



# State of the City Address 2024

Good evening, residents of Johnstown, members of the Common Council, and distinguished guests. It is both a privilege and an honor to address you tonight as we reflect on our shared achievements, confront the challenges that lie ahead, and embrace the opportunities that await us. As your Mayor, now entering my fourth year in office, I am humbled by the resilience and dedication of this community. Together, we have navigated turbulent times and made significant strides toward creating a city that is vibrant, competitive, and poised for growth.

Over the past three years, Johnstown has undergone a remarkable transformation. We have faced and overcome obstacles, built new foundations, and reignited a shared vision for our future. I am proud to report that our city is in a stronger position than ever before. With 95% of our financial reports now complete, we are turning the page to focus on what truly matters: the well-being of our residents, the success of our businesses, and the continued growth of our community.

From the outset, my administration has been guided by three overarching goals: fostering growth, strengthening our community, and enhancing the quality of life for all who call Johnstown home. These goals remain steadfast, informed by the knowledge and insights we've gained along the way. Tonight, I will outline the progress we've made, the challenges we've faced, and the ambitious plans we've set for the coming year.

## **Collaborative Growth**

Johnstown's success is built on the foundation of strong partnerships. Over the past year, we have worked closely with the Center for Regional Growth to tackle critical issues such as housing, Brownfield redevelopment, and attracting new manufacturing opportunities. Housing remains at the forefront of our efforts, as a strong housing market is vital to drawing businesses and ensuring families choose Johnstown as their home.

Our commitment to repurposing vacant properties through Brownfield grants and other initiatives is creating safer neighborhoods and opening the door to new developments. The pro-housing certificate we earned—a first in Fulton County—is a testament to our forward-thinking approach and positions us to secure grants that will bring our vision for Johnstown to life. Together, these initiatives are laying the groundwork for a city of opportunity.

## **Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development**

Prudent financial stewardship has been a hallmark of this administration. By keeping tax increases below 2% while advancing key projects, we have shown that fiscal responsibility and progress are not mutually exclusive. Through careful planning and efficient resource management, we have maintained and even enhanced city services, ensuring Johnstown remains a place where families and businesses can thrive.

Infrastructure improvements have been a cornerstone of our economic development efforts. Significant road upgrades in the industrial park and other areas, funded through the CHIPS program, are not just about improving transportation—they represent investments in our city's economic vitality. The 9% increase in sales tax revenue from 2023 is further evidence of the resilience of our local economy and the hard work of our citizens.

## **Investments in Recreation and Tourism**

This year, we celebrated the opening of the Johnstown Recreational Park at the corner of Briggs Street and Jansen Avenue. This vibrant new space is poised to become a hub for sporting events and community activities, with planned restroom renovations and a potential skating rink on the horizon.

To showcase Johnstown's rich history and vibrant culture, we hired Chandra Casline as our part-time Tourism Coordinator. Her efforts have already made a significant impact, increasing attendance at city events and providing a boost to local businesses. Additionally, our partnership with the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Consortium resulted in updated Welcome signs, which honor our city's historical significance and create a lasting impression for visitors.

## **Advancing Public Safety and Infrastructure**

Public safety and infrastructure are top priorities for this administration. Our Fire Department and Ambulance Service have expanded to meet growing demand, including the addition of a second ambulance supported by the Johnstown Hospital Foundation. Meanwhile, our Police Department continues to set a high standard for integrity and innovation, utilizing body cameras and maintaining a strong partnership with the Johnstown School District through the Resource Officer program.

Infrastructure improvements are also progressing steadily. The successful completion of the meter change-out project marks a significant milestone in our water system upgrades. We are now focusing on valve replacements and other critical updates to ensure reliable service for residents well into the future.

## **Transforming Technology for a Smarter Johnstown**

Johnstown is embracing the power of technology to streamline operations and enhance efficiency. From city-wide Wi-Fi to advanced AI-powered systems, our technological advancements are reshaping the way we serve our community. Key innovations include:

- **Unified Systems:** Connecting all city employees, services, and documents on a single platform for seamless collaboration.
- **AI-Powered Solutions:** Automating time-consuming tasks, analyzing contracts, and supporting law enforcement in solving cold cases.
- **Modernized Communication:** Replacing outdated systems with streamlined processes that reduce reliance on paper forms and improve response times.

These advancements not only optimize taxpayer dollars but also position Johnstown as a leader in municipal innovation.

## **Looking Ahead to 2025**

The year ahead is brimming with promise. Among our key initiatives are:

- Finalizing and implementing the City's updated Code of Ordinances to meet modern needs and improve governance.
- Completing the street lighting project to enhance safety and reduce costs.
- Advancing green space projects and addressing persistent flooding issues on East Main Street.
- Strengthening partnerships with Fulton County and neighboring municipalities to improve efficiency and shared services.
- Expanding Brownfield clean-up efforts and launching new housing initiatives.
- Implementing a landlord registry to combat blight and improve neighborhood stability.

## **A Vision for Johnstown**

As we move forward, I remain steadfast in my commitment to fostering a city that prioritizes its residents, embraces innovation, and seeks out opportunities for growth. This administration will continue to pursue creative solutions, secure vital grants, and foster economic development that benefits all.

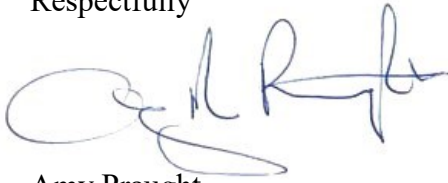
I am proud to announce my intention to seek a second term as your Mayor. My passion for Johnstown and my belief in its immense potential drive me every day. Together, we can achieve even greater success.

Thank you for your continued trust and support. The best is yet to come. Let us move forward into 2025 with hope, determination, and a shared vision for a prosperous future.

Always remember Team Work Makes the Dream Work!

Happy New Year, and may 2025 bring growth, unity, and opportunity to the City of Johnstown.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Amy Praught', with a large, stylized initial 'A'.

Amy Praught  
Mayor