

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for a Special Meeting for the Swearing in Ceremony of Mayor Elect Dan Clodfelter as Mayor of Charlotte, at 12:00 noon on Wednesday April 9, 2014, in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center, with Mayor Pro Tem Michael Barnes presiding. Councilmembers present were Al Austin, John Autry, Ed Driggs, Claire Fallon, David Howard, Patsy Kinsey, Vi Lyles, LaWana Mayfield, Greg Phipps and Kenny Smith.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Pro Tem Michael Barnes called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the Swearing in Ceremony for Mayor Elect, Dan Clodfelter.

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### **INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Reverend John Cleghorn, Caldwell Presbyterian Church gave the Invocation and Mayor Pro Tem Barnes leads the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

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### **REMARKS BY MAYOR PRO TEM BARNES**

Mayor Pro Tem Barnes said the last two weeks have no doubt been very challenging for the City of Charlotte, for the people of Charlotte, for my colleagues on Council and for our staff. I view today as an opportunity for this City to begin moving forward to renew itself in many respects. As I told my colleagues a day or so ago we've been through some turbulent air over the last few days, but I believe that smooth air is ahead. We are all committed to working hard to represent the people of this City and to do what is best for Charlotte and to remain committed to doing what is best for Charlotte and I am very pleased and honored that the Council chose to move forward in selecting a new Mayor on Monday and I welcome Dan Clodfelter and his family to this wonderful experience that he is about to undertake. The one thing that I have told people since all of this started is that Charlotte is a City that works together; that it has elected officials who work together; that we work as hard as we can to arrive at conclusions that are in the best interest of Charlotte as we carry on our day to day business for this City. I want to thank the City Manager and his staff for all of their work over the last two weeks in making sure that all the trains kept rolling, the police kept coming, the water kept pouring, the fire trucks kept rolling and we appreciate that very much. I also again want to thank my Council colleagues for their class and their patience and their commitment to Charlotte as demonstrated over the last two weeks, so thank you to you guys, and thank you to the City Manager. I want to welcome down Mr. Clodfelter and his family to the podium to begin the Oath of Office.

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### **OATH OF OFFICE**

Mr. Clodfelter and his family came to the podium and Senator Fletcher L. Hartsell, Jr. administered the Oath of Office.

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### **REMARKS BY MAYOR DANIEL CLODFELTER**

Mayor Clodfelter said I think I ought not look in this direction as I'm not going to be able to get through it if I do, at least if I keep my glasses off and I'm not able to see all the faces maybe I'll get through it okay, but then I can't see what is on the paper. You take your choice about which of those you prefer. I've seen already this morning folks that I haven't seen in so long that just make my heart sing. I can't call them all out here and I hope you know that but each and every one of you here is in your way very special to me and to the City and you've had a part in making me what I am so if this doesn't work out this is going to be on your head you know that. I have to say most of all to my two daughters who are here, just a simple, you know how magic  
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you both are to me and to my wife I have to say you know what a rock you are for me. If you will allow me to single them out and to let the rest of you slink away in amenity, if that is okay, I'd like to do the same right now by the way. We will get through this I think okay and I do have a few things to say.

I want to say to the Council thank you, I think; I've heard from several of you that you are relieved that you have gotten at least to this step. I wish I shared your feeling; I'm experiencing an awful lot of emotions today but I'm having a lot of difficulty finding relief in the list of those. I've gotten here by a very unusual path and under unprecedented circumstances and I wish for our City, and not just for me, that we never have a repeat of the circumstances that have brought me to this podium. I haven't had the typical time period between a successful election and today's ceremony to collect my thoughts and to put them into words that are worthy of this Chamber and of you so if I'm a bit ragged this morning, I want you to know that that comes from the fact that because of the pace of events and the time that I've had, what I will say to you this morning necessarily comes more from the heart than from the head.

To the Council again I want to say whether or not you have chosen wisely on this, you and the community at large now will be the judge as we go forward. All I can do is pledge to you and to our beloved community that I will do all that I am able to vindicate your choice and to repay the confidence that you have placed in me. However that may be over the course of your deliberations in the last difficult two weeks, you have discharged an unexpected task then that itself and the manner of your doing so has done much to restore the confidence in our City and has demonstrated your strength as a Council and your ability to lead in a time of uncertainty and a time of doubt. I have to add that the exemplary manner in which the Manager you selected just a year ago and the entire City staff have responded and have handled the business of this City mirrors your own strength and integrity from what I learned many years ago on my years as Council of the City staff, I expected no less of them and as a citizen of Charlotte I have never been disappointed in them.

People are asking me what will you do to restore our shaken confidence and I have to say to you partly my anxiety today is because I have no magic answer to that question. So far as I have been able to determine there is no app that you can download, trust in confidence to your Smart Phone and there is no streaming media that will deliver those things to your big screen or to your tablet. I haven't found them; I have been looking very diligently. They are instead the kind of old fashion values that are far older than those technologies and they will long, long outlast those technologies I very much suspect. I thought about what do I say on that question and all I can do is share with you how I have personally approached the task of trying to recover for myself my own belief, my own confidence that I know is deserved. On March 26<sup>th</sup> for me, as it did for you, the world seemed to have been turned completely upside down; something had just happened to Charlotte, but I didn't understand how that kind of thing could be. Something to think about; it's something that happened to Charlotte. I had no experience of that. This is the City that makes things happen; things do not happen to us; how could that be?

So the days that followed March 26<sup>th</sup> like all of you, I have been struggling to find the meaning of that day. I've already said that I believe our feelings of shock and our feelings of hurt are themselves good things. They are an important part of the recovery; they are a testament to the depth of the integrity of this community and its City government and to the strength of its traditions. Were we to have been any less shaken by this, any less saddened by this if we accepted this as the way things have been, the way things are, the way of all worlds, only then would we be justified in worrying about the health of our body politic. You know that a diseased individual succumbs to infection but a healthy host rebels and repels it. In that first thought I found for myself the beginnings of comfort and restoration. I called then upon my memories and the history and the traditions of this City. I don't know about you, but I always find reassurance when I am confused and in doubt and I question the knowledge that I have, I know then that I am not first to be in such a place and that many others have found their way through more difficult circumstances before and they have not only come through it, but they have emerged not only in tact, but with renewed strength and determination in that second thought all of a sudden the blessings of this City's history and its traditions came rushing over me and overwhelmed me. I thought of a long span of my time and my life in this community. I am not a native Charlottean; that used to be an unusual thing but it is not today, but my children are. I thought about the

whole history of my time here and their lives here and I knew then that no one, no one day, not March 26<sup>th</sup> or any other day could ever change the power of that history or diminish its force as we go forward. Then I knew that March 26<sup>th</sup> is already in the past and it is only the very tiniest part of the past. It will diminish as each day goes by and the more powerful and more deeply rooted, more enduring traditions of Charlotte reassert themselves. Those are our future, not March 26<sup>th</sup>.

There are many of you today in the audience who embody, in your persons; all of you in some way or other do what I mean. They are here and they have been at this podium and around this dais and they are the custodians of, the keepers of and the nurturers of the traditions I speak about. Again I do not mean to diminish anyone by not naming them here in person, but for myself I must mention a few just to remind you and have you look around at all of the others who are also here. I call upon former Mayor Gant; I call upon former City Manager, Wendell White who is here today with us, Wendell thank you. If I could have done so I would have done so and so I will do so anyway; I call upon Liz Hair who was with us so long and so recently. I think about them and about all the others I have not named and I am comforted and I am restored. They were my models; they were my exemplars; they are the paragons of what leadership and service could mean, does mean and offers. They taught me about the differences between the roles of the Manager, the Mayor, the City Council and the County Commission and the various sectors of our community. I looked at this Council then and I looked at this Manager and I looked at them all and I said to myself, these are the same people as my teachers; these are the same people as my exemplars; they are still here. Different persons in different seats but they are the keepers and the carriers of that same tradition. As my comfort and my balance were restored I also then realized two things that I need to share with you; two things that I must do to help answer the question what can you do to help restore trust and confidence. I must tell you these are things I am committed to do, but I ask that each and every one of you also commit to do them. We are defined by the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves and the stories we tell to each other about our shared experiences and we are in peril if we take it for granted that those stories survive and that their power continues without the continual retelling of them. Since I last sat on this dais more than 20 years ago our City has more than doubled in population. It has welcomed to the community many who have no direct personal experience of the crucible in which a Stan Brookshire or a Julius Chamber or a James McMillan emerged to lead our community. So it is more imperative now than ever before that we continue to tell the Charlotte story; that we repeat it constantly to ourselves; that we teach it to our children and grandchildren; that we tell it to all of our new neighbors and our co-workers and in doing so I believe we will truly inoculate against the temptations of power and corruption. We can insure by telling those stories that the value of public and community service will continue to define and to distinguish Charlotte as it always has. The second thing I will add is a warning and a call for vigilance, we must all be on guard against efforts by any who would seek profit in turning what has happened to us from a tragic story of the failings of one individual into some broader narrative that tries to drive wedges of suspicion and doubt between us. The City cannot tolerate such a thing; we will not tolerate it; it is not the Charlotte way.

Many are also asking me a second question, what is my plan or program. I do not and could not claim the mandate that comes from an election, and I have not been carrying around in my back pocket a 10-point program for Charlotte just on the chance of having to show up here today and tell you about it. I haven't been doing that and I hope you don't think so. This Council and this Manager together have labored diligently and with care to articulate a vision for our City and to elaborate on strategies for its accomplishment, and I have great confidence in their direction and their vision. As Mayor I do not intend to call the tune for them; I will work instead to help them keep the tempo and stay on the page. That will be my job. Having said that, there are two final things I want to add; many of the members of Council with whom I have already spoken and I suspect all that with whom I haven't yet spoken share this view. I believe as they do that a comprehensive and independent review of the City's policies dealing with matters of ethics and improper influence is imperative. I agree with them and I expect that you will see them take early action on that subject. They will do so not because anything is now missing from those policies that might have prevented what came to light on March 26<sup>th</sup>. They will do so instead because in the mindfulness of this moment we are uniquely aware and prepared to take a look at those things we may take for granted on a daily basis or may even be unaware of and take steps

to insure that those unimportant lapses and departures will never take root and grow into anything dangerous.

The second thing I will add comes to you from the place where I've spent part of the last 15 years of my life to come back home. I have to tell you I am sometimes amused by how we here perceive what the rest of North Carolina thinks of us. I will tell you now from my time there, the days when envy or jealousy may have predominated in their feelings, if they ever in fact did so, are truly long gone. I am not talking about the casual gest; I'm talking about the deep feeling of importance of Charlotte and of hope and expectation for this community. There has never been a time when our State has looked to Charlotte for leadership as it does at this time. I'm not talking about the leadership of specific individuals who may come from Charlotte; I'm talking about the leadership that is provided by you; by the entire community that we call Charlotte. They look to us now first to study the ground and identify the paths by which the tools of the new economy can lead to good jobs for a community's citizens. As our State becomes ever more diverse in the origins of its people and their backgrounds, their cultures and their belief, the State now looks to us in Charlotte for answers on how to nit out of such diversity a sense of one community and one purpose, and as always because our community is blessed with great resources they expect us in Charlotte to be fearless in showing how to tackle the perpetual scourges of mankind, poverty and hopelessness, shameful neglect of children and many other evils. After all think about it, for all else that we may be and hear in Charlotte, we always will be and I'm proud that we will always be first and foremost Charlotte comma, North Carolina period. I tell you that the State looks to us now with hope and expectation and we cannot disappoint them. In this new job I pledge to do my part as I tried to do in my former job in Raleigh.

Now back to how am I going to answer the real question; I've answered your questions, but I still have mine. How am I going to get to that feeling of relief I talked about at the beginning. Well, I thought about that one too and I've always found one sure thing that works for me and I recommend it to you too. I've already taken enough of my short time in this office speaking to you at the podium and so I know what works for me; I'll be relieved when we Just Get on With the Work. I thank you from the bottom of my heart; God bless you all and God bless Charlotte.

Mayor Clodfelter said I want to ask Reverend Cleghorn to come back to the podium because I'm going to ask him if he will dismiss us with Franciscan Benediction.

Reverend Cleghorn said Mr. Mayor if I might take a point of personal privilege; thank you for starting a new chapter in the story of our City on a note of such hope. It was our Mayor's choice to conclude today's service with what is known as the four-fold Franciscan Blessing and it is offered in the sense of a benediction ascending, not just for our Mayor and our Council, but for all of us.

Reverend Cleghorn administered the Franciscan Benediction

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**ADJOURN**

Mayor Clodfelter adjourned the meeting at 12:31 p.m.



Stephanie C. Kelly, City Clerk

Length of Meeting: 31 Minutes  
Minutes Completed: April 10, 2014.