



## **Statement from Mayor McNamara**

My parents taught me that serving the community was not optional. It was mandatory to give back to my community and work to make it a better place. That sense of service is what led me to run for City Council in 2013 and mayor in 2017 and 2021. I take my responsibility as an elected official extremely seriously and pride myself on making decisions based on what is best for my hometown and the people I was elected to serve.

Two months ago, Congresswoman Cheri Bustos announced she would not seek reelection in 2022. Not long after, people from within our community and across the country called to ask me to consider running to fill her seat. It was incredibly humbling and encouraging that so many individuals expressed confidence in me and the work we have done here in Rockford. I firmly believe that my goal should always be to serve whatever office allows me to do the most good. And right now, that place is as the mayor of Rockford. After much discussion and reflection, I have decided that my heart is here. I want to remain your mayor and will not run for a Congressional seat in 2022.

I am proud of the progress we have made in the last four years. We have lowered property taxes, opened a Family Peace Center to help survivors of domestic and sexual violence, approved the long-sought-after Hard Rock Casino, helped our airport continue its record-breaking expansion and reduced blight in our neighborhoods. We have also established the Rockford Promise/NIU Scholarship Program to help RPS 205 graduates attend NIU tuition-free and signed an agreement to bring fiber optic cable to every business and residence in our city. However, this is just the beginning. We have work left to do and I want to be here, beside you, as we implement more positive change in our community.

Today, I reaffirm my complete dedication to this community. I know we have our challenges. Unemployment is still high, crime is trending in the wrong direction and many businesses are still trying to recover from the impacts of the pandemic. However, I truly believe we are on the path to the best version of Rockford. We are developing programs to help youth in trauma and to help citizens successfully reenter our community after serving a prison sentence. We are setting an example that we can invest in public safety while treating all residents with respect and dignity. We are focusing on neighborhoods to increase property values and homeownership, and we are addressing the social determinants of health that have for too long created inequities among our citizens. We are bridging gaps between groups and organizations in our community and we are making real, long lasting change. I look forward to seeing our progress in the years ahead.

While I will not be campaigning to fill Congresswoman Bustos's seat, that individual certainly has big shoes to fill. During her time in office, Congresswoman Bustos has been a staunch advocate for cities and towns and the people who live in them. I respect and admire her and the work she has done for our community. I believe the next representative of the 17<sup>th</sup> District needs to hold these same priorities and make themselves accountable to the citizens of the district, instead of Washington, DC. I look forward to supporting and holding accountable a worthy candidate for this position and will work to make certain he or she has Rockford's best interests at heart.