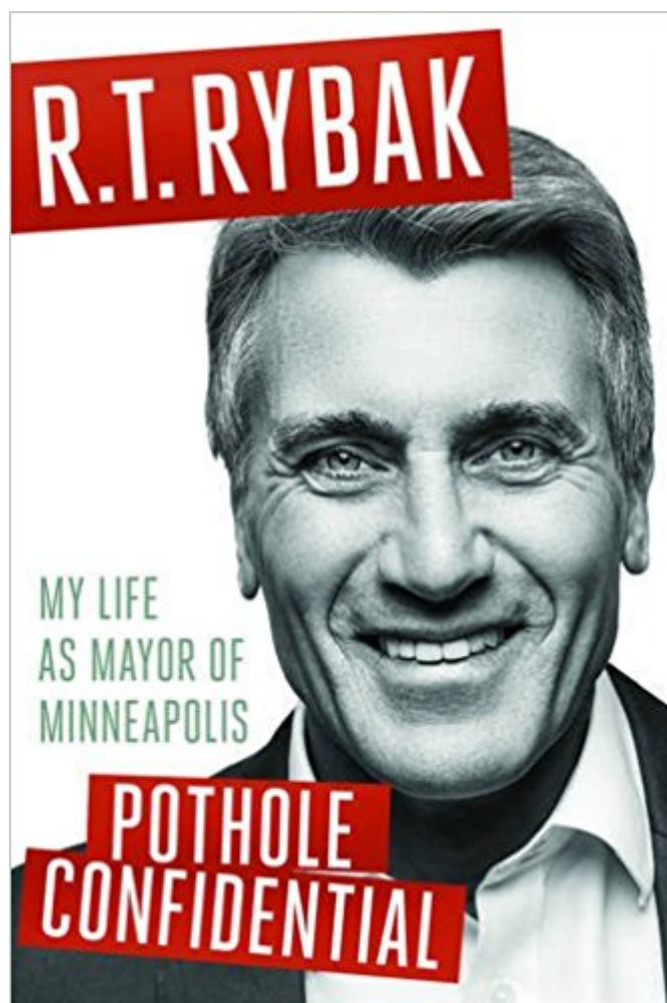


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# Pothole Confidential: My Life As Mayor Of Minneapolis



## Synopsis

A pajama party at the Minneapolis "St. Paul International Airport inadvertently helped launch R.T. Rybak's political career (imagine a rumba line one hundred protesters long chanting, "We deserve to sleep, hey!"), but his earliest lessons in leadership occurred during his childhood. Growing up in a middle-class neighborhood, attending private school with students who had much more than he did, spending evenings at his family's store in an area where people lived with much less, he witnessed firsthand the opportunity and injustice of the city he called home. In a memoir that is at once a political coming-of-age story and a behind-the-scenes look at the running of a great city, the three-term mayor takes readers into the highs and lows and the daily drama of a life inextricably linked with Minneapolis over the past fifty years. With refreshing candor and insight, Rybak describes his path through journalism, marketing, and community activism that led to his unlikely (to him, at least) primary election on September 11, 2001. His personal account of the challenges and crises confronting the city over twelve years, including the tragic collapse of the I-35W bridge, the rising scourge of youth violence, and the bruising fight over a ban on gay marriage (with Rybak himself conducting the first such ceremony at City Hall on August 1, 2013), is also an illuminating, often funny depiction of learning the workings of the job, frequently on the fly, while trying to keep up with his most important constituency, his family. As bracing as the "fresh air" campaign that swept him into office, Rybak's memoir is that rare document from a politician: one more concerned with the people he served and the issues of his time than with burnishing his own credentials. As such, it reflects what leadership truly looks like.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"There are four types of political memoirs, depending on whether or not the politician was any good and whether or not the politician can write. There is much to be learned from all four, but only one type can be recommended with enthusiasm. A skilled journalist before he became a great mayor, R.T. Rybak has given us a story that deserves the attention of all those who enjoy good governance and good reading."â Jeff Speck, author of *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time*"This is a fascinating look into the personal and political life of one of the best big city mayors in the U.S. R.T. Rybak, a leader of the American Progressive Movement, started out as a Nixon Republican and became a public servant known for his honesty and his willingness to tackle the really tough problems of urban America. It's a great read."â Howard Dean, former governor of Vermont"R.T. Rybak's decision to return to writing is an enormous gift to us all. This book is a love letter to Minneapolis, and it tells the riveting story of what you must tackle to make and keep a city great."â Lizz Winstead, cocreator of *The Daily Show*"It is a rare political book that makes us laugh out loud while also inviting us to examine the challenges of running a modern American city."â Michele Norris, former host of NPR's *All Things Considered* and founder of *The Race Card Project*"In his dozen years as mayor of Minneapolis, R.T. Rybak was the poster child for ebullience, a fearless crowd-surfer. . . and an advocate for equality."â *Star Tribune*"An intimate and, from my own perspective as a former mayor, highly authentic view from inside the maelstrom of urban governance."â *Governing Magazine*

R.T. Rybak has lived his entire life in Minneapolis. Before his twelve years as mayor he was a journalist, publisher, Internet strategist, and marketing consultant. He now leads Generation Next, a public-private coalition that helps improve academic outcomes for children of color. He is a vice chair of the Democratic National Committee and senior advisor to Living Cities, and he has taught the course *Mayor 101* at the University of Minnesota.

This is an excellent account of RT Rybak's time as Mayor of Minneapolis. Written with compassion and understanding of the many social and political problems he faced, it makes for a cracking read. Anyone interested in how a mayor and his allies need to work to effect real change in a community will relish the detail in this book. You don't have to have an intimate knowledge of Minneapolis politics to enjoy the many anecdotes that illustrate how tough the decisions were that had to be

faced and how fair this mayor was to all parts of the community. I was particularly taken with the descriptions of paying visits to the homes of the victims of random violence. RT writes with a fluency and an attention to storytelling that is very impressive.

A refreshing take on politics in a great city. Thanks RT!

My favorite Minnesotan. He has done a massive amount of good for Minneapolis and I was very sorry to see him not run for Mayor again.

I could hear RT's voice with every word. He is the real deal, and this book is a must read for anyone looking to run for public office, especially Minneapolis!

A thoughtful review of lessons learned as mayor of a big city. Things are always more complex than the outsider realizes.

Amazing book. Totally engaging. Well written. RT is unique in his passion for leading his beloved city of Minneapolis for twelve years as Mayor. Through Rybak's eyes you learn how his heart and brain work, how the adrenaline of politics courses through his veins, and how devoted he is to both his city and his family. In general, it's fascinating to get a glimpse into the world of an American Mayor and know that many of the challenges he describes are happening all over the USA. I cannot recommend this book enough. You will laugh out loud countless times. You will be touched by the sadness and grief wrought by crime, aging infrastructure, difficult budgets and Mother Nature.

I really enjoyed this book! I moved to Minneapolis a few years before R.T. Rybak first ran for mayor and was always impressed at how well he managed the city and showed that a politician can be both politically savvy while not losing a down to earth approach to touching people's lives. But as the saying goes, "You never really know someone until you walk a mile in their shoes." Or in this case, sprint from side to side of a street during a pride parade. And, man, did he ever let you into what was going on in his head over those 12 years in office (and more). It turns out, that even if you get the chance at your dream job, it doesn't mean that you'll master it from day one. I was intrigued at just how much he admitted he needed to learn when he started. Seeing events that I lived through as one of his constituents (the 35W Bridge collapse, the Vikings' stadium, the tornado in N. Mpls, etc.) through the eyes of someone who was literally on the front lines of, and the

mental/emotional toll it took, really helped me to understand just how much love and devotion you'd have to have for a city and its people to throw yourself so completely into public service as he did. I'd also like to put in my two cents and say that I think poodles in eating establishments work better in Minneapolis than R.T. thinks/thought. But as a poodle owner I'm very biased. (You'll understand when you read it). I can't speak as to the choice of headgear though. An excellent read. I highly recommend!

This book is really quite good and interesting. An easy read!

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