

## Closed Caption Log, Council Swearing-In Ceremony, 06/25/12

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good evening and welcome to city hall.

Will everyone please rise and remain standing for the posting of the colors, the pledge, the national anthem and the invocation.

We're going to be a while.

Thank you very much.

Post the colors.

[ ♪♪ Music playing ♪♪ ] [ ♪♪ music playing ♪♪ ] please join me in the pledge of allegiance.

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the united states of america, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under god, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

I'd like to introduce suzanne abbott to sing our national anthem.

Suzanne?

[ ♪♪ Singing ♪♪ ] [drums] please remain standing for the invocation by senior chaplain rick randall of the austin police department.

>> We join together in prayer.

Our god and father, we thank you for this day and for your many blessings.

We are grateful to you for the great grace you have poured out upon our city, and grateful that you have brought to this city a multitude of peoples from many ethnic, religious and language backgrounds, that you have fashioned together as one community.

We thank you for the moral and spiritual foundations of our city, which those who have gone before us so diligently established.

We even thank you for the challenges we face as a city, for each one of them represents a fresh opportunity to discover your wisdom, and more of the unique gifts you have bestowed upon austin, texas.

We commit to you, lord, on this the 25th of june, 2012, our mayor, lee leffingwell, and our council members mike martinez, bill spelman and sheryl cole.

We also pray for all our elected and appointed officials that you would give them all a desire to seek your will and to do it.

Bless them with a vision of what you desire austin to become.

Give them the wisdom to accomplish it and the strength to see it through.

We ask a special blessing upon their families.

We ask that you would support them and hold them in the palm of your hand while their loved ones are absent from them.

Now, lord, we dedicate this inaugural ceremony and celebration to you.

May our hearts be filled with your joy and our spirits alert to the awesomeness of your presence.

We ask these things in your holy name, amen.

>> Mayor leffingwell: amen.

Thank you.

Please be seated.

Thank you, chaplain.

I would now like to introduce the honorable tim sulak of the 353rd district court who will administer the oath of office and ask our council members elect to please join me in front of the dais up here.

>> Welcome.

I am tim sulak, judge of the 353rd district court here.

It's my distinct honor and privilege to be able to officiate over this encore performance for these dedicated public servants here.

I especially honorable to me having lived in austin for all of my adult life, which is over 40 years.

Some of you may be looking at me and saying, his adult life is a lot more than 40 years, but it's just a little bit more than that.

I assume that your attendance here is like mine, to congratulate and to show your support for these dedicated public servants and not just for the complimentary air conditioning and refreshments, but I'd understand on a day like today if that's part of what you're doing here.

In preparation it occurred to me that i, perhaps like some of you, often overlook that austin is the 16th largest city in the nation, that it has over 300 square miles of territory and that it has over 800,000 residents with a budget of 8 billion, and that is the charge that these officials have to carry out as well as their colleagues here with them.

In addition to that, austin has a very diverse population, which means the diversity of -- a diversity of opinions on virtually every issue that might come before them.

Austin has the spectrum of secular and religious with every practitioner of every denomination, wealthy and poor, robust and frail, young and old, and each of them has their own expectations and desires and demands.

But they all have one unifying purpose, and that is to make austin, texas the best place for me to live today and tomorrow.

So it requires tremendous vision, dedication, commitment, patience, wisdom and understanding to deal with all of those constituents and their concerns about the things that make austin what it is, water, electricity, transportation, police, fire, ems, libraries, parks and more.

It is truly a self-sacrifice that these people put into this to maintain a transparent and inclusive government.

They are, if not the most, among the most knowledgeable of every aspect of this vibrant, growing, evolving people and their perspectives and their problems and the opportunities.

So those that are both existing currently and those that are expected in the future.

It makes me rest easy at night knowing that they are worrying about and working on all of those things so that the rest of us can focus on things that seem to be more personal and more pending in our world.

So I have the distinct privilege of making them swear that they will to the best of their ability perform all of these functions and more, and what makes it especially sweet is that if they should misstep in their performance, I get to line up with all of the others who are not bashful to voice the disagreement and their discontent, but i get the added privilege of being able to say, you swore to me that you were going to do the right thing.

[Laughter] so with that I would ask you all to raise your right hand and repeat after me.

I, state your name, do solemnly swear or affirm.

>> Do solemnly swear or affirm.

>> That I feel faithfully execute the duties.

>> That I will faithfully execute the duties.

>> Of the office of austin city council place.

>> Of the office of austin city council place.

>> Of the state of texas.

>> Of the state of texas.

>> And will to the best of my ability.

>> And will to the best of my ability.

>> Preserve, protect and defend the constitution and laws of the united states.

>> Preserve, protect and defend the constitution and the laws of the united states.

>> And of this state.

>> And of this state.

>> So help me god.

>> So help me god.

>> Congratulations to you.

[Applause] thank you, judge.

And one minor thing.

We're now the 14th largest city in the united states.

[Laughter] retire the colors.

Council member, please join me on the dais so we can convene a short meeting.

again, I'm austin mayor, lee leffingwell, and a quorum is present, so I want to call this special called meeting of the austin city council to order on monday, june 25.

The time is 6:15.

We're meeting in the council chambers, austin city hall.

Council member bill spelman is not here tonight.

However, he is still with us.

He had another function he had to attend tonight and he will be sworn in separately at a later date.

So the purpose of tonight's meeting is to elect a mayor pro tem.

So I will -- by the way, the mayor pro tem presides over city council meetings and ceremonial functions in the mayor's absence.

So I'll entertain a motion for -- to nominate a mayor pro tem.

Council member tovo.

>> Tovo: mayor, thank you.

During the this last year our city has faced many challenges, and mayor pro tem sheryl cole has done a terrific job in her role.

She has executed her role with humor and grace and strong leadership.

She aims to build consensus.

She's dedicated, hardworking and always strives to do what is in the best interest of our city and to create a just and fair process, and so, mayor, it has been a delight to serve alongside sheryl cole and it's my privilege to nominate her now as our mayor pro tem.

motion to nominate council member sheryl cole to be mayor pro tem.

Is there a second to that motion?

Council member morrison seconds.

Is there any discussion?

All in favor say aye.

>> Aye.

>> Mayor leffingwell: aye.

There are no nos.

That passes on veet of 6-0 with council member -- vote of 6-0 with council member spelman off the dais.

Congratulations, council member cole.

[Applause] and now mayor pro tem, i will turn the dais over to you and I'm going to step up podium and deliver some remarks and when I get back you'll have the opportunity to do the same thing.

I am very honored and humbled to be here today to be sworn in for the fourth time, for my fourth term of service at city hall, twice as a city council member and now too as mayor.

And to my family, my friends, my supporters, my colleagues and coworkers here at city hall, and most of all to the citizens of austin, I want to say a heartfelt thank you.

It has been and it remains today my greatest privilege to serve as mayor of my home town, austin, texas.

It has also been the greatest challenge of my life.

You know, I flew commercial jets for over 30 years, but I didn't really have a full appreciation for turbulence, the word turbulence, until i came to austin city hall.

[Laughter] but that's one of the reasons we love austin so much, and it's called, actually, terminal democracy here.

I want to take a minute to acknowledge some people who have played a critical role during my seven years of service in austin and through four successful campaigns.

First and foremost I want to thank my wife julie.

This is a job that simply cannot be done without the strong and full support of your spouse.

So julie, thanks for what you've done and continue to do to make my life happy and productive.

[Applause] I also want to thank some members of my family who are here tonight, my son frank, my daughter-in-law bethany, and my grandson blake, and my granddaughter claire.

Thank you for coming here.

You've been a great source of support for me.

Thank you for being here again tonight.

[Applause] as some of us here have experienced one of the toughest parts of public service is the campaigning.

On some days campaigns can be rewarding and a lot of fun, but on most days they're cruel and unusual experiences that I wouldn't wish on anyone, including my opponents in those campaigns.

But like a lot of things in life, campaigns can be made a lot less unpleasant with a little help from professionals, and I've been lucky to have some of the best.

So I'm going to acknowledge mark nathan and david butts and mark littlefield and jdgenz with providing me with strong leadership and mentorship over the course of many years and multiple campaigns.

My sincere thanks go to each one of you.

Thank you again.

[Applause] and our campaign this year also had the help of two young people, new faces, who I know have a great career ahead of them whatever they choose to do.

Joe desotel and lilly houseman.

Joe and lilly, thank you very much.

Thanks for your help.

And finally I want to thank all the folks who have volunteered and worked as canvassers on my campaigns over the years.

There are too many to mention by names, but I know who you are.

You know who you are.

I couldn't have accomplished any of this without you so thank you from the bottom of my heart.

[Applause] inside city hall I've been very fortunate to be served by an excellent staff over the years, people who have devoted themselves to serving our community.

So I want to recognize my current staff, andy mormon, nancy williams, everheart, slier magi did not and past staff curts, larry curtis, janet jackson, and mark nathan.

Schooler.

Please join me in giving them people a big round of applause for what they do.

Certainly not -- not last but -- certainly last but not least, I want to thank my colleagues and coworkers here at city hall.

This is a uniquely strong city council with a diversity of skills and perspective, especially perspective.

Mike martinez, sheryl cole, chris riley, laura morrison, bill spelman and kathie tovo, thank you very much for serving with me on the dais.

[Applause] and finally my sincere thanks to our city management team, city manager mark ott, deputy MANAGER mike McDonald, assistant city managers robert good and sue -- and bert lumbreras and anthony snipe and each of our excellent department directors.

Thank you all very much for your service to our city.

Thanks again.

, You know, I've talked a lot over the past six months about my goals for a second term as mayor, so I'm going to do you the service of not repeating all of those here tonight.

But I do want to mention just a few issues that maish't merit some attention on this special occasion.

We've talked a lot about affordability and I think all of us agree that working to keep austin affordable has to be a top priority at city hall.

At the same time we have to continue to invest wisely and strategically in protecting our special quality of life.

Austin is a great american city, one of the most desirable and envied cities in america, anywhere in this country, but it didn't happen by accident, and it won't continue by chance.

We have to keep working all the time at making austin even better.

As bob dylan once said in a song, he who is not busy being born is busy dying, and I think the same thing is true of cities.

I've said before and I'll say again here today that a great quality of life and afford -- an affordable quality of life too begins with a good job.

So a key goal for me in a second term will be to continue to invest in bringing good new employers and good new jobs to austin.

A second goal will be to continue to support new investments in the infrastructure that a growing city like ours needs to thrive.

This november we'll all have the chance to do just that through a package of proposed bond investments in things like transportation, affordable housing and open space.



We need to make those investments in our future, but once again, we also need to stay focused on affordability.

So as I have already, I want to once again call on my council colleagues here today approve a package of bond investments for the November ballot that does not require a tax increase.

We can do a lot without imposing a new tax burden on Austinites, and I hope that's how the council majority will choose to proceed.

I also want to mention some much-needed reforms at city hall.

Nearly 18 months ago I called for a series of voter-approved amendments to our city charter to change the way we elect representatives in Austin.

Now, in just a few days, in fact, we'll consider various plans for implementing district-based representation on the council.

It's something I think we badly need.

You probably heard it said before that we shouldn't let the perfect be the enemy of the good, but in this case I think we have to be very careful that we don't trade bad for worse.

I've said and continue to believe that a mixed system of representation, one that incorporates a mix of representatives from districts and citywide representatives is the best choice for Austin.

I believe that a mixed system would allow for a fair balance of interest to be heard at council, elevating neighborhood-level concerns without abandoning city-wide perspectives.

For this same reason I do not believe that transitioning to a council made up exclusively of district representatives would be good for Austin.

In fact, I think it would be worse than the exclusively at-large system we have today.

But ultimately it will be up to the citizens of Austin to decide what change, if any, they want, and that's exactly as it should be.

And I trust the voters to choose wisely in the end.

Finally, I want to mention a special initiative that we're now undertaking in the mayor's office.

It's one that I think will prove to be very important to our city's future.

Most people think of Austin as a young town, but the truth is we have a large and fast-growing population of seniors.

In fact, it's one of the largest and fastest growing anywhere in the country.

So two months ago i announced a plan to form the mayor's task force on aging.

It's a collaborative effort to create a plan for ensuring that seniors can live happy, healthy, independent lives here in austin.

So I'm very pleased to announce today that we're joined by bobby barker of david's foundation and ken gladish of the seton foundation who have agreed to serve as co-chairs of this effort.

Thank you very much.

[Applause] bobby and ken, we appreciate it.

I am also pleased to david's and seton have agreed to jointly fund this entire planning process so there will be no cost to the city of austin.

Thank you again.

[Applause] so together with bobby and ken our office will now begin convening a full task force and launch a year-long effort to engage the whole city in planning for the safety and security of our seniors.

My hope and my expectation is that this process will prove to be a model on how we can better collaborate as a community to tackle some of our biggest challenges.

So with that let me wrap up by saying again how truly honored and privileged I am to serve as your mayor.

I've said all along that my commitment and the commitment of my team in the mayor's office is to leave austin better than we found it.

With your help I am more confident today than I have ever been that we will achieve that goal.

We can, we will and we must.

Thank you very much.

I see she's already on her way.

I was just going to say you have used your three minutes.

[Laughter] first and foremost, I must thank the guy on thursday nights who still has the tv on and is looking at the dais and waiting for me to walk through the door.

My husband kevin cole.

[Applause] in the two terms that I've already served he has done more than his share of football and soccer games, taking and abringing as my mama says and just attending to the boys, and i appreciate that.

My son nelson is here.

He voted for his first time, and he said publicly that he did vote for me.

[Laughter] so we will be helping him with college.

[Laughter] he is going off to pomona college in california, and i am very proud of him as everybody in here probably already knows.

His brother marcus is off at soccer showcase in dallas, and I am proud of him also.

I would be remiss not to say a special thank you to my mother, who lives with us and keeps us fed.

We wouldn't be able to stand here or be here tonight without her and so I want to say thank you, mom.

[Applause] I want to thank the voters for giving me another term to serve you in office.

I promise to work hard and do all those things that i swore to do.

What have we learned?

Austin is on the right track.

Our economy has not suffered to the same extent as it has in the nation and around the world, and it has done that largely because of all the people behind me and all the people that went before me, betty dunkerley, who set down firm rules of financial responsibility.

That is the good news.

The troubling news is that people are not involved.

They are not voting.

They are not participating, and our sense of community is declining, and I want to make one of my highest priorities getting people involved from every section of austin.

One of the things that i feel strongly that we have done right is we addressed austin energy after 17 years despite four of us being on the campaign trail.

Thanks to my colleagues we slowed the process down, we took our time, we learned a lot, and I have to thank, in his absence, council member spelman, who did a bang-up job in delivering this ball for us.

The challenges that we have ahead is what do we want government to do.

At the local, state and national level, we see government not addressing our fundamental needs in education.

In particular, the state government has failed to fund our schools.

We must continue to do all that we can to support them in every effort that they make to help our children.

We simply cannot have an uneducated workforce.

We cannot bring companies here who bring other people here who are unable to employ the people who grew up here.

At the same time we see the government at every level in a state of limbo about health care and pushing that bill off to local communities and asking us not what will we do about it but what we must do about it, and we see that, especially with mental health and the homeless issue.

Again, I plan to be very directly involved in these issues.

Many of the things that we cherish about austin are not the fruits of our own labor, as I said before, like lady bird lake.

People had the presence of mind to think about the future, and as we make decisions here today, it's sometimes difficult to understand that we are not making decisions about next week, next year, but about our children and our children's children.

So we hope when they come back and they stand here, they will say jobs well done.

Thank you.

[Applause] council member mike martinez.

thank you, mayor.

Lucky for you all and lucky for me I don't have a speech.

[Laughter] I just wrote down some folks that I need to thank.

I want to obviously start by thanking the citizens of austin and the supporters of our campaign, without whom their support none of this would be possible.

But real quickly, in defense of council member spelman, he's actually not at another function.

He's working.

He's at the university of texas teaching his class tonight, and that's the kind of commitment bill makes when he, you know, commits to doing a class, he sticks to it.

And I know one of his class members is skipping class and here tonight but I'm not going to point him out.

[Laughter] so thank you to my family, starting with my beautiful wife, laura.

For those of you that don't know this, this last six months was literally the busiest six months of my entire life.

Aside from running a campaign, we built a house, we're having a baby.

I went back to school at ut.

Oh, yeah, and I did the city council stuff in between all of those times.

Daresay it's one of the most rewarding six months, because it says that sticking together with family and friends and working hard bears fruit, and it bears positive fruit.

And so I just thank you so much, honey, for all of your support, for all of your love.

You know, sheryl, you mentioned how kevin watches tv.

We picked our cable company based on whether or not they showed channel 6.

That's how dedicated we are.

[Laughter] but she's here with me every single day in spirit, if not physically here, and when i get home I get duly lectured if I need it for saying something I shouldn't have.

She's my best political adviser but more than that she's my best friend.

So laura, thank you so.

[Applause] and of course we're mexicans so we have big families.

I want to thank my family, starting with my son, alejandro, who is one awesome young man.

When I first got elected to city hall six years ago, you know, he was just a little kid and now he's turned into this amazing young man and he's just a joy to be around, and I say this, and I say this with all sincerity, I want to be just like him when I grow up.

So thank you, son.

I appreciate it.

[Applause] all right.

And rounding out the top 20, I want to thank my mom and stepdad, trees a and alvarez, my beautiful and wonderful mother-in-law, margaret wendler.

Thank you so much.

[Applause] so like the mayor we don't do this alone.

It takes a team, and we had one incredible team.

So I'll start with our campaign team.

Most of whom are here tonight except my campaign manager, she was unable to be here country, sylvia, was the -- susan did our fundraising, john martinez is here, another great martinez, even though he's not related he did a great job on the campaign.

Matt halpin is here this evening.

Mark littlefield and then of course my internal city hall staff who did double duty.

Not only did they do their jobs here, they were there at every political function.

Oh, and nick hudson also worked on the campaign.

So my inside city hall staff is here as well.

Andy moore, bobby garza and laura williamson and I want to thank them so much for all they do for austin and for our office.

[Applause] so I don't have a speech, but, you know, I always believed that if you speak from the heart and you tell the truth you don't ever have to write it down or remember it because if you're asked about it again you'll say the same thing every time.

I love this town.

I love what I do.

Starting as a firefighter it was a tremendous honor to wear a badge in the name of austin on my sleeve every day and represent the citizens and protect and take care of them.

And my training as a firefighter was the best possible training that you could have if you're going to be an elected official, because just like being a firefighter, when the phone rings, they expect you to respond within 90 seconds and they expect you to take care of it and they expect you to not charge them a dime for doing it.

[Laughter] and that's what we did in the fire department, and that's what we do at city hall every day.

Every single one of us, our staff, the elected officials, we answer those calls, we answer those emails, and we work tirelessly to represent all of austin.

And on any given issue we'll get blamed for representing the 1%, depending on what issue it is that week, but the bottom line is the one commonality between all seven of us, we all love this town so much and care about this city so much, that we do everything we can to represent 100% of austin all the time.

And I know that the folks sitting behind me, there is no one up there that i wouldn't go to battle with in defending this wonderful city and protecting this wonderful city, just like i had with firefighters in the austin fire department.

So it's an honor to serve with you all.

I thank you all for your commitment to austin, your dedication, and I wish a special congratulations to mayor pro tem cole and to my buddy mayor lee leffingwell.

And also, I think he might be conflicted out on voting on his new program because he might personally benefit from -- [laughter] congratulations, mayor.

Thank you all.

thank you.

[Applause] so that concludes our agenda for today, so without objection we stand adjourned.

But before we leave, a couple more things to do.

I would like to call on susanne abbott again to sing america the beautiful.

Please welcome susanne.

[Applause] [ ♪♪ singing ♪♪ ] [ ♪♪ singing ♪♪ ] [applause] thank you.

And I'd like to call on chaplain rick randall again, austin police department, for the benediction.

Please rise.

>> Thank you, god, and once again for your love and your mercy.

We ask that you stretch forth your hand in fruitful blessing upon our beloved city.

Kindle within each of our hearts a passion to see austin, texas as a place of peace and reconciliation and may your justice roll on like a river and your righteousness like a never-ending stream.

We ask this in your holy name, amen.

>> Mayor leffingwell: amen.

Thank you all for coming, especially also I want to thank thomas groser, who provided the music before the ceremony tonight.

Of course susanne abbott, chaplain randall and judge sulak.

Thank you very much, judge, helped make this ceremony a very special meeting this evening.

Parking tickets, there will be someone outside to validate your parking tickets.

And please join us in the atrium for refreshments immediately following this ceremony.

Thank you very much for coming.

[Applause]