what type of person they are because they're on the front lines, they're interacting with residents, they represent not only themselves or the chief, but also the mayor. So I want to make sure that we put the right people in the right positions. And I also do that for promotions as well. Police and fire do their own interviews for promotions, but I will independently and separately interview the candidates as well, and then I'll talk to the respective chief, and sometimes we agree on who should be hired or who should be promoted, and sometimes we don't. It's ultimately my decision, and I'm going to make the decision that I feel is in the best interest.

34:28

I don't do that for every single position in the city, but I do that for a lot of positions. That's not to micromanage the respective departments, but I think that who you hire – the city is a service provider – so one of the most important decisions are the personnel decisions. Just to give you an example of what type of manager I am. I will meet with the department heads. I know what instructions I've given them. I know what sort of timelines I've given them. And I think it's just very important that you just monitor these things to fruition or to completion. I think too often people just say something, they expect it to get done, they forget about it, they don't follow through, and then a couple months may go by, and nothing's



happened. And that's not the type of manager I am. I think it's important – an important part of the answer to that question is, I know that I'm only going to be mayor for a certain period of time. So four or eight years is a very short window in the history of a city. So there is a clock always ticking in the back of my mind. And so that's why when I was elected, I knew I wanted to hit the ground running on day one.

I think too many people make the mistake of, they get elected, takes them a year to kind of figure out the lay of the land and get comfortable, and then they'll start doing stuff, and then before you know it, they're up for re-election. And I said, that's not going to be me. I campaigned on a specific plan and agenda, and I hit the ground on day one, and I think that's why many people have said to me of both parties, they feel that they've seen more action and activity in the last three and a half years than they did in the last eight years. And that's because I've never really taken my foot off the gas. I certainly think that there's more work that needs to be done, but I never want to feel that when I'm done, I have regrets about not doing something, that I wish I had taken this on, or I wish I spent more time doing this or that. I don't want to have any regrets, I know that, like I said, I'm going to be here forever, so during the period of time that I'm in office, I'm going to do everything I can possible to do all of the things I said I was going to do, and to get results for residents. And I think that's the right mindset, and frankly, I wish that other elected officials at different levels of government had that mindset, too.

37:08

**Q: What do you do after you're mayor?**

**A:** What do I what?

**Q: What do you do after you're mayor?**

**A:** You know, I don't know. I haven't really given it any thought, my focus right now is on the election. As you know, I am running for reelection, and my announcement is tomorrow. And a lot of times people will ask me, "What office are you going to run for next?" And nobody believes the answer that I say when I say, "I'm where I want to be." The mayor's office was never a stepping stone to somewhere else. Personally, I think the mayor's office is really the – I think the job as mayor is one of the best elected officials out there. Because you're directly interacting with residents, what you do has a direct impact. And just because technically it's on the, they say it's the local government is the lowest level of government, and then county, state, etc., I think that I'm probably one of the more productive elected officials out there, and I'm more a fan of the executive level of government than the legislative. So I – if it weren't for term limits, I'm sure I would just continue running for mayor until a point where I just wanted to do something else. I can't sit here and say that I want to be an elected government official for my entire career. As you know, I've been involved in investing in businesses and property as well.

38:50

I know that I'm really happy with the job I have right now, and the work that I'm doing, and the results that we're getting. And I feel there's more work that needs to be done, and that's why I'm running for re-election, but as far as what happens four a half years from now, I have no idea.

**Q: Would you consider, I guess, putting more time into your – putting time into your business? And using that as kind of a jumping off point to invest more in the city?**

**A:** After, after four and a half years?

**Q: Or eight, whenever you end your term as mayor?**

**A:** Oh, you know, sure, when I'm done with the, when I'm done with my time in office –

**Q: And that'd be your full-time job?**

39:43

**A:** Oh, you know, I don't know. I honestly don't know. Maybe? What I do know is one of the reasons that I ran for mayor is that I wanted to, I wanted to be productive, and I wanted to give back to the community. And so that's how I felt when I was working at City Hall under Rich Bucci, that's how I felt when I was working at SUNY Broome Community College, that's how I feel now. So it's really what is the best way that I can give back and help the community? I can tell you I don't plan on moving to Ithaca or some other community, or going back to Rochester. I plan on staying here in Binghamton. I love the city, I'm invested in the city, and I certainly could foresee in the future that I will continue to be more aggressive with investments in the city after I'm out of office. Not during the time that I am in office. But I'm certainly here for the long haul, and I don't have any intentions of leaving anytime soon.

**Q: What are the top three things you want to see by 2020?**

**A:** Well, I want to make sure that the hydroelectric dam is up and running. I would like to see our tax rate get as low as possible. It will certainly be soon lower than it was when I first took office, but over the course of the next four years, I'd like to see that tax rate even lower. And I'd probably group these next two things together. I'd like to see more jobs, whether it's in technology or industry and more economic growth as well, with regards to, whether it's housing projects or different types of manufacturing or technology. You know, downtown, there's a lot of energy and enthusiasm, but across the city, whether it's in neighborhood business districts that will continue to grow, I'd like to see more economic growth and development by 2020.

**Q: What role do you play in that, in attracting businesses to the area? Are you sitting down with businesses who are coming in?**

**A:** Well, I think the mayor is part of a team of people that play a key role in the economic growth of the region. For the city, I think it's that, I don't create the jobs, I create the environment that's attractive for investors and job creators. And that's again making the city safer, and lowering taxes, and fixing our infrastructure, and making our – investing in our parks, and dealing with quality of life issues in the neighborhoods. Those are things that I can directly have control over, but at a much higher level, I can work with the Regional Economic Development Council, the IDA (Industrial Development Agency), the county and other stakeholders on (indecipherable) these larger companies in the city, or in other areas in Broome County. One of the challenges for the city is that the city is landlocked, so there are not a lot of large tracts of land that are conducive for these, whether it's distributors or warehouses or some of the big ticket wins you're seeing in the county. We only have a handful of large tracts of land available, as opposed to the county that has rural land, corporate parks, etc., or even Tioga County, where you've seen, whether it was the Best Buy warehouse or other sorts of, the CVS distribution center and those large, massive facilities. If they wanted to come to the city of Binghamton, we don't have 150 acres of land anywhere in the city. I think the largest areas of land that we have are approximately 35 acres. So that in itself poses unique challenges. But there are other right types of fits for those sorts of businesses, and also it's an opportunity for us to tear down blight and redesign parts of our city. And that's why whether it's a parking ramp, or an old DPW (Department of Public Works) facility, or a variety of homes that are next to each other, tear down the blight, let's get new investment, new construction, and help to rebuild our city.

**Q: What are the things that constituents complain to you the most, not about the city, but about how your administration has handled something?**

A: (sarcastically) Nobody complains to me about anything.

**Q: Uh huh, right.**

A: (clarifying question) What? About how we're handling?

**Q: Yeah, it's not necessarily like an incident, but people feeling that your administration maybe haven't tackled an issue effectively.**

A: Well, I would certainly say that a top issue that I hear about has to do with taxes, and even though, we've held the line on taxes, and are lowering taxes, and that I've pledged that this year is going to be the largest tax cut we've seen in most likely decades, it's tough when the city is the leader in tax rate per capita for several years in a row. So I think people would like to see that faster. Right? See that relief come more quickly.

I certainly think, even with jobs and economic development, too. People would like to see these singular big ticket projects that you see in other areas of the state. I think we have a lot of singles and doubles with regards to wins, but as far as that home run or grand slam, with regards to a major company that's coming in that's bringing hundreds of jobs or something along those lines, you know, that's something that we're, we work on, and focus on on a regular basis.

**Q: Alright, is there anything I haven't asked?**

A: No, I think that was pretty – there isn't anything else I want to say, so I think you've covered all the –

**Q: Alright. Sounds good. So what's this event (official re-election announcement) going to be like tomorrow?**

A: Um, we've got a lot of people coming.

**Q: How many people?**