

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for an Organizational Meeting/Swearing-In Ceremony on Monday, December 1, 2025, at 6:11 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, Tiawana Brown, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, Lawana Mayfield, James Mitchell, Marjorie Molina, Edwin Peacock III, and Victoria Watlington.

**ABSENT UNTIL NOTED:** New Council Members Juan Diego Mazuera Arias, Joi Mayo and Kimberly Owens

\* \* \* \* \*

**Mayor Lyles** said good evening, everyone and welcome to the 2025 swearing in ceremony for the Charlotte City Council. I want to say we ought to give a big hand of applause for Phillip O. Berry Academy of Technology. I want to thank everyone for coming and now I officially call this meeting to order to be the part of our communities' choices so that we can really work together. So, I want to thank everyone again and this meeting is now called to order. So, we'll have everyone introduce themselves.

I want to thank the family and friends that are in the audience today to support their loved ones to acknowledge the service of our new and returning Council members. To start this evening, we will have an invocation by my pastor, Reverend Doctor Clifford Jones of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church followed by a presentation of colors from the Charlotte Department Honor Guard.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **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.

**Kayleigh Mayhew, Mayor's Youth Employment Program** led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**Officer Kelvin Moore of CMPD (Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department)** sang the National Anthem.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **MAYOR'S AWARDS**

**Mayor Lyles** said each year the Mayor Citizen Awards recognize distinguished members of our community who have served with honor, courage and selflessness. The first Mayor's award is the Richard Vinroot Award. Mayor Vinroot, please know how much this means to all of us. Thank you so much for being here tonight. So, tonight I am proud to present the Mayor's Award in honor of Richard Vinroot, to a remarkable leader whose voice, vision and authenticity have helped shaped a more connected, compassionate Charlotte, Tonya Jameson, as the Director of Civic Engagement for Leading On Opportunity. Tonya is helping us guide our City towards greater equity and inclusion and bringing people together. [INAUDIBLE] barriers, sparks dialogue and the creation of meaningful change. Tonya, I want to say thank you for using your gifts to move Charlotte forward. Your courage, your authenticity, and your unwavering dedication to civic engagement and equity. Because of you, our City is more informed, more united, and inspired to take action. Please join me by welcoming Tonya Jameson as the 2025 Vinroot Mayor Citizen Award.

**Tonya Jameson** said thank you Mayor Lyles so much. I am honored and humbled to accept the Richard Vinroot Award. This reflects my commitment that I've made to Charlotte since I've moved here more than 30 years ago. Some of you know my story. I moved here from Columbia, Maryland, a planned community that was based on racial and economic integration. That inclusive upbringing has shaped my life and my work, including my ability to adult here in Charlotte. I spent 15 years at the Charlotte Observer telling stories that mattered for stories of marginalized people and communities, and stories that challenged us to see Charlotte as a City with the potential to be more inclusive. Now, most of you may know me for Paid To Party. That was my nightlife column and today I have to tell you I'm going to bed at the time that I used to go out and hit the streets. Paid To Party wasn't just about clubs, and when I started it, it wasn't just about music and clubs, it was about capturing the energy of a City that was growing and changing and making sure everyone saw themselves in that story. I covered President Obama's historic 2008 election in the multimedia blog *That's What's Up* because I wanted to appeal to a younger generation. I wanted to make sure that our voices were heard and that we could understand what was going on. My goal was always to amplify voices and create spaces where people felt seen and I used to say all the time that my writing, my work was to be a voice for the voiceless, but when I joined Leading On Opportunity I realized that they didn't not have voice, we just weren't listening. We were ignoring what people were saying.

So, our new Council that's coming in, our job is to listen, to carry with us that message every day to make sure that we're focused on improving economic mobility. We've made some progress, but we have more work ahead. This award reminds me that change does not happen alone, and I didn't win this award alone. I want to thank my parents, my aunt and uncle and my ride or die Randy who are all with me tonight, for standing with me in my quest to work with the journalist, the activist, the business leaders, neighbors, and anyone else determined to create a City where every child has a chance to succeed. It is not lost on me that today is the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rosa Parks standing for equal rights by sitting down. Together, we are writing a new story for the south. My promise to you is to keep fighting for opportunity and inclusion. I want to make sure that we create a City where every child can write their own story regardless of their neighborhood. Thank you all very much.

Mayor Lyles said thank you Tonya for being who you are. The second Mayor's Award is the Harvey Gantt Award. Mayor Gantt is here as well. The Harvey Gantt Mayor's Award recognizes individuals who demonstrate courage and civility that strengthens our community and defines true leadership. Tonight, I am proud to present this award to Chief Johnny Jennings whose dedication to service and commitment to Charlotte embody the very spirit of this honor. Chief Jennings has served with integrity, compassion and a deep respect for the people of this City. His steady leadership has guided CMPD through challenging moments with transparency and grace and always striving to build trust and understanding between law enforcement and the community. Chief Jennings, thank you for your years of devoted service, your commitment to collaboration, and your compassion for the City you call home. Please join me in congratulating 2025 Harvey Gantt Award to Chief Johnny Jennings.

**Chief Johnny Jennings, CMPD** said thank you Mayor. Wow, this is a change here. This is fantastic. Mayor, thank you. Thank you for always supporting me. Thank you for your leadership in this wonderful City, and thank you for everything you've done to help me be successful. I truly, truly think that you are the best Mayor in the entire Country and we appreciate you so much. Thank you. So, five and a half years ago this man sitting behind me took a chance during one of the most difficult times in law enforcement history. Marcus Jones, thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to serve this police department, this profession, and this City, and this County. It has absolutely been the best honor that I could actually ask for in my entire professional career. This is it for me. This is my stop. People have asked do I want to go be a police chief anywhere else. There is nowhere else. There is nowhere else other than the City of Charlotte. This is the best City and the best County to serve and I'm so proud to have served in the last 33 and a half years. So, thank you for allowing me to have that opportunity Marcus Jones. Thank you so much.

To the City Council, somebody's going to fact check me on this, but I don't think we've ever been turned down for anything we've asked for in the last five and a half years that I've been chief. So, Chief Patterson, the record's on. You have to make sure that continues. Thank you for your support to make our department successful. Thank you to all of my CMPD family that's here. You deserve a huge round of applause as well. Last, but definitely not least, I'm going to ask my family to stand up. My wife Lisa, oldest son Johnathan, [INAUDIBLE] and Jayden. Folks, let me tell you, without them, there is no me. Without them, I'm not the police chief in Charlotte. Thank you so much. Love you all. Thank you for allowing me to do this job that I love.

\* \* \* \* \*

## PRESENTATION TO OUTGOING COUNCILMEMBERS

**Mayor Lyles** said now comes a very hard and difficult time for I think many, at least for me, I'll say that. On behalf of the Charlotte City Council, I want to thank our outgoing Council members for their years of service to this community and for the best of luck in their future endeavors. You will each have an opportunity to share a few words. I ask that you try to do it better than we do in Council meeting. Maybe three minutes, you know, the three minute rule. I think that we never had it adopted. So, I'd like to recognize and ask Councilmember Tiawana Brown to come up and join me at the podium.

**Councilmember Brown** said give it up for the Mayor. She does not have an easy job. Good evening, Mayor. I'll say that to you Madam Mayor, colleagues, staff and beautiful people of Charlotte, especially my mighty unshakable, never silenced District Three. Tonight is my last night standing before you in this capacity, Dr. Councilmember Tiawana Brown, but hear me clearly. My service does not end here. My purpose does not retire. My voice does not expire. I walked into this chamber making history. The first and only formerly incarcerated woman, and in case you don't know what that means, I spent time in prison. A clean sweep, a unanimous mandate from the people. A victory that would never be undone because it lives in the record books and in the hearts of the residents who believed in me. In a world where people would rather follow than lead, gossip than pray. I stand here tonight unapologetically in my truth. I didn't come here to blend in, I came here to stand out and I did that. You can ask my colleagues. I want to honor three sisters that I brought with me tonight because I'm different. Charlene Henderson who ran for District One, Robin Emmons who ran for District Three, Lia White who ran for District Two. Thank you for your courage. You dared to run. You dared to hope because you wanted to see community in a community that does not get community. Warren [INAUDIBLE] and Candace, I know you're recording. They're not political allies. They are spiritual anchors. They prayed me through storms. They loved me through the pain. They stayed when others walked away. Their loyalty is loud. Their presence is powerful and tonight I honor them with my whole heart.

To my Councilmember Dr. Watlington, and she's fierce. Smart, beautiful, young and energetic. We didn't start off on the right foot, but we aligned and I loved you. Councilmember Mayfield, the knowledge in District Three. The leader of the three of us who represented the District together. Thank you for your knowledge. Mr. Mitchell, James Mitchell. Thank you for always honoring me and never judging me. You never treated me differently even when I didn't vote the way you wanted me to. Councilmember Johnson. One of a kind. You are the real deal. We vote alike, we think alike, and we fight like hell for the people alike. My constituent services. Amanda and your team, you are not the help. You are the background and the backbone of City Hall. Your compassion heals family, saves lives. You answer emails and calls that we don't even know come in. Now let me speak about where I come from. I come from a long line of influential phenomenal Black women. Women who survived without applause. So, when you don't clap, it doesn't matter. Women who endured without recognition. Women who led without titles and from the strongest of them all, my mother, Artie Mae Brown. I learned how to love from her. So, I give love. That love guided me here. That love carried me through and that love keeps me standing when you wonder why I didn't resign. Through the storm, let me tell you something. There has been more love than

hate, but the media helps the hate spew out because hate always screams. Love sits with you. Love stands with you. Love holds you and for anyone that's confused, I am not defeated. I'm often imitated but never duplicated because authenticity cannot be copied, because purpose can't be cloned, because my calling can't be counterfeited.

Now let me tell you this before you run off and start talking. What I brought in this chamber cannot be bought. You either have it or you don't, and I have it. I did not lead from ego. I led from empathy; I led from a place for people that don't have people to fight for them often. I did not come from scripts, I lead from my soul. My term may end tonight, but my calling, that does not end here, it does not end ever. Now my mother, the phenomenal Black woman that walked to work and gave my sister her car so she could get around on North Carolina campus A&T (Agricultural and Technical), she's not here. My daughters Antoinette and Tijema, they are not here tonight. My sister, my grandson, they are not in this room, but their love is. Their prayers are. Their strength is. Their absence is protection, not distance. I honor them with every breath in me and every time I do public service. Listen closely. I'm almost done Mayor. I'm not stepping down. I'm stepping forward. I'm stepping into my next assignment. I'm stepping deeper into my community. I'm stepping into higher purpose. I will serve the District Three community all the days of my life because I've lived there for 54 years. Look at me. I'm a Black woman who survived hell to get here. A Black woman who made history. A Black woman who spoke truth to power. A Black woman who shook the chamber when it needed to be shaken, and there's some more shaking that needs to be done. A Black woman who rose and will rise again. So, when you think about me, remember people over politics, purpose over pain, still I rise. The one and only Tiawana Brown Charlotte City Council District Three. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said next I'd like to recognize and ask Councilmember Marjorie Molina to join me at the podium.

**Councilmember Molina** said how y'all doing tonight? Y'all can do better than that. Y'all not sleep yet are you? How y'all doing tonight? Alright, alright, alright. Listen, I don't have remarks. If you know me, you know I speak from my heart. I've done that for the entirety of my experience because what I feel is what really guides me. This is a celebration. I wondered, I said, "How will you hold this moment? This moment where you're walking away from a position and you are not going to continue. How will you hold it?" Then as I reflected, I said, "This is a celebration." Charlotte is one of the greatest cities in the United States of America, and I am absolutely honored to have held this position for two terms. I am absolutely grateful. Thank you Charlotte, thank you to the voters of East Charlotte. I moved to Charlotte when I was a very, very young woman in 2004. I took a job at a bank, and I started my family here. My oldest child voted in her first election in November 2025. I have an 18-year-old, but my baby voted in her very first election. I have a 15-year-old son who's at UNC (University of North Carolina) Charlotte early college of engineering. I have a bright, beautiful 18-year-old who, like the Mayor said in the last meeting, she applied and got accepted to SCAD (Savannah College of Art and Design) but she's also looking at NC (North Carolina) State. She wants to be an industrial designer. So, my children, my family have shared me with service for the entirety of my time in Charlotte, and to them I owe a great debt of gratitude. Moreover, I will also say that my time in Charlotte is not done. Now I will not return to District Five. You can absolutely put a million-dollar bet on that and you're going to win. That is not going to happen, but I know nothing but service. Service is the rent that I pay to live and be in this being. It is how I was created. It is what God called me to do.

Let me start with thank you. There is a whole back row of senior leadership from the City of Charlotte here and I want to say thank you to each and every one of you. We've done some great things together. The City Council often instructs the what, but then the how is this tedious task of human beings that have skillsets beyond measure that take what we would like to have happen and they create and craft this how, that turns in to the last 30 acres of Eastland Yards. It turns in in to Spark Centro, it turns into \$73 million along Robinson Church Road and strategic investment areas. That's how it happens. It happens when Marcus Jones aligns with what you can see and even

expands that idea. I can honestly tell you that I feel like Marcus is one of the best managers that we can ask for in this position to hold.

To my colleagues. I can say that we have had a lot of tough times. We've seen some tough tasks. We've seen some heavy holding. We've had some real tough things to hold and we've not always aligned, but the one thing that I can say is that I respect each and every one of you. There's so much that could not have been done but for the ability to have conversations. Eastland Yards, and I've been saying this for a long time, this is a team sport. I'm going to say it until the cows come home and y'all are going to get it. You can come here with your magic and "I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that," but first of all if you can't count to six, nothing's happening, but moreover, if you can't get other leaders to buy into the messaging, nothing happens. When I got here, it wasn't the intention to come here. I remember standing right there at that podium in 2017 after being asked to fill a vacancy on Charlotte City Council for appointment and I wasn't chosen, actually Dimple Ajmera was chosen. I was one of six candidates to be considered for appointment and never in a million years. At that time, I was just helping other people getting elected and I was serving on boards and working for others and just volunteering across the board. I never saw myself in the seat. I saw myself being a part of a solution, but again I have to say I am absolutely just ecstatic for having held it because I learned a lot in the process.

Mayor Lyles, somebody who I admired from a distance for a very long time, I love you. I adore you. A woman who has given her entire life to the City of Charlotte. Coming as a very young woman, going to college here and then working for the City of Charlotte and retiring from the City of Charlotte and then taking another career and then retiring again and then coming back. I honor the opportunities for leadership that you've offered to me. Thank you. Again, and very, very lastly, again this is a celebration you guy. I have shed tears because my race was very ugly, but it is an absolute celebration. Charlotte is my home. My children were born here. We will continue to do absolutely fantastic things in this City and I am excited about what will come to our City. I wish the 2026/2027 Council all of the blessings in the world, because I am absolutely invested in what happens in our great City. We are 14<sup>th</sup> now. We'll be 10<sup>th</sup> in five to 10 years. That's my estimate. We have nearly a million people coming, more than 157 coming to our region on a daily basis and growing. So, we have so much to be proud of. Thank you Charlotte, thank you East Charlotte, thank you to the support staff, our staff, my colleagues. Chief Jennings, going to miss you. You are amazing. Chief Patterson is the bee's knees. I'm really excited, we're in good hands. Thank you all. God bless you. Good night.

Mayor Lyles said now we have one more person to ask to come join me at the podium. Edwin Peacock, would you please?

**Councilmember Peacock** said I began my journey on May 20, 2025. The significance of May 20, 2025 was not beyond me. Our country celebrates its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but here in the great state of Mecklenburg, we celebrate our independence, an independence I did participate in and this democracy I got the opportunity to participate in. To that, I'm greatly honored. I want to first thank my City Council colleagues, Madam Mayor, Mr. Jones. I'd like to thank City staff as well. I'd like to thank the citizens, my friends and supporters and perhaps most importantly, thank my family and especially my wife. It has been an honor, and it has been a privilege. Thank you very much.

\*\*\*\*\*

## READING OF MUNICIPAL ELECTION RESULTS

**Stephanie Kelly, City Clerk** said results of the Municipal Election held November 4, 2025.

The City of Charlotte Mayor	Vi Lyles	<b>Elected:</b>	<b>92,537</b>
	Terrie D. Donovan		33,533
	Rob Yates		4,717

	Write-ins		50
City of Charlotte Council At-Large	Dimple Ajmera	<b>Elected:</b>	<b>96,599</b>
	Victoria Watlington	<b>Elected:</b>	<b>95,212</b>
	James Mitchell, Jr.	<b>Elected:</b>	<b>90,177</b>
	LaWana Slack-Mayfield	<b>Elected:</b>	<b>87,866</b>
	Edwin B. Peacock, III		46,190
	Misun Kim		36,564
	Write-ins		212
City of Charlotte Council District No. 1	Dante Anderson	<b>Elected:</b>	<b>17,607</b>
City of Charlotte Council District No. 2	Malcolm Graham	<b>Elected:</b>	<b>13,530</b>
	Write-ins		629
City of Charlotte Council District No. 3:	Joi Mayo	<b>Elected:</b>	<b>10,050</b>
	James H. Bowers		2,224
	Robin Emmons		1,387
City of Charlotte Council District No. 4	Renee Perkins Johnson	<b>Elected:</b>	<b>14,522</b>
City of Charlotte Council District No. 5:	Juan Diego Mazuera Arias	<b>Elected:</b>	<b>12,753</b>
City of Charlotte Council District No. 6:	Kimberly Owens	<b>Elected:</b>	<b>16,268</b>
	Krista Bokhari		12,510
City of Charlotte Council District No. 7:	Ed Driggs	<b>Elected:</b>	<b>13,863</b>

\*\*\*\*\*

**MAYORAL OATH OF OFFICE AND REMARKS**

**Mayor Lyles** said I want to thank you Madam Clerk. Now it is time for the official Oaths 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 thank you. Tonight, as I begin my fifth term as your Mayor, I am deeply grateful. I'm grateful for your trust, I'm grateful for your partnership, and I'm grateful for the honor of continuing to serve a City that I love with my whole heart. Over these years, I've seen so much of Charlotte, it's triumphs, it's challenges and it's a remarkable spirit. I've stood with families opening doors to their first homes, I've mourned when community tragedy has touched us. Through all of it, one truth has guided me. Charlotte keeps moving forward. That progress is what I want to talk about tonight. The future of our City depends on how we move. Mobility is more than trains, buses, or roads. Mobility is access, it's freedom, it's opportunity. It's how parents get to work and students reach their dreams. That is why the passing of the Transit Tax Referendum was such a proud moment for Charlotte. You made your voices heard. You chose to invest in a vision that connects all of us. This isn't just about infrastructure; it is about people. It is about every Charlottean having the chance to move forward, not just physically, but economically and socially. I often share that my granddaughters live here. I say that because it is the lens to look through when we see our work. Every decision I make, I am thinking about the City. What will it be? What will it inherit? Will we have housing that people can afford? Will we have streets to be safe to walk, to bike and to play? Will our girls, my grand girls grow up and be surrounded in a City with opportunity that values every child and every family? My promise is that we will continue to build that Charlotte. Healthy, sustainable, and strong, but we can't talk about mobility without talking about safety. We're already working alongside CMPD and our transit partners to make sure every person can move through our City with confidence and peace of mind. Confidence and peace of mind. Charlotte is a City on the move driven by

innovation, anchored by compassion, and strengthened by unity. Every new greenway, every expanded bus route, every safe crosswalk brings us closer to a city that moves with purpose and care. So, we begin this new term. I carry with me everything I've seen, our progress, our pain, and our potential and I carry hope. Hope for a Charlotte where every person has a path forward and hope for a City that reflects the best of who we are and what we can become. Let's keep moving safely, boldly, together. When Charlotte moves forward, every one of us moves forward. Thank you Queen City for your trust, your energy, and your faith in what we can build as one. Thank you very much.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **COUNCIL-ELECT OATH OF OFFICE AND REMARKS**

**Mayor Lyles** said now is the time everyone gets to enjoy having an open office to having this together. So, I'd like to invite Council elects Mayo, Mazuera Arias and Owens with their families to join us to be sworn in.

The Oath of Office was administered by Mayor Lyles to Councilmembers Dimple Ajmera, Danté Anderson, Juan Diego Mazuera Arias, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, Lawana Mayfield, Joi Mayo, James Mitchell, Kimberly Owens, and Victoria Watlington.

Mayor Lyles said thank you, we're sworn in. Thank you. Now if you can have your seat. So, now it's time for us to move into individual comments. Beginning with the newly elected Councilmember Mayo of District Three. I'd like to invite each Council member to deliver a few brief remarks.

**Councilmember Mayo** said good evening. Thank you so much District Three residents for voting for me to represent District Three. So appreciative for your support and your trust that I can handle this job. Very excited to represent you all. First, I have to thank my mom who came down. She has been my secret weapon in this endeavor. She met many of you all at the polls, she was often there, really just so grateful for her assistance and her support, also with fundraising. So, she really, really came through, and very appreciative. Also, my brother Jamelle who has been steady and steadfast in this journey as well. I'm very grateful to him.

I have several key leaders who I'm very appreciative of who have helped me in this journey. First, I'm going to start with Councilmember Malcolm Graham who for the last two years has been mentoring me and helping prepare me for this role. So, I want to thank you for that Malcolm. Former Councilmember Dr. Justin Harlow who was one of the first people to really stick their neck out for me and have a big name to support my run for District Three, thank you. Also, the first District Three representative, Ron Leeper has been such a great mentor to me in this. When we talk about community benefits, how do we make the airport work for all residents in Charlotte. I think it's so imperative that we continue to look to former leaders and the work that they've done. So, very appreciative to all of the mentors that I've had in this journey.

Next, I've had a great campaign team, many of who are right here. They have become family to me. I'm so appreciative of you all, your dedication. We were out there in the cold, in the rain and we got it done, and just so excited to continue this journey with you all as we are working to make this vision a reality. So, I'm excited to represent District Three, all the work that we're going to be doing together, really to put my platform into action. So, much of that is working with our community leaders to create safe and inclusive communities, having intentional investment to increase opportunities for everyone in District Three. Anyone who has heard me talk at any of the forums and things during this run, has heard me talk about walkable 10-minute neighborhoods. I think that is so intentional that residents are able to easily live, work and play within a 10 minute walk, bike, transit ride or drive. I think that's what creates a really vibrant city and I look forward to creating that with my colleagues. So, looking forward to working with the rest of Council, City staff, and just ready to get to work. So, thank you so much

residents of District Three for choosing Joi, which is my slogan and excited to work with you all. Thank you.

**Councilmember Mazuera Arias** said Madam Mayor, Council, the public, the City of Charlotte, good evening. Before anything else I want to thank God and begin with the people who know me very well, who shaped my life long before I imagined sitting here.

(Spanish/Español) Mamá, papá, Salomé, los amo con todo mi corazón. Gracias por cada sacrificio, cada miedo silencioso y cada paso que dieron para que yo pudiera estar aquí hoy. Todo lo que soy como servidor público nace de ustedes. (English) Mom, Dad, Salomé, I love you with all my heart. Thank you for every sacrifice, every silent fear, and every step you took so that I could be here today. Everything I am as a public servant comes from you.

A mi abuelita Carmen, my grandmother Carmen whose life embodied compassion and service. Thank you for being the quiet force that grounded me. I feel you with me tonight and I hope I'm making you proud.

(Spanish/Español) A mi abuelita Jenny, quien me está viendo desde Colombia, y a mis abuelos Sergio y Humberto, gracias por sus oraciones, su fe y por creer en mí desde la distancia. Este triunfo también es de ustedes. (English) A mi abuelita Jenny, who's battling cancer right now, who's watching me from Columbia and to my grandparents Sergio and Humberto, thank you for your prayers, your faith and for believing in me from the distance. This triumph is also yours.

To my partner Julian, thank you. You carried the highs and lows of this campaign with me, sometimes more than I did. Your steadiness and love grounded me through every moment. To my mother-in-law Arlene, to my sister-in-law Kaetlyn, to my baby niece Layla and to my father-in-law Ray, thank you for surrounding us with care, kindness and support. To my campaign family, Gerry, Ariana, Kate, John and Ten, you poured yourselves into this race because you believed East Charlotte deserved representation rooted in dignity, honesty and community. You built a campaign that reflected who we are as East Charlotteans, hardworking, hopeful and resilient. I also want to thank the leaders who stood with me from the very beginning. Representatives Jordan Lopez and Julia Greenfield, former Mayor Jennifer Roberts, Greg Ascitutto, Carolyn Millen, Gerald Patton, SY Mason Watson, Emma Allen, Astrid Chirinos, Manolo Betancur, Wendy Mateo Pascual, Rachel Guzman, Rebha Hamilton, Valerie Johnson and Annette Goodman, thank you for your guidance and your belief in me. To SEIU (Service Employees International Union) 32BJ, the airport workers, and Ray Beamon, you reminded me that this City deserves workers when they organize, because when you all organize, communities rise and win. This victory belongs to the people who keep Charlotte running.

I also want to recognize Councilmember Marjorie Molina for her service to this District. Public service is a thankless job, campaigning is hard.

So, thank you. This election was decided by 34 votes. Don't ever say your vote doesn't matter. Thirty-four reminders that this seat is not mine. It belongs to all of East Charlotte, those who supported me. Those who didn't. Those who didn't vote and those who wanted to vote but couldn't. I am here for the full humanity of this District. I grew up in East Charlotte, I'm a son of East Charlotte.

I grew up hearing the languages of the world on Central Avenue, eating in restaurants that hold entire nations in their kitchens, watching families build dreams from scratch. For years people have called this area "up and coming," as if our value is still on its way, but anyone who has lived here knows the truth. East Charlotte has been carrying this City for decades and it's time our policies and our budgets reflect that. Let me be clear, because I know there's a lot of rumors about who I am. I'm not anti-growth, I'm not anti-business, I'm not anti-development. Growth is healthy. Business is essential. Development is necessary, but none of it matters if people are not centered in the

process. I am unapologetically people first and that means every decision we make on this dais must begin with one question. How does this help the people who live here today? I learned this standard in neighborhood meetings across the District where residents spoke from lived experiences from hope and from the future they want for their children. Those conversations shaped my vision. A government that is transparent and accountable. An economy that strengthens the communities who built it and make East Charlotte a destination and a public safety system rooted in trust, provision, prevention and partnership. For me the work is simple. This leadership is from East Charlotte for East Charlotte. My vision is shaped by the people who raised me, by the people who trusted me and the people who deserve a City that finally sees their worth. To my community, mi comunidad, this responsibility is not lost on me. I am the first Latino, the first formally undocumented and the first Gen Z'er to sit on this Council. So, thank you for believing in me, for giving me the voice and the honor of representing you, and for reminding this City that East Charlotte's voice is powerful, necessary and here to stay. I am ready to serve. I'm ready to fight for a future worthy of our families, and I'm officially ready to begin. Thank you.

**Councilmember Owens** said good evening, Charlotte. Tonight, I have three goals. I have a limited amount of time. So, I've been low key with three. I want to express my deepest gratitude to all who made this moment possible. I then want to set some honest expectations for my service and then finally, I wish to commit to leaning in and invite all of you to do the same.

So, our scrappy little campaign made history on November 4, 2025, with a long shot victory in District Six. The tireless and talented Anna Carpenter, Randolph Middle School, Myers Park High School and Wingate University Alum. She managed a young team of college and high school students, Max, Charlie [INAUDIBLE] along with a former journalist Chris Miller and graphic designer Nikki Moore. We stood on the shoulders of those who came before like Stephanie Hand and Robert Hillman. We learned from former and current Charlotte leaders and from the experiences and wisdom of thoughtful primary candidates like Matt Britt, Will Holley, Namrata Yadav. To my fierce group of girlfriends who've carried me through the decades, I say thank you. To my family and my husband Martin and my three sons, Grayson, Hayden and Cooper, my mother, my sister and my grandmother, to all of you, I say thank you for your insights, your wisdom and your patience. Campaigns are hard on families, and you've always been there for me.

While the result of the election was affirming, the real history was made in the weeks and months before November 2025. Our team with hundreds of donors and volunteers knocked on over 15,000 doors all over District Six. We visited neighborhoods who had never seen a candidate before and were hard pressed to even say who their current representative was. We showed up everywhere, at every endorsement opportunity, at forums, and meetings. We met with the Black Political Caucus, the Service Employees International Union, the Sarah Stevenson Tuesday Morning Forum. We went to all these places because we cared about every voice and every lesson. We embraced the entirety of the 125,000 residents of District Six because District Six is not a monolith. It is not simply privileged zip codes with silver spoons in ever kitchen. District Six, you are the grandparents who are raising grandchildren. You are a person with hearing impairment and your spouse who comes out to sign for me so we can discuss your unique transit needs. You're a caregiver worried about how to safely house an elderly parent nearby. You're a recent college graduate returned to your childhood bedroom because everything just costs so much. You're a retiree who limits your world to the one mile radius of the Charlotte Skipper because life outside of SouthPark feels just too dangerous. You are all District Six and your shared stories gave this campaign its authentic voice and I thank all of you.

I want to manage expectations. I'm going to disappoint all of you at times. I've had three decades of legal experience, I've worked with dedicated nonprofits in Charlotte, but I've never done this job before. I'm certain to frustrate you with the decisions I make if I don't see the world exactly as you do, but I also hope to educate you about the City services, to guide you to useful resources, and to raise the bar for local leadership. To District Six

Republicans. You have not lost your voice. I offer you a seat at the table for real collaboration and just trust me when I say that I likely will disappoint Democrats, Republicans and Independents alike. Not because I don't believe in the promises and protections of a liberal democracy, but because municipal government doesn't address many of the things that feel so broken in our country right now. We do roads, transit, public safety, economic development, and housing and those things we do, I want to do efficiently without unnecessary bureaucracy. Simply put, as I said on the trail, I want to bore you. To bore you with acts of governmental competence. I want you to trust that your City government is saying what it's doing and doing what it's saying.

Finally, I have high expectations of myself but also of our business community and of all the you, the residents of Charlotte. I ask the business community to lean in to serving our people, all of our people. Like you did for transportation, I beg the business community to advocate for our public schools so that your employees can be confident in their children's education when they choose to relocate here. When the people of a city are a priority, communities thrive. So, let us value our workers, our teachers, our CMPD and our young people. Let us work together to bring more attainable housing, food security, and quality education to the 14<sup>th</sup> largest city in America. Let us listen to each other business leaders. If you share your pride with me about being the number one state for business, I will listen, but in return I ask that you hear my concern about being the 50<sup>th</sup> state for workers.

To our residents, I ask you to show up or at least dial in to our City Council meetings. Subscribe to your local newspaper. Local media holds local government accountable. Local media is who files FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) Requests. Get your news from multiple sources. Listen to public radio. Come out from behind the keyboards and engage with your community. Attend a forum. Join a civic club. Lean into your City and be a partner to this Council. Help us prepare Charlotte for the uncertainties ahead, economic, environmental, and social. Learn about our City. I suggest Tom Hatchett's books on Charlotte housing or Joh Cleghorn's book on Caldwell Presbyterian's journey to address chronic homelessness. Vote in every election, every year. County is on the even year; City's is on the odd. Lean into local politics. I personally commit to get out to vote even when I'm not on the ballot and I hope you'll join me. Run for office. Bring your energy to public service. Primary us. Help us know when to lead and when to leave. Share yourself with the City in an intentional way, and there is no limit to what we can do together. You elected me to represent you on Council, but you need to represent yourselves in how and where you show up in our community. Put simply, expect more, Charlotte.

**Councilmember Watlington** said good evening. As we heard earlier today, this election, our community really made its voice heard loud and clear. We heard through the results that were read by the City Clerk that we had record voter participation for the primary and that tells me one thing. It tells me that when the stakes are high, we rise together. I'm honored, humbled and fired up, I have to say, to continue serving you. Thank you to my family. Y'all stand up. To my mother and father, my cousin who is here, I come from a long line of public servants. My parents are both U.S. (United States) Army retired and continue to serve in the federal government. So, thank you for your service. Thank you to my team and to everyone who has stood with us, who knocked on doors, who shared our message and who believed in what we could build. This victory belongs to all of us, but let's be clear. Tonight is not the finish line. Tonight is fuel. In the next term we're going to push harder. We're going to think bigger, and we're going to deliver real results. We're going to strengthen our neighborhoods, we're going to open doors for our young people and we're going to make sure that every single voice, especially those that have not been at the table, is heard. We're not settling for small steps. We're aiming for bold progress. From the labor unions to our first responders, our safety and community advocates, you all showed up, you spoke up and you made your mandate clear. We've got to do more, and we owe you that we keep that same energy, that same urgency, and that same commitment to move our community forward. So, thank you for showing up and I will continue to do the same. Thank you so much. I look forward to continuing to serve.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said First, I am going to thank God for all things. I am going to thank my pastor, the Reverend Doctor Clifford Matthews at St. Luke Missionary Baptist Church at 1600 Norris Avenue. I am going to thank my family that is here. My amazing partner and spouse as we are 19 years together, nine years married. Her amazing mother, which many of you know, my mother unfortunately passed when I was 15, my father when I was 13. So, God gave me a bonus mom who is the most amazing gift that I could ever have. I want to thank my team. The fact that I had James Rice, III who had never been a part of politics, but has a degree in marketing and media which is not something I do. So, follow me on Facebook, but I'm not going to engage with you. I'm just going to go ahead and let y'all know that once I share the information, I'm not going back and forth with you. He helped me to get the message out because a lot of times I'm at community meetings. I'm at the events. The community did speak, but I also want us to acknowledge that when we had this referendum on the ballot, 84,939 people voted against, to 92,499. That was 52.13 percent for, 47.87 percent against. We still have work to do. I am thankful that those who went out and voted for me. Thank you, Clerk Kelly, for sharing 87,866 of you chose my name, and I appreciate that. I am going to continue fighting for us and fighting for all the voices, not just the yes voices because the answer cannot be yes, all the time. We need to question because Charlotte is a beautiful city that is growing quickly. I personally believe it is a privilege to do business here, not a given. I want to continue working alongside of my colleagues as we build up the Faith In Housing Initiative.

So, Mayor thank you for tapping me and allowing me to lead that initiative because that has given us an opportunity to have a completely different conversation around housing. Manager Jones, I want to thank you for listening to the ideas around housing, for us being able to work with our County Manager to flip this whole housing conversation on its head. Because if our workers cannot afford to live here, we are going to see a mass exodus of our workforce just as we're seeing a mass influx from other areas.

To my colleagues, there are going to be plenty of times where we are not going to agree. Yet, what I am hoping for as we move into 2026, that those disagreements happen behind these walls more than at this dais. I think we have an opportunity to work a little closer together. I don't think we have been able to necessarily build everything that those of us that were around years ago had because we were in the office four or five days a week, versus being able to see each other one Monday to have all of our meetings. We have an opportunity to not only pay attention to the voters, but also pay attention to those that didn't vote, because our City has over 811,350 eligible registered voters. So, imagine the fact that we had 21.97 percent voter participation this time, what would it look like even if we had 30 percent?

Councilmember Johnson you mention all the time, how do we outreach to community, how can we figure out a better way? Community, I'm going to ask you to help us. Follow us online, watch our meetings on Monday. One we're determining your everyday quality of life and two, you just never know how that meeting is going to go. What we're determining and what we're working towards is a Charlotte that is representative of the collective and we need you all to help us do that. Email us. Reach out to us. Invite us to your neighborhood. Invite us to your churches. Invite us to the parks when you know you and three other family members are going to be out together, but also hold us accountable and when we don't show up and we're a no call no show, let that be known as well. Keep in mind there's 800,000 plus of y'all and there's 11 of us, but I want to be as representative as I possibly can for each of you. The way that I can do that is to ask you to help me be better. I am going to get it wrong sometimes. I am going to stand 10 toes down when I believe I'm right, but I'm also going to stand 10 toes down and recognize that if I was wrong, I'm going to own that because I want us to be better, I want to be better. I am thankful that you've allowed me to come back. That you've allowed me to continue to serve and I do look forward to serving with these individuals around this dais and following the leadership of our Mayor, of our Manager so that we can continue to work towards a City that is reflective of this room's age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, identification. This is the Charlotte that I love, and this is the Charlotte that I will continue to fight for. Thank you.

**Councilmember Driggs** said good evening, everybody. My name is Ed Driggs. I am a Republican. I don't have as long a list, because I didn't have an opponent this year, of thank yous. I do want to acknowledge my donors. I got a lot of campaign contributions this year, even though I didn't have an opponent and I really appreciate the thought behind that gesture from those people. So, thank you to them. My treasurer Alex Rossitch. You have been keeping me on the right side of the law for years now and I appreciate that. My first supporter and the guy who put me up to all of this, Jim Rogers. Jim, thank you for all these years. I have a number of unpaid advisors that are always there for me. Larry Shaheen, Towers Mingledorff, Ken May, thank you, you guys. I appreciate being able to call you when I have a question. I do want to especially recognize the staff and we do this sometimes at these meetings because we should. I really want to emphasize this. Marcus, you are a great friend and good leader. I appreciate you and your people up there in the back row. These people are dedicated. They're committed. They take phone calls on Sunday afternoon. They send me text messages late in the evening, and they are wise. So, be grateful for them. We should all appreciate them.

Finally, of course, and I didn't even promise that I wouldn't point her out this time, my wife Caroline up there in the green sweater. Sweetheart, Caroline, walks every step of this journey with me up and down and it means a whole lot. Also, our two kids. They're in their 30s and the joy in their life adds to the joy in our life, particularly as of about five or six weeks ago when I became a grandfather for the first time. So, thanking my granddaughter Ellie who is one month old. She'll appreciate it later. I do want to say welcome to my new colleagues and know that I won't talk much about myself or what I'm going to do because you've been able to see what I do for 12 years and that's who I am. I can't tell you any different, that's who I am. I will continue to commit to the people of D7, my District, to serve all of them whether they voted or not, whether they voted for me not, whether they wrote in or not. I regard that as a responsibility in order, among other things, just to bring a perspective to these conversations on our Council. I don't approach this situation that I'm in with any air of confrontation or hostility. I seek collaboration, but I think there are things that I can point out to people based on a long history of being a traditional conservative. I think I deplore the current political landscape as much as everyone does, but that is my commitment. We have an exciting term ahead. We've got to get the Mobility Plan, and the Authority stood up and seen through. That's going to pay great dividends to the City. Over the coming year, you'll start to see sidewalk investment and other improvements, and then of course, over the span of five and 10 years, amazing changes in Charlotte. We also have to finish our planning process, adopt the remainder of our Community Area Plans and have in place everywhere in Charlotte a Plan that reflects the particular circumstances and needs of these geographies, these 14 locations. We will continue to confront the challenges our City faces, and most of all build on all the advantages that we have in our wonderful City which makes us the envy of so many other cities around the Country. Thank you.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said tonight is not just about taking an oath. Tonight is about renewing a promise and hope to the people of Charlotte. I did not get here alone, and I did not get here without struggle. There were moments when the doubts were louder than the applause. Times where I wondered if I could survive the political storms, the criticisms, the expectations. There were years when I questioned whether I could be a full-time professional, a mother, a wife and a public servant at the same time, or whether I would have to sacrifice one to hold on to the others. The personal sacrifices were real. The professional sacrifices were real. The struggle was tremendous, but every time I was on the brink of questioning whether to continue, I was never alone. To my late father who inspired me to serve others. He believed public service was not about titles or positions. It was about showing up for people when they needed you the most. He would tell me success means nothing if you only rise for yourself. I carry his words with me every time I walk into the Governmental Center. His memory reminds me that leadership is not measured by popularity, it is measured by purpose.

To my husband and my best friend, Dr. Vaibhav Bajaj. He's a man of few words. You are my rock. You did not sign up for late night Council meetings, back-to-back community events or the countless nights I walked through the door long before the kids

are asleep, yet you show up. You hold our household together with strength and patience. You do it without applause, without headlines and always with love. You are quite the backbone of this journey. Thank you, my love. To my mother who taught me resiliency. When life pushed, she pushed back. She taught me that adversity is not a stop sign, it is a challenge, and I bring that lesson with me to the public service every single day. To my children, thank you for your patience, your hugs and yes even your tantrums. You remind me that leadership is not about perfection, it's about compassion and it's about love, and you remind me why this work matters. To my campaign team here. Marjorie, Xavier, Giovanni, Uncle Dan, Denitra, Jayden. You walked every step of this journey with me. Thank you. To our supporters who are here with us. Michael, Anne, Dr. Chen, Cameron, Jane and so many more, thank you for believing in me.

To our City staff. Mr. Manager, Madam Attorney, I want to give a special shout out to Shawn Heath, Amanda Birch, Natasha Hursey, Isabella Moller and every member of Team Charlotte. I have seen your dedication firsthand. You keep the gears turning. You serve the public with humility. We cannot do our work without you. So, thank you.

Last, but certainly not least, to the 96,599 voters Citywide who entrusted me with your confidence, thank you. To those who did not vote for me and even those who did not vote at all, I will not dismiss you. I will not ignore you. I will work hard every day to earn your trust. You may not always agree with me, and I will not promise that you will, but I do promise this. I will never hide. I will be transparent. I'll tell you the truth even when it's uncomfortable. Tonight is not just a celebration, it's a commitment. A commitment to a Charlotte where every family feels safe regardless of their zip code or where they come from. A commitment to a Charlotte where our infrastructure must meet the pace of our growth, not trail behind it. A commitment to a government that is honest, accessible and transparent not just when things go well, but especially when they do not. Commitment to fight for a City that works for everyone, not just those who already have a seat at the table. I want to look at my daughters Charlotte and Arya in the eyes some day when they're old enough and say, "I did my part. I stood for a City that is safe, a City that is sustainable, a City that is resilient enough to weather storms, economic shifts and growing pains without losing our humanity." That is the work ahead and that is the promise I made tonight. So, thank you. I look forward to working with my colleagues. So, let's get to work. Thank you all.

**Councilmember Graham** said good evening, everyone. I would be remiss if I don't start by thanking the first person that voted for me some 37 years ago, my wife Kim. We celebrated our wedding anniversary last week, and she's been with me on every step of this journey from Charlotte to Raleigh to a pit stop in D.C. (District of Columbia) and back to Charlotte. So, I want to thank you. I also want to thank team Graham. We didn't have any opposition, but we still were engaged. Vanessa Matthews, my campaign manager, Erin Galloway is also here with me tonight and the rest of the team, Graham. I really want to thank you for your support and just standing with me, family and friends, I see so many other supporters in the room tonight. I really appreciate it. Mr. Bates from Johnson C. Smith University is here with us. He's a political science major. Each one must reach one and teach one. Your turn is coming right here. I look forward to seeing the future for you. I'd like to welcome Kimberly and JD to the dais, and Joi, dreams do come true.

I want to thank the citizens of Charlotte. I want to thank you for your confidence, your trust, your partnership and I'm humble and honored to once again raise my hand and take the oath of office on behalf of the people of this great City and especially the residents of District Two. Each time I sit here, I've done so with one guiding purpose, to serve Charlotte with integrity, compassion and vision. From my years on this Council to my decade in the North Carolina State Senate, and now I'm back on this Body, I've seen Charlotte grow, change, and rise into one of America's leading cities, and through it all, one thing has remained constant. My love for this City, my belief in its promise, and the ability for me to get the work done, but as proud as I am of how far we have come, I know that there's still work to be finished.

Our community really stands at a crossroad. The choices we make now will define the next generation of opportunities, affordability, and safety for anyone who calls our City home and that's why I believe more than ever, we need leadership for Charlotte. Leadership in public safety because every family and every neighborhood deserve to feel safe and protected. That means supporting our officers with the tools and training they need, while also building trust and accountability with the communities they serve. Safety and justice must go hand in hand. Leadership and affordability, because a City that's too expensive for working people to live is a City that's losing its soul. Teachers, first responders, service workers, folks who make Charlotte run should be able to live in the communities they serve. Affordability is just not a housing issue, it's a moral issue. Leadership and opportunity, because growth means nothing if it leaves people behind. We must expand pathways to good jobs, support small businesses and ensure economic mobility is not determined by your zip code. Leadership and community, because Charlotte's greatest strength is our people, our neighborhoods, our churches, our small businesses, our families. We must invest in every corner of our City and honor the diversity that defines who we are.

Leadership and transportation and mobility. The widening of I-77 South must not repeat the same mistake of the past. Highway projects in our City once divided Black neighborhoods, displaced families and broke apart vibrant communities. As we look ahead, we must ensure that any expansion projects protect the people and places that have long made this historic West End home. We need leadership within the Transit Authority making sure that everyone gets on the bus, the train at the same time.

This is a defining moment. We can manage our growth, or we can lead it. We can wait for a change, or we can drive it. We can talk about the future or we can shape it. I choose to shape it, and I know I'm not alone. Across this City from Beatties Ford Road to Ballantyne, from University City to South End, people love Charlotte and want to see it thrive. They're asking us to do more than debate, they're asking us lead. So, tonight as I take this oath of office one more time, I do it with gratitude for the past and a clear vision for the future. A future where every neighborhood feels included, a future where prosperity reaches every family. A future where leadership means listening, lifting, and leading with courage, that's the Charlotte I believe in. That's the Charlotte I love and that's the Charlotte we can build, together. Thank you for believing in me, thank you for believing in each other, and thank you for believing in Charlotte. Let's move our City forward with courage, compassion, and conviction. God bless you, God bless the City Council, and I look forward to getting to work. Thank you.

**Councilmember Anderson** said I will do like the rest of my colleagues and thank all of my loved ones that are right there in the middle. You guys can wave your hand. So, excited and it's a privilege to have you all support me in a variety of different ways. So, thank you for that. I also want to thank my spouse, my lovely wife who decided to say yes just a couple of months ago. She's truly a treasure. I thank you for the support and your leaning into what I care about. I want to thank the District One voters. It was incredible this time around. Nearly 18,000 District One voters went and cast a vote for me. It's a record for the City for District votes, and the last time I thought I was really humbled by it, but this time I was really blown away by the level of support, and I really want to thank my community leaders. I want to thank everyone that lives in District One that call me, email me, reach out to me. I really truly love representing my District and I'm so happy that they decided to put faith in me. Even with that, we have less than 200,000 voters Citywide participate in this election and there's well over 800,000 residents in the City of Charlotte. While I was blown away, I also had a level of concern about our lack of engagement regardless of party line or unaffiliated votes. There's so many people who are standing on the sidelines allowing things to happen in this City without exercising their right to vote. So, I hope as we move forward, we can tap into those residents and make sure that they are a part of this incredible growth and amazing City that we have. I was privileged enough to be born right here. So, I watched this City over the last several decades grow into the amazing City that it is. I also unfortunately have lost so many of my loved ones along the way.

I have my Bible here that my sister gave me, and she gave me this over 30 years ago. She was the one in our family to break the mold. She went to Livingstone College, and she purposely kept me and my siblings out of the system. She would come and get me, and I would go and stay with her in her dorm in Livingstone College on the weekends. She would drive home during the week to check on us because she didn't want us to go in the system. She did that and then she was the vice chair of her class, and she was a Delta and had a leadership role and she did a variety of other things. It was amazing what she did to move our family forward, and it's a privilege to sit here and represent that level of effort and that level of dedication. So, I'm really thinking about her tonight, and I want to say to each and every one of you, we just experienced something over the last couple of weeks. I was in my neighborhoods and I had elders who were concerned about how they were going to eat next week because their SNAP (Supplemental Nutritious Assistance Program) benefits were paused and we had to come together and figure out how to deliver groceries to them, because they're not able to get out to the grocery store and they had no money and no resources.

Then we had a surge in the City that laid out a blanket of trepidation across every side of the City, whether you live in East Charlotte or South Charlotte or North Charlotte in the Core. People were afraid to leave their homes. Over 30,000 children stayed away from school and what CMS (Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools) is saying is that many of them won't come back until potentially this month. There was nothing that we could really do about it and I had so many endless nights and I want to thank Jason in comms because he worked so very closely with me and his team Lindsey and others to ensure that our City wasn't painted a certain way in national media. It humbled me to be able to go out and represent our City and to let people know who we are and when our back is up against the wall, we come together, and we lock arms to ensure that every neighbor is ok. That every elder has something to eat and if we can get our kids to school, we're going to get our kids to school so they can continue to advance.

So, we have an amazing future ahead of us. You've heard about the Transportation Referendum; we bring so many jobs here. The State is number one in business; we're a top five City for business. Growth is amazing here, but growth is a privilege and as we continue to move forward, growing up the list of becoming a top 10 city, a world class city, we have to make sure that we bring everyone along with us and they have an opportunity to sit at the table. They have the opportunity to access jobs that pay a good livable wage. That there is an opportunity to live in a safe community without paying half of your paycheck in order to do so. We have to make sure that when our kids go to school, that when you all walk out the door tonight, that there is a surety that public safety is paramount in the Queen City. So, I thank you all for coming out and thank you for being engaged, but we have to continue to tap our neighbor and tap our neighbor and tap another neighbor to get them out to help do this work so the Queen City can continue to thrive. Thank you.

**Councilmember Mitchell** said the only thing I'm going to say first off, City Manager, get your budget ready. You know what this means. Let me thank the voters of the City of Charlotte for supporting me once again. Each year it gets more humbling to receive your support as I continue to provide public service for this community. Let me thank team Mitchell. Some of them are here today. My campaign manager Netta Ford, my treasurer/MVP (Most Valuable Player) Bob Shitawitz, my volunteer coordinator, Mr. DaMario Baker, my social media, Travis B. Jackson and my website, Ms. Q, and to all the volunteers of team Mitchell who attended the fundraiser and worked on the precincts to make sure we would be successful. Thank you to my church family, CM Jenkins, for your prayers. Thank you to the men of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity for your support and to that HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) in Durham, North Carolina Central University and last but not least, to that high school off Beatties Ford Road, Doug C!

Group said you know!

Thank you for my family and some of them are here today. I'm going to ask them raise their hand. My Aunt Ola Mitchell, will you please raise your hand auntie? Ms. LaFreida

Wallace, Aunt Trish, raise your hand. My sister, Ms. Kimberly Mitchell. I'm focused on probably the top five things I've always remained passionate to. Small business and minority participation. I want to bring solutions for a safer Charlotte. I want to make sure our workforce development is successful as we look to provide opportunities for ages 18 to 24, and continue our work on affordable housing. Last but not least, thank you to my queen. I appreciate your love, your support, and being by my side through my illness. Ms. Joan Elizabeth Higginbotham, I love you with all my heart and soul. Can you please stand and be recognized? To the City of Charlotte, the 14<sup>th</sup> largest city in America, but we have so much potential, so much promise. All in?

Ms. Watlington said all in.

Mr. Mitchell said you have to say it like you love Charlotte. All in?

Group said all in.

Mr. Mitchell said together.

Group said together.

Mr. Mitchell said all in!

Group said all in.

Mr. Mitchell said together.

Group said together.

Mr. Mitchell said thank you Charlotte.

**Councilmember Johnson** said first of all I want to give glory to God because when He is for us, who can be against us. My name is Reneé Johnson, Reneé Perkins Johnson and I am honored to serve District Four. I say that every week when I introduce myself because I truly am honored to be here. Tonight, I'm being sworn in for a fourth term as your District Four representative. I'm filled with deep gratitude and a renewed sense of purpose. To the residents of District Four, thank you for trusting me once again to serve, to listen, and to lead. District Four has become one of the most engaged, vocal, and community driven Districts in our City, from neighbors showing up to rezoning meetings demanding to be heard, for our wonderful District Four Coalition, your voices have shaped this District's direction. I'm sitting here tonight because you showed up, because you stayed engaged, and because you never stopped believing in what we could accomplish together. I also want to express my sincere appreciation to the organizations and community partners who publicly endorsed my reelection. Your support was not simply political, it was a statement about integrity, accountability and community-centered leadership. Thank you to the Black Political Caucus, to the Charlotte Observer, to the Charlotte Firefighter's Association, to the Charlotte Metrolina Labor Council, SEIU, the Red, White, and Blue North Carolina and Unite Here North Carolina. Your trust, your advocacy, and your commitment to working families and vulnerable communities mean more to me than words can express. I'm honored to have your confidence.

As we begin this new term, I recommit myself to the values that have guided my service, equity, transparency, compassion, and courage. We face big decisions in this City. Affordability, transportation, infrastructure, small business support, and community stability. I will continue to push for solutions that put people first, like you said, I'm looking forward to working beside you. Put people first, especially those with the least protection and the least power at the table. District Four represents what Charlotte can be. Diverse, dynamic, resilient, and full of possibility, but progress doesn't happen by accident. It happens when leadership listens, when residents are centered, and when decisions respect both our future and our history. That is the work I promise to continue this term.

I want to take a moment to thank two groups that carried this campaign to the finish line. First of all, our volunteers who were led by an amazing campaign manager and strategist, Monifa Drayton. Thank you Monifa, I know you're watching. I hate to name names, but I'm going to name the names who are here. I do want to thank my volunteers, but I want to thank the folks who are here in the audience today. Tony Foreman, thank you for your support since the very beginning. Ms. Ida Howell and Dr. Betty Howell-Gray, thank you for your continued support, your fundraising, your donations. You've just been a rock. Thank you for speaking at that Black Political Caucus, leading that. So, thank you. Thank you to Navita Bell. She is my angel since before I ran for office. Thank you for being a friend. Thank you for your prayers and your support. [INAUDIBLE] Wright, I see you. Thank you for being here. Thank you for being an up-and-coming leader in District Four. Congratulations to your recent appointment to the Charlotte Business Inclusion Committee. Willie Voltz, thank you so much with Unite Here. He has stood in 100 degrees heat several times. So, I appreciate your being here. Mr. Gary Alexander, is that you back there? He was here earlier, I saw him. He put out hundreds of signs. Ms. Toni Mingo, Ms. Antoinette Mingo, thank you for your continued support. Thank you for your leadership over the District Four Coalition. Also Ray, I see you as well, thank you. If I missed any volunteers who are here, stand up now so I can just give you a shout out. Thank you all, thank you to the volunteers who are watching at home also.

Most importantly to my family. To my in-laws who drove in from Ohio, Ms. Lois Johnson and Mr. Larry Lynch, thank you for coming from Ohio. Thank you to my children. My beautiful daughter India, my son BJ, and my grandson, Mr. Bishop Johnson. You want to stand up? You're looking awful sharp today. Thank you for being here. Finally, thank you to my husband, my wonderful husband of 32 years. Thank you, Bernard Johnson. If you came to early voting, he was the man in the blue hat that I'm sure you got a ballot from. Thank you, you've been here since the beginning, obviously, the first time I went back to school to start on my associate degree. You've been here for subsequent degrees and now here at the Council and every day since. You truly, truly, truly, are my strength and the wind beneath my wings. So, thank you. Thank you for your love, your patience and your support on the long days and nights. Thank you for giving me the space to serve. You've kept me grounded, reminded me of my purpose and carried me through the hardest moments. I love you and I'm profoundly grateful for your strength and your sacrifice.

To my colleagues on Council and to our City staff. I look forward to our work ahead, sometimes in agreement, sometimes in debate, but always with shared commitment to serving this City with integrity and compassion. To the people of District Four, this seat belongs to you. Your voices, your experiences, your concerns will continue to guide my decisions. I serve with fairness, transparency, and integrity. Thank you for the privilege of representing you. I am ready for this next chapter, and I'm ready to continue the work together. Thank you.

\* \* \* \* \*

### ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO TEM

**Mayor Lyles** said so, I believe that everyone has had an opportunity to speak and so we have one piece of business to do. I think it is time for Council to elect a Mayor Pro Tem.

Motion was made by Councilmember Arias, and seconded by Councilmember Ajmera, to nominate Dimple Ajmera for Mayor Pro Tem.
--

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

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Arias, Johnson, and Mayo

NAYS: Councilmembers Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Mayfield, Mitchell, Owen, and Watlington

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, and seconded by Councilmember Watlington, to nominate James Mitchell for Mayor Pro Tem.

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

YEAS: Councilmembers Anderson, Arias, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Mitchell, Owen, and Watlington

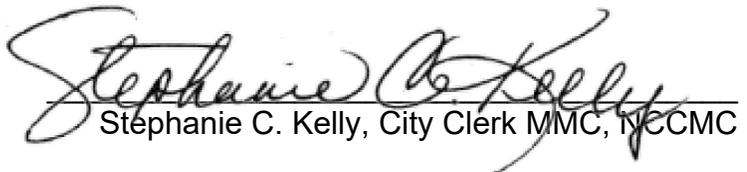
NAYS: Councilmembers Ajmera and Mayo

Mayor Lyles said congratulations to Mayor Pro Tem. Alright, so I believe that once again we have run through the program of having us participate and get the ability of all of the changes that we want to have and make possible. I do believe that we have to ask Council to please stay seated for photographs before we move into the next space. For all of our guests, thank you for taking the time for being here, for all that you've done and said and made it possible for the people that work in this City. We really appreciate that. I do believe that there is a small reception outside.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

  
Stephanie C. Kelly, City Clerk MMC, NCCMC

Length of Meeting: 2 Hours, 2 Minutes  
Minutes completed: January 5, 2026