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## City Council

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## Summary

- President Griffin pledged council's support in working with Mayor Justin Bibb's administration. He warned the mayor that there would also be "tense" days but as "Iron sharpens iron," council and the administration would ultimately work towards improving the lives of all Cleveland residents.
- An interesting note raised by council Member Joe Jones: 2022 finds an African American mayor and an African American president of council serving at the same time.
- Each council member shared a commitment to support President Griffin and embrace freshmen council members.

## Follow-Up Questions

- Could there be a six-month follow up looking at the relationship between the administration and council once the engagement period is over?
- How will council committee assignments be made?  
*[Editor's note: Council leadership determines what members are assigned to committees. [See the committees and assignments here.](#)]*
- What will be the council's list of priority legislation?

## Notes

The swearing in ceremony of the 134th [Cleveland City Council](#) began at 7 p.m. Rev. Jose Reyes, Pastor, [Iglesias Nueva Vida](#), Ward 14, offered the invocation.

2022 Cleveland City Council Members

Joseph T. Jones - Ward 1

Kevin L. Bishop - Ward 2  
Kerry McCormack - Ward 3  
Deborah A. Gray - Ward 4  
Richard A. Starr - Ward 5  
Blaine A. Griffin - Ward 6  
Stephanie D. Howse - Ward 7  
Michael D. Polensek - Ward 8  
Kevin Conwell - Ward 9  
Anthony T. Hairston - Ward 10  
Brian Mooney - Ward 11  
Rebecca Maurer - Ward 12  
Kris Harsh - Ward 13  
Jasmin Santana - Ward 14  
Jenny Spencer - Ward 15  
Brian Kazy - Ward 16  
Charles J. Slife - Ward 17

U.S. Representative [Shontel Brown](#), [11th District](#), performed the swearing in of council. Members took the following oath: “I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the [Constitution of the United States](#), the [Constitution of the State of Ohio](#), and the [Charter of the City of Cleveland](#), and that I will faithfully, honestly and impartially discharge the duties of the office of (Ward), member of the Council of the City of Cleveland, State of Ohio during my continuance in said office.”

Jasmin Santana was unanimously elected as temporary Chairperson for the purpose of leading the official election of Council President Blaine Griffin. Council member Griffin was unanimously elected [council president](#). The oath of office was given by Griffin’s mother, Earlene Bently.

*[Read about the Unit Rule and council’s unanimous votes [here](#).]*

Griffin called on Council members Jasmin Santana and Jenny Spencer to nominate and second a nomination for clerk of council. They nominated Patricia J. Britt to continue serving as clerk of council. Griffin asked Deborah Gray, as three of the five female council members, to close nominations for clerk of council. Britt was unanimously elected and took the oath of office given by President Griffin. Britt then oversaw adoption of File #4-22, [Rules of Order Governing Council, City of Cleveland](#), 2022-2025. The Rules of Order were unanimously adopted. President Giffin affirmed that the 134th Cleveland City Council was organized and ready for business.

Griffin offered apologies for the inability to fully open council chambers due to COVID. A moment of silence was asked for in honor of fallen Cleveland Police officer, [Shane Bartek](#). The residents of Ward 6 were thanked for having confidence in Griffin, who acknowledged former council president and friend, Kevin Kelley, and Mayor Justin Bibb. Griffin pledged council's support in working with the new administration. Griffin acknowledged the five women on council. He then took time to honor and thank former Mayor Frank Jackson as a member of Jackson's administration, mentor and friend.

All members of council were given the opportunity to give acknowledgements according to their seniority. Of note, Council Member Mike Polensek, the "Dean of Council", thanked his constituents (Ward 26, 11, and now 8) for their faith and trust in him. Polensek is the longest-serving council member with 44 years of service. First elected in 1978 as a freshman council member, Polensek has served under five mayors and six council presidents.

Kevin Conwell, Ward 9, spoke next, using his time to speak directly to Mayor Bibb, who was in attendance, about violence and crime in his ward. Council Member Conwell shared that while the ceremony was taking place, calls were coming in about three teens involved in a shootout; all three were hospitalized. Mayor Bibb indicated he received the notification as well. A plea went out asking for additional police assigned to walk the neighborhood and engage the residents in constructive dialogue. Conwell invited Mayor Bibb to ride through the neighborhood with him and visit with Glenville residents. Conwell was confident that once safely behind closed doors, residents would share their concerns with the newly inaugurated mayor. He shared, if during the campaign, neighborhood drive throughs and home visits were made, surely they were needed after the election. The threat of violence was not new to Conwell as his home was the target of gunfire while he and his family were inside. He added that his granddaughter asked, "Poppy, do bullets go through windows?"

Each subsequent council member thanked their constituents, families, and pledged their support to Council President Griffin and Mayor Justin Bibb, and shared their hopes for the future of Cleveland, outlining numerous areas such as crime, education, jobs, neighborhood development, community engagement, healthcare etc.

Council member Joe Jones said council and the Administration must work "hand in glove" to accomplish the best for residents and return Cleveland to "The greatest location in the nation."

Find each of the City Council members' comments [here](#).

Councilman Griffin announced a week-long retreat aimed at instructing members on council policies and procedures, with third party experts sharing information about issues in the city. The retreat takes place at the Public Auditorium. Committee assignment will be handed out at the culmination of the ceremony.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

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