

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for an Organizational Meeting/Swearing-In Ceremony on Monday, December 4, 2023, at 6:10 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Council members present were Dimple Ajmera, Danté Anderson, Tariq Bokhari, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, Lawana Mayfield, James Mitchell, Marjorie Molina, Victoria Watlington, and Braxton Winston II.

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Mayor Lyles said that is the way to start a City Council meeting on December 4, 2023. Thank you JCSU (Johnson C. Smith University). I now call this meeting to order. Please have a seat. Good evening, everyone, and welcome to the 2023 swearing in ceremony for the Charlotte City Council. So, first, let's just acknowledge JCSU's band is like all of that. They actually have a name called the International Institution of Sound, so they can go anyplace, anywhere that they choose to and do really well. I want to thank everyone for coming, and this meeting is now in order.

I want to thank the many of you that are joining us this evening, who have come to support those folks that have put themselves in the public ability to be elected and serve, and to acknowledge that we are going to have a new Council member and a returning Council member. So, I really want to say thank you very much for all of that. Before we begin our evening, we would now like to have the invocation by my Pastor and his spouse, Reverend Dr. Clifford Jones and Sister Brenda Jones, of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, and they will be followed by the presentation of colors from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Honor Guard. Please stand if you choose.

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INVOCATION, POSTING OF COLORS AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Invocation was given by Reverend Dr. Clifford Jones from Friendship Missionary Baptist Church.

The posting of Colors was by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department Honor Guard.

Ayse Ermis, Mayor's Youth Employment Program led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Queens University of Charlotte's Chorus sang the National Anthem.

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MAYOR'S AWARDS

Mayor Lyles said each year, the Mayor's Citizen Awards recognize distinguished community members who have served with honor, courage and selflessness. Tonight, I am proud to present The Mayor's Award in recognition, of former Mayor, Richard Vinroot to an individual who has displayed unselfish leadership and support for the community. Please join me to welcome Mike Lamach to join me at the dais. As Mike comes down to be recognized, I'd like to speak to his service. While most people would just retire and take some well-deserved time off, he has remained deeply committed to building a more just and equitable future for Charlotte. Mike, thank you for helping us bring the public and private sectors together to reach our shared equity goals while we address the disparities and create economic mobility in our disinvested communities. We're grateful for your work, promoting information technology in our schools, where you focus on efforts to create tomorrow's leaders through the Executive Leadership Council. I just want to say that we really appreciate who you are and the way that you stand. May we please have a round of applause for [inaudible].

Michael Lamach said thank you, Mayor Lyles. It's such an honor to be recognized this way. Mary and I have lived in many places in our 40 years together. We're blessed to call Charlotte home. When we landed here, we knew it was a special spot. We often talk about the special sauce in Charlotte, and someday maybe we'll all know what that really is, but I think it has to do with a long legacy before us of leaders that both had a high standard and expectation for service that led by example. I think some of that rubbed off on a few of us, and many of us I know are happy and thrilled today with those leaders that are still in our community. I hope with the next generation of leaders, that we're able to do the same, and Mary and I look forward to being part of the community for a long time to come and helping in any way possible. Mayor Lyles, thank you so much for the recognition.

Mayor Lyles said the next recognition is in the name of former Mayor, Harvey Gantt. Harvey would you please stand and be recognized. I often say there'd be no Vi Lyles without Harvey Gantt, and I really do mean that, every bit of it. This award is given to someone who has demonstrated courage and civility. I'm proud to announce that this year's award is being presented to Kieth Cockrell. Alright, I have to say something about Kieth. So, as Kieth has gotten here already, I'd like to share some of his contributions. As president of Bank of America Charlotte, you've been a key partner in many of our most important initiatives, including investing in affordable housing and contributing 10,000 free laptops to Charlotte-Mecklenburg students this summer. Amazing partners like you are what we have to have to help thousands of families get the resources that they need to be able to be successful. We're also very grateful for your leadership at Bank of America, for the \$10 million commitment to build Johnson C. Smith University as Charlotte's premiere HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities). Not only have you been generously investing in Charlotte in your professional role, but you've also given so much of your personal time serving on numerous boards and commissions, and we greatly appreciate your commitment to this City. So, let's have a round of applause please.

Kieth Cockrell said Mayor, thank you very much for this honor. I must say that it's a tremendous honor for me, because I have so much respect for the name of this award. As we all know, Mayor Gantt, there are people that you can meet in life that may be the first in one thing in their life, but to be first in multiple things their life is incredible leadership, that just had the right to go to school and study and be courageous enough to challenge an institution for that opportunity. So, it's not lost on me to have this honor. Mayor, you've been an inspiration for me. I have an obligation, because we here at Bank of America, this is home for us, and I stand on the shoulders of so many other great leaders in my organization that gives me the opportunity to hopefully help young people and our neighbors. So, to my wife and to all of my teammates at Bank of America, and Mayor to you and your leadership of our great City, it's without question a tremendous honor. Thank you very much.

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PRESENTATION TO OUTGOING COUNCILMEMBER

Mayor Lyles said now I'd like to welcome Mayor Pro Tem, Braxton Winston, to the podium. So, Braxton, on behalf of your colleagues that you've all hugged, I want to say thank you for your years of service to this community, to this City. We want to wish you good fortune in your future endeavors, and I know that means including that you're going to visit North Carolina 100 counties. So, we wish you well as you begin to take this journey. We often like to make a recognition, and we have two recognitions for you tonight. One, of course, that is the skyline of the city that was probably not what it was when you got here, but here it is today in part due to some of your great decision making and thoughtfulness. In addition to that, we always say, in case you need to find directions home one night, we hope that you'll enjoy Winston Way 2017 to 2023. Please give Braxton another hand.

Councilmember Winston said you know, a little over seven years ago, I became very familiar with the term civic virtue. When Keith Lamont Scott was killed by CMPD

(Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department), I found myself fed up. After recently becoming a father of three, I was fed up with the extra hurdles black men were facing just to make it home safe to their children. As a Charlottean, I was fed up with how our City government responded with violence to authentic and legitimate questions. I found myself fed up with the fact that, despite what I had been taught in school, that your government or any person could be legally protected from taking another person's life if they were motivated by fear. I was fed up, and I did not know what to do. I felt I had to do something to make things better for my children and the community. To the people of Charlotte, this is where you come in. You embraced me, you encouraged me, and you supported me. You invited me into the rooms. You gave me seats at the table. You gave me the high privilege and responsibility of amplifying your voices. It was during this time that I counted the term civic virtue, and I define it as the willingness to take action for the greater good. This is the value that our great experiment in American self-governance is built on. The notion that every single one of us is endowed by our creator with the ability to do things for the greater good.

Our various democratic experiments rely on the community to understand their civic virtues and to exhibit them daily. I realized that the way we police our communities is affected by the way our City is built, that the ability for people to have opportunity in this City is directly related to how our local tax dollars are invested. I came to understand that the things a community values most were defined by its policies. So, I ran for City Council. You elected me six years ago, and we as the City Council, we got to work. We adopted a policy to utilize social media for our meetings and increase the number of people who can speak to the official record, making our government more accessible to anyone who has interest in our City business. We adopted new, more diverse, economic incentive policies and prioritized opportunities across the income spectrums, not just for the highest incomes. We created a crisis communication plan to effectively meet our residents where they are and when it matters most. We created new first response models that were successfully embraced by our partners in the county and the North Carolina General Assembly.

Your government now acknowledges that, while we must answer every 911 call for help. Sending the police, fire or medic, may not always be the appropriate response for the type of help that is needed. Most people told me that would be impossible before I got here. We are making investments that are effectively closing the digital divide in our community and putting people on the pathway to digital equity. We are setting the standard for making investments in our workforce, making us one of the safest and healthiest employers in the entire City of Charlotte, but there are two particular achievements that I am most proud of. First, how we handled the COVID-19 pandemic. When our world went into lockdown in March of 2020, our local government sprang into action. It's hard to explain just exactly what things were like behind the scenes for those first few days, weeks, and months. There was absolutely no playbook for this for local governments to follow. This government, led by the Council, the Mayor and the City Manager, quickly realized we couldn't wait for others to figure things out for us. Hundreds of calls a day went out to leaders from across the state and around the country. The work we did helped us be one of America's most resilient cities through and coming out of the pandemic.

Second, the communities reckoning after Keith Lamont Scott's death. The government of the City of Charlotte began to acknowledge the responsibility it played in perpetuating a community that created structural barriers keeping people impoverished, hungry, and displaced from the benefits of living in one of the world's most prosperous cities. I ran in 2017 to make sure the City of Charlotte would meet words with action, and we did that. Make no mistake about it, at its heart, the Charlotte Future 2040 Plan is a plan to desegregate Charlotte. It abandons the status quo of simply defining good growth as expanding tax revenue and adopted measurable methods to develop neighborhoods that are interconnected and provide opportunities for many, not just a few. We are leading. Cities much older than us are reaching out to emulate the policies that we are passing.

So, I want to say thank you. Thank you to the people of Charlotte who believed in me enough to elect me three times. Thank you to the entire City staff of Charlotte, over 8,000 workers, who work on behalf of us seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. I want to give particular thanks to Alana Bailey, my Executive Assistant. You made sure I was always on point when it came to city business. Patrick Baker, Stephanie Kelly, Marcus Jones, thank you for setting the standard for how a city of our size should be run. I want to especially thank Marcus. You know, coming in, this guy is very smart, very decorated when it comes to public administration, and this man always allowed me to come to him, to be my authentic self. He never looked at me as anything, but a peer and he challenged me and encouraged me, and I cannot tell you how valuable that is to a young elected leader.

Mayor Lyles, you continue to help me be a better leader, a better person, and certainly a better Council member. I thank you for always having your door open and always challenging me. To all the colleagues that I've served with, Larkin, Justin, Greg, Matt, Julie, Danté, Malcolm, Victoria, Renee, Marjorie, Tariq, Ed, LaWana, this is certainly not goodbye, but it's see ya later. James, Dimple, I'm sorry, and Tiawana, welcome. All the partners in government, the community, and our private sector, I thank you for allowing me to lead with you. My campaign team, including the best manager who has been with me since day one, Kayla Jacobs. To my family, especially my mother, and to my children, I do this all for you. I do this for you. Nobody has sacrificed more for me than you four. Like I said, this isn't goodbye, it's see you later. I will miss the work of Council, but my service to Charlotte and our state is only beginning. I look forward to continuing to work together to improve the condition of even more people in our community. Thank you all for the privilege of serving you. Good day.

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READING OF MUNICIPAL ELECTION RESULTS

Stephanie Kelly, City Clerk said results of the Municipal Election held on November 7, 2023.

City of Charlotte Mayor	Vi Lyles	Elected:	64,564
	Misun Kim		18,713
	Rob Yates		4,087
	Write-Ins		10
City of Charlotte Council At-Large	Victoria Watlington	Elected:	65,869
	Dimple Ajmera	Elected:	65,625
	James Smuggie Mitchell	Elected:	63,053
	LaWana Slack-Mayfield	Elected:	61,270
	Write-Ins		118
City Council District No. 1	Danté Anderson	Elected:	11,471
	Write-Ins		8
City Council District No. 2	Malcolm Graham	Elected:	8,920
City Council District No. 3	Tiawana Brown	Elected:	6,264
	James Harrison Bowers		1,690
City Council District No. 4	Renee Perkins-Johnson	Elected:	8,762
City Council District No. 5	Marjorie Molina	Elected:	8,132
City Council District No. 6	Tariq Scott Bokhari	Elected:	11,727
	Stephanie Hand		11,413
City Council District No. 7	Ed Driggs	Elected:	9,526
	Write-Ins		9

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MAYORAL OATH OF OFFICE AND REMARKS

Mayor Lyles said thank you, Madam Clerk. Now it is time for the Oath of Office to begin. I'd like to invite Judge Karen Eady Williams to join me at the podium, along with my family.

Judge Karen Eady Williams administered the Oath of Office to Mayor Lyles.

Mayor Lyles said if I can take a moment here. I want to say to this community, thank you. I want to thank the residents of this community who voted for me, and even those that didn't vote for me, because I hope there's a reason why. As long as there's something that we can do, to do better or more of, that's okay. I'm grateful for the trust and the opportunity to serve another term, because it was only 14 months ago that many of us stood here to take our Oath of Office. Despite being a shortened term, I'm incredibly proud of the many achievements that we have made. Nearly 10 years ago, a study was released by Harvard Economist, Raj Chetty, that ranked Charlotte last on the list of 50 U.S. cities for economic mobility. Just a few weeks ago, that same economist praised our collective efforts to improve and significantly move the needle in a positive direction.

We've moved in a positive direction because we are a City of action, but we still have more work to do. I am proud of the work that we've done to improve the lives of Charlotte residents for today and generations to come. We have made considerable strides in addressing the challenges surrounding affordable housing by collaborating with developers, nonprofits and our residents. Our investments are important in creating a future where everyone in Charlotte has a safe place to call home. In the past Fiscal Year alone, we funded over 1,000 affordable housing units, a milestone that's only made possible by the voters who support the \$50 million in housing bonds and voted for them November 2022.

The challenge ahead is to maximum and leverage the support foraging more partnerships that bring more transformative change to our community. Our policies as well as our investments must be dynamic, evolving with the needs of our ever-changing city. Together, we have begun to emphasize workforce development by investing in training programs and business partnerships with the goal of spreading economic opportunity to every corner of our City. This is something that I'm pleased to report, that while we are in a challenging environment, the residents of Charlotte, I believe, are capable and stubborn enough to weather the economic storm of unrest. In our last term, we attracted new businesses, supported the growth of existing ones, and encouraged entrepreneurship and innovation, resulting in increased prosperity for our residents and a more resilient local economy.

In 2023, we generated over 1,000 jobs through our Business Investment Grants, and we supported 52 minority small businesses through our AMP Up Charlotte program. In 2023, we also supported the final piece of the Eastland Yards puzzle. Progress is underway, and I'm excited to see a new park, housing, and mixed-use development being brought to the East Side. We also recognize the challenge that we have to support the idea of, how do we expand our violence intervention programs, and we've done that in two additional Corridors of Opportunity, and that is showing progress. We will continue to support a comprehensive approach to public safety, and while we celebrate achievements, it is important to acknowledge that our work is far from complete. As we look ahead, we must confront the challenges that lie before us, such as bringing to life our plans of an integrated regional mobility vision. The reliability and the efficiency of public transportation is essential to our continued growth and sustainability of our City and our region, and as we grow affordable housing and create more attainable opportunities for work, we have to have a mobility network that connects people to housing and jobs. We aspire to build a welcoming, inclusive City, a city without walls, a place that recognizes that cities are living spaces that must change and adapt. To do this, this Council must be committed to showing up, to listening to,

serving the whole City, and delivering respectful timely governance. This term, I ask the Council members, let's be bold. Let's be action oriented, data driven, and objective focused. Let us establish clear metrics to ensure our goals are met effectively. Our accomplishments in affordable housing, workforce development and economic growth are significant, but we can do more, and we need to start doing more as a Council beginning this evening.

In closing, I'd like to add, we're stronger together, and I'm confident, with the continued collaboration of this Council, and with our residents' support, we will shape a future that all of us can be proud of. Let us continue the journey towards a better tomorrow and a better Charlotte. Thank you.

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COUNCIL-ELECT OATH OF OFFICE AND REMARKS

The Oath of Office was administered by Mayor Lyles to Councilmembers Dimple Ajmera, Danté Anderson, Tariq Bokhari, Tiawana Brown, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, Lawana Mayfield, James Mitchell, Marjorie Molina, and Victoria Watlington.

Mayor Lyles said now, this is the time that we move into comments from those that have been just sworn in, and beginning with Councilmember Ajmera, an At-Large member, I'd like to ask each Council member to deliver a few brief remarks. I think that we've been trying to think around three minutes, but there of course, will not be a clock that we're looking at, but please.

Councilmember Ajmera said wow, it's been seven years. As I sit at this dais and reflect back on my time on the Charlotte City Council, I can say I'm proud of the work that we have done together. As Mayor said, we are stronger together. Now, don't get me wrong, there have been some difficult decisions along the way, but these decisions have helped me personally and professionally to grow. I couldn't do this work without my best friend, and my love, my husband, Dr. Bajaj. Thank you so much for being there for our girls when I'm here late night. Thank you for kissing them goodnight when I'm here. Thank you for telling them that mom is going to be home shortly. I appreciate you, I love you so much, and you are my rock. I see the sacrifices that you make, so that I can continue to serve.

I am grateful for incredible family and the village that I have, and I couldn't do this job while raising two young children, 2-1/2 years old and 9 months old, without the incredible village that I have. I'm so grateful for my mom, my entire family, our campaign team, for always being there for me. Also, I'd like to recognize Uncle Dan for all that you do for me. You are part of my family. My good friend, [inaudible], who's been with me every step of the way, since past seven plus years, and her daughter. Thank you so much for being here. It's great to see young people here in the room, because it all starts when they're young. I'm incredibly grateful for the young talent that I had as my intern's team of over 10 interns. So, thank you so much. Lastly, I would like to thank our City staff, our City Manager, our City Attorney, our City Clerk, and over 8,000 city employees. Thank you so much for all the work that you do. Our support staff, especially, I'd like to highlight Amanda Birch and your entire team. Your entourage is strong and keeps us going. We are absolutely blessed to have you Amanda, and Robin, Jacqueline, Jocella, Antwon, and the entire team, thank you so much, we appreciate you.

As I look forward to next two years on the Charlotte City Council, my pledge and my commitment to Charlotte remains the same. It's not the words, it's what we do that matters. When I rock our girls to sleep at night, I often think about mothers and fathers that do that every day in our City. We all want to provide a better world for our children and our grandchildren, want to make sure that they have a good place to stay, they have a safe and healthy neighborhood, that when they grow up, that they will have jobs and opportunities. I commit to doing all that I can, along with my colleagues to provide

that environment that our children and our grandchildren can be very proud of. So, when my girls look back, I want to tell them a story that this is how your mom, along with her colleagues on the Charlotte City Council, helped make a place that you can thrive in, not just survive in.

You know, this position and the work that we do, it requires a lot of sacrifices, from family, from friends, and it truly takes a village. This is not about the titles. History will not judge us based on our titles. It will judge us based on our deeds and our commitment to our community, and that's what I want to be remembered for and that's what I want to leave my legacy. I will live by those words, that it's not what I say, but it's what I do that matters. Again, thank you so much for your continued faith and trust in my ability to serve you on the Charlotte City Council. It truly has been humbling, and I am honored to have your continued support. Thank you all so much for electing me. This is like my seventh election. Thank you.

Councilmember Molina said I want to say hello, welcome, bienvenidos, to everyone joining us in the chamber and online. I'd like to start by giving honor and glory to the most high, referred to by many names, but for me and my house, we say God. I am eternally grateful for the honor of representing our growing community. I have so many people to share gratitude with. I ask for your forward forgiveness for anybody that I may leave out. I'll begin with my umbilical soulmates, [inaudible]. They've spent most of their lives sharing me with service to Charlotte, and very often they actually were with me in that service, and now that they're a little older they don't like to come with me so much, as they've gotten a little bit older. I want to tell you that I love you so much, that the beginning of why I engage in service is you, and what remains is the rent that I know I owe for being alive on this planet.

As I briefly described in my first term, I grew up in foster care, and so often I've had the rare opportunity to love outside of race and outside of kinship. So, my biological mother, who has not been able to join me, I know she's watching online. My mother, Constance, I want to tell you that I love you, and everything about who you are has made me a better woman. My mother has battled stage IV lung cancer for the last year and three months, and so the entire time that I've taken this journey, there's been a duality of being present for my biological mother and running a campaign and being a mother, amongst other things. To my foster parents, Jean and Jim, who were able to join me the last time and not able to join me this time, your love and commitment to me for an eternity in my life has shown me that God is real. It's shown me that God will never leave me or forsake me, and that's one of the most important lessons of my life that I'd like to share in my service.

To Will Moody, who is my treasurer, thank you for staying present with me on this journey, for keeping me fiscally responsible, and for being one of the best parts of East Charlotte. To all of the friends, neighbors and leaders who donated to my campaign, thank you so very much. To Mayor Vi Lyles, when I began my re-election campaign, I had \$600 in the bank, and I got on the phone with Mayor Lyles and I told her that I hadn't been raising money for my first term, and that I was really afraid of starting the journey where I was, and she jumped right into action. She not only endorsed me, but she helped me get started financially. You are a trailblazer and I adore you. We have the gift of having so many trailblazers in this community. Mr. Harvey Gantt, we have Kieth Cockrell, we have so many human beings that are the best part of Charlotte that, when we come along as younger leaders, we get this rare opportunity to learn from them, to be in their presence, to be better human beings, because they get to pour into us. I am absolutely grateful and gracious to have Mayor Vi Lyles as our gracious leader who cares enough to be a great fellow democrat and great leader. Thank you for supporting me.

For all the organizations that supported me, the Black Political Caucus, to which I'm a lifetime member, the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer or Questioning) democrats, the Mecklenburg County democrats, the North Carolina Asian Americans Together, and the Charlotte Observer, thank you. To the warriors that are the City of Charlotte employees, thank you for all that you do. There's nothing about this

role that can happen without you, nothing. To the residents and the voters of East Charlotte, all 125,000 plus of you, we've experienced a first year that has been very tough, with bumps and bruises, but I am absolutely encouraged by the resilience that has been present and I'm encouraged it will stay present in East Charlotte. Thank you for your overwhelming support in the general election. Thank you for your patience. Thank you for your growth.

What I commit to doing, with 100 percent certainty, is working as hard as I can to leave East Charlotte better than I found it. So, for the next two years, I pledge to work with my colleagues, with our staff, and our neighbors in the City that are leaders, to encourage the best outcomes for our City. Lastly, I don't want to forget my colleagues. Every last one of you. I have had some tough battles since I sat here and we've huddled and most of the time you guys have been there to listen and support me unanimously, and I just want to say thank you to each and every one of you. I look forward to continuing to serve with you and taking our City to the next level. Thank you.

Councilmember Mitchell said good evening. Thank you to the voters of Charlotte for this great opportunity to serve you in the 14th largest city in America. Let me say thank you to my campaign team, Bob Siskowitz; Kendrick Cunningham, my treasurer; Ms. [inaudible], my social media director; [inaudible], and my officer manager; Ms. [inaudible] for my advisor; and the one and only, [inaudible]. I'm here because of your work and the sacrifices you made. Citizens, I'm asking you to join me to work together. Let's work together to address affordable housing, create new opportunities for minority businesses, support our new workforce development initiatives, and let's work with our neighborhoods and CMPD, so everyone can feel safe in our city we call Charlotte. I'm going to tell you, nothing has changed. If you want to get on my calendar, those meetings that include food, become a priority.

Last, but not least, let me say thank you to my Queen, Joan Higginbotham, and to my blessings, Kayla and Nicole. Kayla is here with me tonight. Thank you for sacrificing that you make, that you're allowing me to work for the citizens of Charlotte. I love you with all my heart. Citizens, you have allowed me to serve. This is my 13th term. I sit here humbled, and I appreciate you allowing me to provide public service for two years. Thank you and let's start working to make Charlotte a better city. Thank you. Oh, I forgot, thank you LaWana. I have to give four shoutouts. First shoutout, [inaudible], West Charlotte, alright. Second shoutout, North Carolina Central University, any Eagles? Alright. Third shoutout, the members of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. Last, but not least, my church family, CN Jenkins. Pastor, thank you for being here. CN Jenkins in the house.

Councilmember Johnson said first of all, I want to give glory to God, because without him none of this would be possible. Although, I've had the opportunity to be in this seat since 2019, tonight is different, because the journey this time was full of invaluable lessons that I will cherish for a lifetime. I learned the power of resilience and the importance of grace under fire, because I never lost focus of my north star, which were the constituents of District 4. To the citizens and voters of District 4, I cannot say thank you enough for standing beside me and entrusting that I will continue to put your needs above all, and that this is your seat, and I'm honored to represent you. To my husband, Bernard, thank you honey for the last 30 years for supporting me. You've stood beside me and believed in me, even during the times that I didn't believe in myself. So, I'm here because you've always been a steady anchor, thank you. To my children, India and BJ, thank you for your sacrifices, thank you for believing in me, and thank you for being the best part of my life, thank you. To all of my grandchildren, but to Bishop Johnson, thank you for being here Bishop. Thank you for being the best part of the campaign team. Thank you for your sacrifices that you've made. Thank you for teaching yourself how to tie your own shoes. Thank you.

I want to name some names, and I have to thank some folks that stood by me and endorsed me. First of all, thank you to the best campaign manager, Monifa Drayton. Thank you for your hard work, for your excellence. Thank you for being tough. When the going got tough, you got tougher. You called that meeting on that Saturday, you sent

those reinforcements, and I'll never forget that, thank you. To the Black Political Caucus of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, to the American Postal Workers Union, service, employees, international union, Charlotte Firefighters Association, Charlotte-Metrolina Labor Council, Unite Here Labor Union. I want to thank my community leaders. I want to thank paster [inaudible]. I want to thank Tony Mingo, William Mitchell, Tony McBride, thank you. To Dr. Betty Howell Gray, thank you. I want to thank Emma Allen and Bobby Draper. Thank you for your support both financially, your encouragement, and thank you for being here tonight. Ms. Carlenia Ivory-Cantey, thank you. Commissioner George Dunlap, thank you for your support, your public endorsement, thank you, against all odds. I want to thank you. I want to thank Commissioner Vilma Leake.

I want to thank former Mayor Jennifer Roberts, thank you. Also, Stephanie Sneed, School Board. Dr. Blanche Penn, Reverend [inaudible]. I want to thank Aisha Dew, and your mom Ruth Sloan. Thank you for your support as well. Reverend Dwayne Walker, Pastor Amelia Stinson-Welsey, Tommy Nichols, and there are so many more. If I'm forgetting someone, you can go to my website, reneeperkinsjohnson.com, and I have my endorsements listed, but again, I just want to thank you all. Thank my cousin, [inaudible], is here. I don't have a lot of family in town. So, [inaudible], you're out here somewhere. Thank you for being here, and I just really want to thank the citizens of Charlotte. Thank you to the City staff. Thank you, Jocella and Amanda and Jacqueline, and thank you to my colleagues. It's an honor to serve beside you, and I look forward to two more years. If you know me, I don't overpromise. I will consistently advocate for affordable housing, public accountability, and responsible and strategic development. Thank you.

Councilmember Mayfield said first, giving all honor and praise to God. I want to thank my wife [inaudible] of 17 years, and I want to thank God for blessing me with an amazing mother-in-law and giving me a bonus mom. Most people know, both my parents passed when I was young, unfortunately my father when I was 13 and my mom when I was 15, but I have an amazing bonus mom in Ms. Gilda, and thank you for my best friend, and for all who serve who share their time, their talent and their treasure. As I'm about to be sworn in for the sixth time, I am filled with joy of work that we were able to accomplish that first time around in a different seat in this last year, but also some anticipation of what the future can hold for all of us. I want to thank, along with everyone else, our amazing staff. We have a small, but mighty team, within this City. LaToya White is my staff liaison and thank you! LaToya keeps my schedule correct for me, because I tend to overbook and do too many things. So, she is helping me on a work-life balance between school and Council and service. So, thank you, LaToya, for everything that you do for me.

I also want to recognize that we have done some great things. We have a lot of great things that we can do, but I want to share something that sticks with me, because this is something that has been with me, and I'm not going to read the whole poem, because it is long, but for those of you that are in the room that know Langston Hughes' 1935 poem, "Make America America Again." I am going to read some excerpts, because somewhere over the last few years, we seemed to have gotten lost, and this was written a good 10 years prior until a certain person graced us in this world, because to God be the glory, all things happen for a reason, but before there was a "Make America Great Again" there was a, "Make America America Again," and from that I will share, "I am the farmer, bondsman to the soil. I am the worker sold to the machine. I am the Negro, servant to you all. I am the people, humble, hungry, mean. Hungry, yet today despite the dream. Beaten, yet today. O, Pioneers. I am the man who never got ahead, the poorest worker bartered through the years. Yet, I'm the one who dreamt our basic dream in the old world while still a serf of kings, who dreamt a dream so strong, so brave, so true, that even yet its mighty daring sings in every brick and stone, in every furrow turned that's made America the land it has become. O, I'm the man who sailed those early seas in search of what I meant to be my home. For I am the one who left dark Ireland's shore and Poland's plain and England's grassy lea, and torn from Black Africa's strand, I came to build a homeland of the free. The free. Who said the free? Not me. Surely, not me. The millions on relief today? The millions shot down when we strike? The millions who have nothing for our pay? For all the dreams we've dreamed,

and all the songs we've sung, and all the hopes we've held, and all the flags we've hung. The millions who have nothing for our pay, except the dream that's almost there today. O, let America be America again. The land that never has been yet, and yet must be. The land where every man is free. The land that's mine, the poor man's, Indian's, Negro's, me, who made America, who's sweat and blood, who's faith and pain, who's hand at the foundry, who's plow in the rain, must bring back our mighty dream again. Sure, call me an ugly name you choose. The steel of freedom does not stain. From those who live like leeches on the people's lives, we must take back our land again. America! O, yes, I say it plain. America was never America to me, and yet I do swear this oath, America will be! Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death, the rape and rot of [inaudible] and stealth and lies, we the people, must redeem the land, the mines, the plants, the rivers, the mountains, and the endless plain. All, all the stretch of these great green states, and make America again," and make Charlotte a Charlotte for all of us. Thank you.

Councilmember Brown said oh me, it's my time, my time. Hello everybody. You all look beautiful. Thank you for taking your time to come today to see us sworn in, and see what we have to offer the world. I want to share this with you. I first have to give thanks to God, because I'm deep rooted in the church. Born and raised in District 3 my entire life, from Southside Homes to West Boulevard to Nation Ford to Steele Creek, where I live at now, the 1500 block of West Boulevard. The West Side is the best side, whether you believe it or not. I don't know what you heard, but I'm telling you what it is. To my beautiful, phenomenal, amazing, strong mother, [inaudible] Brown. I don't know if my mom wants to stand, but she's up there in the green. To my beautiful Aunt Valerie, who was like another mother my entire life, and I still call her and complain like a baby sometimes. Aunt Valerie, would you please stand or just wave your hand for me please. I have two of the most beautiful, smartest, best dressed daughters in the world. Antoinette and [inaudible], they're side by side. Ya'll just raise your hands. My [inaudible], Trinity, who I got when she was making straight F's, and now she's an honor student at Bennett College, so my [inaudible]. I've got some people today, I would the Sheriff's wife to stand, because I bug her husband all the time. She is okay with that. She's okay with me bugging her husband.

I know my time is limited, I'm going to get there, but I have to thank people, because this is a historic moment. The Sheriff has opened doors for me that no other Sheriff would've opened, and he's allowed me to come into the Mecklenburg County Detention Center. He changed the name of the individuals in his jail. You cannot call them inmates or he will put you out. They are residents and I concur. [inaudible], my brother, who spent 23 years and 11 months in federal prison. The judge told him he had life plus five, and the judge told him if you die in prison, you still have five years to do. His mother, who's another mother to me, would you please stand Ms. Betty. [inaudible] her son, Josh, who will kill anybody over me, I love you Josh. My friend, [inaudible]. Oh my God nothing. [inaudible], who's my nonprofit manager who keeps me in line. I know I see Attorney Alesha Brown, For the Struggle, Inc. in the building. I know I've seen Kenny Robinson, who runs a phenomenal grassroots organization who was awarded by the City Council, and I support that. Thank you, Kenny for always supporting. Heal Charlotte, who's not in the building. Is Greg here, I didn't see Greg. Greg, Heal Charlotte, you know you're in my heart. Thank you for always supporting me.

Tonight is historic for me. As most of you may know, I'm a formerly incarcerated individual, and for a long time we were called convicts, felons, inmates, but I charge everyone in this audience to know that incarceration affects the entire family. I want to see a show of hands, honestly, anybody in this audience that don't know anybody that's been incarcerated. If your hands are down, then I think you're being dishonest. I am here because I am a gift from God and this position is a gift from God that I don't take lightly. I would like to thank [inaudible] for writing the check. I would like to thank Colette Forrest who declined to come, as she is amazing. Bobby Drakeford, thank you so much for writing a check. [inaudible] for checking the people you need to check. Daniel [inaudible], your expertise is unmatched. I thank you for all you did for my campaign. You know your numbers and I truly appreciate you. My campaign team, everybody that volunteered at the polls, thank you so much. It means everything to me. We stand at a

pivotal place in time, where people need to be bold like me, strategic in leadership, navigate a path toward togetherness to achieve our Council mission, connectivity to safety, inclusion and engagement.

We have transportation needs in Steele Creek. We have safety needs pressing on West Boulevard where my grandmother's home, my matriarch, still stands. We must disrupt the balance that has occurred far too often, and lastly, we must recognize that the collective community and the engagement of all of us involves sitting at this seat together. Make no mistake, our individual and collective wellbeing, as a people in Charlotte and society, must be achieved by working together for the greater of the good of those that put us here. We have not achieved that yet as a Council, and I pray to be the agent that brings and restores hope to this Council. I said it. I pray to be the agent of change and to restore hope to this Council. To stand bold and strong in unity for the constituents that put me in this seat. I work for you. We must make it shameful and unfashionable to fight amongst ourselves, when our fellow Charlotte residents are lacking upward mobility, affordable housing, and safety is major a concern. We lost a 14-year-old yesterday. We must speak to the pain that is felt by our residents and the mother's cries of parents that lost their children to homicide or the streets, because of lack of opportunity and concern. No personal agendas, just the agenda of the people.

One person alone cannot accomplish this goal. So, I ask my Council colleagues to remember, we bring the gifts that our ancestors gave to us, and we are the dreams and the hopes of the slaves. Together we must uplift our people, all people, all races, all colors, all creeds. We have our work cut out for us, but are we willing to do it? I know that I am, and the day that I can't is the day that I leave. I know that I am, and the day that I can't is the day that I leave. I'll end with this. Thank you to Charlene Henderson, who works tirelessly in this community, who is seeking a public office, but you don't have to have a seat at this dais to serve. So, thank you for serving. To anyone that donated to my campaign, thank you very much. To Braxton Winston, the only Council member that endorsed me and stood with me. Thank you, Braxton. Again, to all of you, to all of the constituents, thank you for choosing Tiawana Brown, a different type of candidate.

Councilmember Graham said good evening once again. It's indeed an honor, as well as a privilege, to be back before the citizens of Charlotte, and I thank you for your support and your consideration for investing in my public policy position. First, I'd like to thank my wife of 35 years, and my daughters Courtney and Nicole for allowing me the opportunity to serve this community once again. I want to thank my campaign team, led by Vanessa Mathews and her amazing husband Sedgwick, for leading the way for the last two years. We won with 78 percent and 79 percent over the last two years. That's what you call a landslide. I want to thank the voters of District 2 for investing in me and stopping me at church or at the grocery store or at the bank, and just providing words of encouragement, that really means a lot. I want to thank LaToya White, my Administrative Assistant as well, for providing me the type of structure I need to get this job done. Now the work begins, and the work begins with the 11 of us, including the Mayor, around the table. It is my hope that we can be a high-performing board and team. High-performing teams must have the vulnerability of trust. We must make data-driven decisions versus ones based on anecdotes and feelings. We must execute effectively on plans, while at times not having complete data, but allow experience and expertise to guide us along the way.

We must be nimble in order to pivot if circumstances warrant it, and we must be open to alternative approaches to obtain the results. Ownership, accountability, transparency, and trust should be our hallmark as a team. Charlotte can only move forward if they believe that this body is worthy of leading the 15th largest city in the country. Things that are important to me as we move forward are that we continue to embrace Charlotte's growth and development throughout the City, that we continue to embrace the UDO (Unified Development Ordinance) and make necessary changes and amendments when needed without changing our vision of how our City should be growing. Supporting balance, growth and development leads to more stable, equitable and sustainable Charlotte, benefitting both current and future generations, and we continue

to the support the Corridors of Opportunities, Beatties Ford Road, I-85 and Sugar Creek, Central Avenue and Albemarle Road, North Tryon and Graham Street, Freedom and Wilkinson, and to ensure that all our neighbors are part of the change and they're not victims of it. Strong Corridors supported by affordable housing, jobs and workforce opportunities, and reliable and dependable public transportation is what we should be doing, what we should be investing in. That we get our mobility plan moving. From my perspective, we've been running in place for the last three years, and success has been hard to find.

I look forward to working with issues ranging from CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) operation, engaging in regional stakeholders' participation, identifying key areas for infrastructure improvement, and continue championing the expansion of Charlotte Douglas International Airport, which is the economic engine for the region. I also understand that transportation and economic development work hand in hand. We must promote and enhance economic growth and prosperity of the region, focusing on strategies and policies that attract and retain businesses, stimulate job creation, foster innovation entrepreneurship, business attraction and retention, workforce development, entrepreneurship innovation, are all things that we should be investing in as a community. Last night, and Tiawana mentioned it, at 14-year-old was shot to death in a neighborhood in North Charlotte. Ten minutes earlier, police found another person shot in East Charlotte. Officers pronounced the victim dead at the scene. While our crime stats are moving in the right direction, too many times we wake up in the morning and hear the news, and its bad news. Too many of our citizens believe that our City's not safe. If you don't feel safe, you're not safe, and so we have to make a concentrated effort to make public safety a priority for our community moving forward.

We must support CMPD, and at the same time, work with community churches, neighborhood organizations, etc., to ensure that people have the resources that they need for upward mobility. I believe, as a city, we can do this. I believe we have the temperament to do it. I think we have the talent to do it. I think we have an amazing City staff led by Marcus Jones to do it, and I think we have the will to do it. I'm certainly committed to do my part to lead Charlotte. I believe that, and my colleagues have heard me say this over and over and over again, it's about the work. It's about the work, and sometimes doing what is right is not popular, and sometimes doing what is popular is not right, and I'm committed to doing and making decisions that's in the best interest of our City, and not what's just popular, and I hope my colleagues will also join me in that. We have hard decisions to make over the next two years. Our budget's going to be extremely interesting through budget negotiations. We still have to make major investments in sports and entertainment, and again, public safety and quality-of-life issues will be paramount and a priority for me and hopefully for this Council. So, I look forward to serving once again, working with the Mayor and my new colleague, to address many of the issues that she outlined as well. So, let's get to work. Thank you.

Councilmember Driggs said I didn't have an opponent this year, so my list of acknowledgements is not as long. I do want to thank the voters of District 7 who voted for me and expressed their continued support, I appreciate that. I commit, as always, to serve all of my constituents regardless of whether they voted for me, whether they voted at all, what party they belong to. We are all here for everybody. I'd also like to thank donors who gave to my campaign unsolicited, even though I didn't have an opponent. It was pretty startling. This was one of my best fundraising years. Love you guys, really appreciate that. I would like to especially acknowledge two good friends, Ken May, who is here. Ken is the Executive Producer of my Friday coffee meeting. I appreciate you, Ken, and Larry Shaheen, who guided me through my first campaign and has been a good advisor and friend to me ever since. My Treasurer, Alex Rossitch, who keeps me out of trouble with my filings at the Board of Elections.

I really appreciate, have appreciated for my entire 10 years, the staff of the City. It's normal that we acknowledge the staff, and I just want to emphasize how important it is, if you're in this job, to be supported by professionals who really know what's going on and who are trying to enable us to do the best we can and be best we can. We have some really wonderful people who work for the City. Manager, congratulations to you

and to everybody on your team. Special thanks to Antawuan Schofield, who tries to keep me pointed in the right direction and Amanda Birch, who is very helpful to me. In particular, of course, I want to acknowledge Caroline, my wife. Anybody who has met Caroline, knows that she is the guiding light of the Driggs political machine, and to me in general. We have developed a couple of traditions in the course of six swearing in, I guess, where she says to me, "Please don't point me out," and I tell her I'm not going to. She's right there, and usually at this moment, the tradition is that I blow her a kiss and I say I love you. Sweetie, thank you.

So, as we enter this coming term, I am what is called a republican. You know, you may have forgotten about those, and that may connote certain things to you, but these are really not applicable in the local context. I think that we have a shared sense of where we want to be, where we want to go as a City. I'm on board with a lot of the initiatives that we are taking, but at the same time, as we pursue those goals, we need to be cognizant of, for example, the businesses in Charlotte and the people, the employees of those businesses who create the vibrant economy that we have, and that make it possible to invest in a lot of the things that matter to us. So, I hope that as we pursue our shared priorities, and I appreciate Tia your remarks, that we will always remember the totality of our community and be appreciative of those who enable us to do what we do and be mindful of those who need us to do a lot of the things that we do.

I think that it's important. We've heard some comments made about working together, and frankly I'll be very candid here, I think we can do better in that department. I think we all understand that, and it's not even a question of whether we disagree, it's more a question of working together. We need to understand that we are team. I feel like a teammate to all of you, even at times when we may have a different priority or something, but being a team means more communication among us and it means recognizing that our shared purpose is to reach a consensus, and to therefore, be able to act with a solid majority of us in the same space and pursuing the same goals. At the end of the day, we have a vision of a future for Charlotte that includes trees, it's clean, it's safe, it offers opportunity to everybody, and there's no disagreement about that. So, let us bring our various talents and skills to bear on finding solutions that we can all agree on. Thank you very much, everybody.

Councilmember Bokhari said first, like to thank all my friends and everyone who came today, and just so you know, as you're experiencing this firsthand, we do this every Monday, and about now is where we're looking at the clock, and the arms still have many rotations to go before we're even close to getting out of here, so I appreciate you guys being here to experience this with us right now. I want to thank also all those who had the courage to run for office. It is a sacrifice that most are never, ever going to understand, and one we need more to answer the call for. To the staff members, you've been thanked by others and let me just join that group. You're amazing and we couldn't do anything we do without all of you, and while I may not be the most exciting call you get, because usually we have something big to solve. When we're done and high-fiving, I hope it was all worth it after that.

To all my campaign supporters and volunteers, all of you, it's because of you that made this happen, and I am forever grateful. We never, ever would've done what we did without all of you and your hard work. To my kids, there they are, Chase, Charlie, May and Channing. They've been introduced to many a time here in this chamber. The time's really flown by, and you've grown up in this world, which is a little scary to think about. I'm so proud of you all, every single one of you up there, and you may not realize it yet, but you're learning how to serve in this process, and I have great, great confidence in the future that will be in your hands. To my beautiful wife, Krista, up there. Most people realize how great you are that meet you, but few realize how we've actually been a tag team these last six years, solving everything from parking to potholes. You're the silent force that moves our world every day, and every accolade I've ever received, at least half of that belongs to you. I am so grateful for you, and if you don't know what she does every day, I'm going to tell ya, it's half terrifying and half inspiring.

To my campaign team, I don't know how to say this, other than, I truly believe you are the best campaign team in the history of Charlotte politics. I like to overembellish at times. I think everyone who's ever met you guys, those of you that are here and not right now, knows just how special you guys are as a team, and it's an absolute honor to work with you. I want to thank God. Jeremiah 29:7 has been a guiding light for my spirit through this journey. "Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, so too will you prosper." It's a powerful statement we should all remember and why we're doing this and what we're working on.

So, finally and in closing, this City can at times feel unwelcoming to conservative views, even though there are hundreds of thousands of us. It can at times feel like that we don't belong, yet here we are tonight.

If there is anyone out there who still doubts that Charlotte is a place where diversity of perspective can exist, who still wonders if the urban two-party system is alive in our time, who still questions the importance of balance, tonight is your answer. It's the answer told by the volunteers who are exhausted but decided to knock on one more door. It's the answer told by friends who don't usually pay any attention to local politics, but this time called everyone they knew and refused to let apathy win. It's the story and answer told by the residents frustrated their voice hasn't been represented in the public discourse, but they did not follow the trend and move away. It's the people in Charlotte who believe that this time must be different, and their voices could be that difference. This victory does not mark the end. In fact, it's just the beginning, but tonight, because of what we did in this election at this critical and defining moment for our community, we have shown all those across Charlotte that balance is possible and maintaining diversity of perspective is worth the fight. I feel that great weight today, and I am overwhelmed by the enormity of this task over the next two years, but I will wake up every day fueled by the thought of each and every one of you that made this win possible, and give everything I have to give for our great City. That I promise you.

Councilmember Anderson said some of you know that music is extremely important to me, and I've been listening to a musical over the last few days that has the following lines in it, and I feel like it's very salient for this moment. "There are moments that words can't reach. There's a grace to powerful to name. Sometimes we push away things we don't understand. Sometimes we push away the unimaginable." There's so many times throughout my life where I have felt like I was the unimaginable. Born and raised here in the City of Charlotte, I took the CATS bus, the number 19, when I was in kindergarten and first grade, to school. My brother would put me on that, what we used to call the square. In middle school, I attended Sedgefield Middle School, and I knew then, I understood the notion of readiness, to be ready for education, and I decided not to ride the school bus, because it was so chaotic, and so I would walk a mile and a half to get to school. I've been afforded so many opportunities and blessing to be in spaces and places where I have been able to pivot myself out of that environment, and to be what many believe is a statistic defier, but I sit here today humbled by so many District 1 constituents who came out to represent and to check that box for me. I didn't have an opponent. They could have abandoned the ballot. They didn't have to come out and represent me. Over 11,000 constituents in this City, District 1, came out to represent me. I was blown away by that. I want to thank everyone in this room, all the constituents and the residents of our beloved Queen City, District 1, everyone who supports what we do and what we bring to the table.

I truly believe, as some of my colleagues have said, there's a power of team, and we don't always have to agree, but we can get to the better answer. We can get to a better solution with the collective voice. So, we need diverse voices. We need diverse opinions. We need diverse backgrounds to be here and to sit at the table. I want to thank, like so many of my colleagues have thanked, the staff and the City Manager. Listen, you don't get to this level. You don't get to be the 15th largest city in the greatest nation in the world, with a triple AAA credit rating, without having tremendous support and people who look after that and nurture it every single day, and that's the staff that we have. So, I want to thank the staff for everything that they do, and all the questions

they answer, all the calls, everything that they bring to bear. I have my love circle up there, they know who they are, and I love them tremendously, and they fortify me. They fortify me to do this work. They fortify me every single day.

I want to thank Mayor Gantt. Mayor Gantt's sitting here, and I've not told him this, but when I was in middle school, he was running for office, and a poor kid from Southside Homes trying to get it done every day, and I saw this brother run for office and stand up in spaces that were unimaginable for me, and you inspired me tremendously, so much that I went to your alma mater. I applied to MIT, because I read that you had went there and I did the research, and I went there too. So, I want to just thank you for the model. Every single person that sits at this dais, we are touching lives that you cannot imagine. You may never hear the story, you may never hear the connection, but you are, all of us are, the unimaginable. So, I want to thank my colleagues, thank the City, thank my love circle, thank everyone for not turning me away, not turning something away that they don't understand, but embracing the unimaginable that I embody. Thank you.

Councilmember Watlington said good evening, Charlotte. I'm incredibly grateful to be sitting here before you tonight, and I'm humbled by your gracious support this go around. I don't take it lightly that I get to be a part of leading in this City. Four years ago I sat at this dais full of nerves and passion and the weight of responsibility of leading in this City. Over the years, you've watched me grow, find my voice, ruffle a couple feathers, and I hope to make meaningful contribution to policy. To my family, my neighborhood leaders, my campaign team, staff, and each and every person that I've worked with over these last four years, I thank you for your insight, for your trust, for your commitment to the work. It has been an honor to serve District 3, and I concur, the West Side is in fact the best side. Years ago, Councilmember LaWana Mayfield transitioned that service into my care, and today I am proud to be in the number of fierce advocates for the district, and I pray that the residents are the better after my service. To Councilmember Brown, I happily welcome you. As a city, we've emerged out of a tumultuous time, embattled but resilient, and optimistic about our future, holding fast to everything that makes this City a great place to call home, and striving to ensure a welcoming, a vibrant and a prosperous vision for the City and our region. I truly believe that we will get there together. Thank you.

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ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO TEM

Mayor Lyles said I want to thank every Council member for their words and especially those words that are expressed to our community and our residents. Now, we have one final item this evening, which is the selection of our Mayor Pro Tem. Now, many people in this community probably don't even know what the Mayor Pro Tem does or why we even have this during our organizational meetings, so I thought it might me helpful for me to read from the charter that, "The Mayor Pro Tem in the Mayor's absence, the Mayor Pro Tem shall preside, when presiding shall have the right to vote upon all questions, but shall have no additional vote in the case of a tie, and no veto vote. The Mayor Pro Tem shall be considered a Council member for all purposes, including the determination of whether a quorum is present. By North Carolina State Statute, at this organizational meeting, the City Council shall elect from its members a Mayor Pro Tem to serve at the pleasure of the Council." I will now open the floor for any motions to nominate for the office of Mayor Pro Tem.

Motion was made by Councilmember Molina, and seconded by Councilmember Anderson, to nominate Danté Anderson as Mayor Pro Tem.

Substitute motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell, and seconded by Councilmember Johnson, to nominate Dr. Victoria Watlington for Mayor Pro Tem.

Mayor Lyles said alright. I believe that creates us a substitute motion that will be voted on first.

Councilmember Watlington said colleagues, I offer myself up for the role of Mayor Pro Tem for this term. As I mentioned, I believe we find ourselves at an inflection point in our City and our region, with an opportunity and an obligation to address significant challenges for the future, including our housing, transportation, infrastructure and economic mobility. I believe we've got tremendous potential to enhance how we operate, to improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of our processes, our policy, and our governance. As a systems engineer, innovation manager, Lean Six Sigma Black Belt, project management professional, doctor of philosophy with a graduate certificate in public policy analysis, a two-term Council member who has served in the district, as a committee chair, and now At-Large, I am uniquely qualified to help improve our internal processes, as well as work with external partners to further our policy goals. Not only am I qualified, I am proving. Before joining Council, I leveraged what I learned in all four of the city's citizens academies to spearhead the creation of the West Boulevard Playbook, which served as the basis for the now city-wide Corridors of Opportunity program.

Within six months of serving on this Council, in the midst of a social justice movement, I drafted the framework for our SAFE (Safety and Accountability For Everyone) Charlotte policy and worked with my colleagues to get it passed. Among other things, I successfully advocated for anti-displacement protections in the UDO, and for the commissioning of the NEST (Neighborhood Equity and Stabilization) Committee, whose work I oversee as the current chair of the Housing, Safety and Community Committee. This year, I took a leading role in reaching a path forward at Eastland that received unanimous support after months of contentious debate. Beyond its ceremonial duties, the Mayor Pro Tem is about enhancing the performance of our Council toward an ultimate and of better outcomes for our residents. I have been committed to this for the last four years, and so I humbly ask for your vote in this capacity. Thank you.

Councilmember Anderson said I'm not going to read my resume to you. It's too long. What I will say is that I've been rooted in service from the very beginning, and I have connected to serve the City of Charlotte in a variety of ways for decades, and as I alluded to earlier, I am just a poor kid from Southside Homes. That's what I am. I've been able to reach heights and have tremendous academic accolades and professional experiences that I don't need to lay out to you now, but the most important thing that I believe in this moment, as you think about a Mayor Pro Tem, is you need someone who can work with every single human that sits at this dais and work collectively to hear disparaging voices, to bring together what will be a better and brighter solution for the City that we all love. So, I've Vice Chair Committees, I've served on numerous boards, I've been an officer in Fortune 100, Fortune 1 companies, is not what I want to put forward to you, as my evidence of how I can serve in this role. What I want to put forward to you is that, every single person who sits at this dais know, they understand they can call me, they can text me, and when they have a problem, if they're trying to figure out a better solution, they know they need to just tell me what it is, and I'm there, and I'm in it, and I'm helping to forge a better solution for the City who has birthed me, and for the City that we all love and call the Queen City.

Councilmember Ajmera said this has been a difficult process for us in trying to appoint a Mayor Pro Tem process. In fact, we don't have a process to begin with, and this has been challenging since we ditched the tradition in the past. In order for us to have unanimous selection for Mayor Pro Tem, I think we should have a process moving forward. We should have parameters in place that guide us, whether that would be a district rep, whether it would be At-Large person, whether that would be top vote getter, and I hope in coming weeks and months ahead, as a Council together collectively, we will draft a process that will guide us for generations to come. I had this conversation with Mayor Pro Tem Winston, and we have had several back and forth in the past. Last year, when we did not follow the tradition, we decided to go with Mr. Winston, and I had supported him in that. I believe, when Mr. Winston sent us an email over the weekend,

he's absolutely right. I think there is a lack of process that we need to put in place, so that we don't have this breakdown like we are having right now. Thank you.

Councilmember Mayfield said so, I want to make sure that we have as much transparency in this process as possible. So, for the community, thank you all for everything that you've done to get out and vote, but I need us to understand that once the elections are over, the community role is out of the discussion of Mayor Pro Tem. It is completely and 100 percent the responsibility of City Council. Last year, Council members came together and had a discussion, and we decided on rank file voting. Most of you know what that is. We voted. We decided who is the individual that we thought would be the most responsible, to be a liaison between the Mayor's office and Council, so that we are all on the same page and have a better understanding of how we can better serve this community. There was misinformation and there was misunderstanding. Collectively, the numbers were for Councilmember Winston. There were no ifs, ands, buts about that. That's one of the challenges that we have, is as a community you receive partial information. We always say we don't like to see how the sausage is made. Sometimes you need to know how the sausage is made. There was no other option that accumulated more than six votes out of the 11 of us. It takes a minimum of six.

We love to talk about the idea of tradition. Tradition has also given us some of the challenges we have today regarding housing, employment, small businesses. We can use tradition when it's comfortable, but if we go back to 2013, when Councilmember then Eiselt was the highest vote getter, and our then before being Mayor, Council member Vi Lyles ran for office as a collective Council body, we chose for Vi, who was a former employee for the City of Charlotte, to be our Mayor Pro Tem. It was not [inaudible] we had a conversation with Councilmember Eiselt because she had just newly been elected. Even though she was overwhelmingly the highest vote getter, she also supported and recommended us moving forward with the Pro Tem choice that we chose. So, it is a cute idea, and it has precedent that the highest vote getter is the person that will be chosen. Understand this. It is someone that we believe we can trust. It is someone that we believe that we can have clear communication with.

I personally, as someone who is on my sixth term serving in this role, I have served under Mayor Foxx, under Mayor Patsy Kinsey, under Mayor Cannon, under Mayor Clodfelter, as well as under Mayor Vi Lyles. There is no version in any Council discussion where I would vote for a district representative to be the Mayor Pro Tem for our City. I also would have a very hard challenge to vote for someone who has literally been in office for 10 months to step into role of Mayor Pro Tem. Now, do we all agree. No, we do not. We are 11 very independent decisionmakers and independent individuals, but I do support the idea, and I have already said that I will support the idea of Dr. Victoria Watlington, who is my predecessor in District 3, and who was the highest vote getter for the City of Charlotte, mainly because we have had multiple conversations and I did share we had some concerns. Hey, what does your job look like? What does your availability look like? You can address that? Oh, wait a minute, you did complete a whole doctorate while still serving on Council. So, I think you can handle more responsibility [inaudible].

We also need to remember the challenges that we put out there, because which my colleague and I discussed, if she were a male, we would not have asked about, "Well, is your job going to keep you away for an extended period of time? Are you able to take on these responsibilities?" Councilmember Winston works 15 jobs, at least eight of them that we know of, and we made a decision, and he stepped up to the plate and became a better Mayor Pro Tem than I would have even guessed that he would have become, because we put our faith, our trust, and we held him to the fire. I personally have already said that I will support Dr. Watlington, and I am reiterating now, that for this Council as we move forward, I think that yes, we can have a longer conversation later regarding putting some rules into place, but I need us to stop being misleading to you. It is the complete responsibility of this dais to say, who is that person that we believe is going to be the best liaison, not only between the Mayor's office and City Council, but

also in the community when the Mayor is not available or may be overbooked with multiple requests, which she receives on a regular basis.

So, I support us moving forward with Council member Dr. Watlington as our Mayor Pro Tem, who was our highest vote getter At-Large. I do not, and let's make sure we catch it on record, that there will never be a time that I'm going to agree with the idea of it being a district representative. There also is a level of responsibility, and honestly respect, to come into a space, learn how to do the job, before saying that I want to step into certain levels of leadership and roles, and it is a concern for me that at 10 months in, the decision to say I want to step in this role, when there is still so much learning to do on just learning how to be a representative and attending the trainings that go along with it, that is something that is very important to me and something that I think we, as a body, not you the community, even though we really appreciate you and we love you for voting, but what we as body need to decide on, as far as how we move forward with our leadership. Thank you.

Councilmember Graham said and then I hope I can call the question.

Mayor Lyles said yes.

Mr. Graham said I was very intentional when I said in my remarks that it's really important that this body operates at a high level, a high-functioning body that has the confidence of the community to be in the 15th largest city in the country. The Mayor Pro Tem position is ceremonial at best. I didn't want it. A lot of people don't want it. It's an important call to what we do in terms of how we manage the work. It's an internal thing. I don't think it matters if you're a district rep or At-Large. I don't think it matters if you've been here 10 months or 13 years. It's who can help us manage the work, lead this Council in the right direction, and help us do the work of the Council, do the work of the Council, and so with that, I hope we call the question and we can move forward.

Mayor Lyles said alright, Mr. Baker, I had another Council member that wanted to speak, but we have a call to question in the comments from Mr. Graham. So, help me with the ruling on it.

Patrick Baker, City Attorney said so, calling the question requires that anyone who chooses to speak, has the opportunity to speak before the call the question is in order.

Mayor Lyles said alright. I believe it's Mr. Mitchell.

Councilmember Mitchell said thank you all for your patience. We have to be very careful when we talk about this position as Mayor Pro Tem of the City Council. It is an important position. It's about 11 of us working with one leader to make sure we're doing the right policy and moving this Council forward. I have sat down here and I have had the opportunity to look at various Mayor Pro Tems through the years, and the one that I think fits the description best, is a Mayor Pro Tem who understands how the City of Charlotte works. A Mayor Pro Tem who has experience in knowing how to do policy, but more importantly, be able to talk to your colleagues about reaching a compromise. A Mayor Pro Tem who has experience in understanding it's not about them or the title, but it's about us functioning as a team. When you look at Dr. Watlington's experience, her work on this dais, her work in the community, I think she is the right leader to move this Council for the next two years to make sure we function. She's all about accountability, and that's what we hear so much from the community. We need you all to be accountable. I think Dr. Watlington will provide that leadership for us, that in return, you will be very proud of how this Council will function for the next two years. Thank you, Mayor.

The vote was taken on the substitute motion and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Johnson, Mayfield, Mitchell, and Watlington

NAYS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Bokhari, Brown, Driggs, Graham, and Molina

Mr. Baker said before we get too far down this road, you're either voting yes or no. So, when the no's come out, you're going to have to raise your hand. If there is no indication that you voted, you're a yes vote.

The vote was taken on the original motion and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Bokhari, Brown, Driggs, Graham, and Molina

NAYS: Johnson, Mayfield, Mitchell, and Watlington

Mayor Lyles said the motion is approved. Danté Anderson, congratulations as Mayor Pro Tem.

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ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Graham, seconded by Councilmember Mayfield, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.
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The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.



Stephanie C. Kelly, City Clerk MMC, NCCMC

Length of Meeting: 2 Hours, 14 Minutes
Minutes Completed: September 25, 2024