

I want to begin by thanking God for all that he has given me in my life. I also want to thank my amazing family for all of their love and support. I want to thank everyone on the program for making this night so memorable. And, I want to thank all of you – friends, supporters, elected officials and community leaders for being here tonight. Thank you for joining me.

---

One of our sons has his first track meet next week. In high school, I too was a runner. My best events were the half mile and quarter mile. To be good, however, I trained in everything from short sprints to long distance runs. And every race required a plan – a specific strategy to win.

So it is with the opportunities and challenges we will face during our new term. Leading the county, in many ways, is like running a series of races.

Some of our victories will come soon. Things like an agreement over county land to build a new School of Engineering for UWM or the potential of a new, state-of-the-art mental health complex are wins within sight. We should sprint to those victories as they will establish hope for the next stages of our race.

Then, as we head into future budgets for the county, we should explore every possible option - so that we might provide the core services expected of us while keeping our costs under control. This is important so that our residents and our workforce can afford to stay in this great county.

When meeting with new Supervisor Joe Sanfelippo, he mentioned seeing a neighbor of his at the grocery store and that

the neighbor told him that he was moving out of the county. When Joe asked why, he said that he was retiring soon and didn't think he could afford to pay the taxes on his home.

That reminded me of just how important our work is to real people. In my mind, not one of the individuals who helped build this great county should ever be forced to move out because they can't afford to pay taxes when they retire.

And it's a big concern for those who provide jobs too. With places like Miller Brewing making key decisions based on the cost of doing business, we need to give them every reason to stay and grow in Milwaukee County.

Facing this challenge will be more difficult than our early victories, but success will have a lasting benefit.

We must also consider the long-term future of our county. To win this stage of the race, we should look beyond the boundaries of our government and consider the race that must be won for the people of this community and region.

Running a long distance races requires great discipline and it requires the most efficient use of weight and resources. Some might argue that the current status of the various layers of government that overlap is not the optimal method of providing services.

So, should we keep the current county government or should we try to create something totally new? I challenge each of us to consider what will be the best way to serve the people that we represent 5, 10, even 25 years from now.

So where do we start? To win each of these races will take a great team. I am proud of the people we have assembled on my staff and in my cabinet.

Since the election, I reached out to the members of the County Board and look forward to continuing that outreach. I will also work with leaders in other areas of government. And I look forward to the support and assistance of our business and civic leaders. Each of these individuals will be part of our winning team.

Most importantly, I look forward to working with you – the people of Milwaukee County. I never lost sight of the fact that we took office because the people of Milwaukee County opted, not for anger, but hope. They (really, we) wanted our government back and we strive to meet that goal every day.

---

My parents have always been a great inspiration to me. When I ran track, my mother would provide quotes to motivate me for the next race. One came from the Book of Hebrews:

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked for us.”*

Now is the time for us to run with perseverance. Now is the time for us to run on to victory. Now, is the time to make Milwaukee County great again.