

A meeting of the Martinsville City Council was held in Council Chambers – Municipal Building Friday October 6, 2023, at 10:00am to swear in and welcome the new Martinsville City Manager Aretha R. Ferrell-Benavides.

Mayor Jones thanked attendees and said that this was a historical day for Martinsville, changing, evolving and adjusting to the climate – today is another step in the right direction.

Pledge of Allegiance Council Member Kathy Lawson.

National Anthem by Jyshire Plunkett, Junior at Martinsville High School.

Welcome by Lawrence Mitchell – Council Member Mitchell welcomed everyone in attendance and said that Martinsville is a community; we are family. Mitchell grew up in Martinsville and he is thankful that we can have a new city manager all the way from Texas.

Invocation by Helen Jessup Howell, Director of Martinsville and Henry County National Society of Black Engineers Jr Chapter – Howell stated that this is the day the Lord has made, and residents are excited because Martinsville is making history. Martinsville is city with rich and diverse history and the FAHI museum holds a wealth of information on the African American community.

Oath of Office by Mayor LC Jones.

Remarks by Mrs. Aretha R. Ferrell-Benavides, City Manager – Ferrell-Benavides stated that she is pleased to have been selected and thanked the Mayor, Council Members, and Interim City Manager Glen Adams. Never underestimate the power of a dream. After serving in many other cities, she can finally begin her final position serving Martinsville. Martinsville is a beautiful community with courageous leaders; all are important and dedicated.

Mayor Jones said it was a long process to select a City Manager and Council Members invested a lot of hours. Vice Mayor Rawls dove deep and provided a lot of value in the outcome.

Council Presentation Vice Mayor Aaron Rawls – Rawls stated that this is not a moment of headlines or community pride, we have a lot to do. Applicants from all over the country were interviewed and wanted the position of City Manager. The ideal person is the one who doesn't look at the money but what they can do for the community; Council knew that Ferrell-Benavides was a multi-generational leader with experience in community engagement, economic development, and fiscal management, all which are important. Rawls touched on Ferrell-Benavides history in Petersburg, Virginia where she put the City on the right path. Courage is a paramount virtue. Ferrell-Benavides was removed from her position in Texas for standing on integrity. Martinsville City Council decided she was the person they needed for Martinsville.

Closing Remarks Mayor LC Jones – Jones thanked everyone for coming out; stating that this was a historical day and there are great things to come. Ferrell-Benavides will be a vital part of getting Martinsville back to where we need to be.

Pearson shared key words that describe Ferrell-Benavides including truth, integrity, a listener, faith, action-oriented, transparency, commitment, a servant leader, accountability,

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financial response, vision, positivity, humbleness, courage. Council knows that we can't do this alone and must partner with citizens, employees, the faith community, schools and various other organizations and businesses. That is what this City Council stands for and they work hard to execute that on a daily basis. Council looked for those qualities in a City Manager. Ferrell-Benavides and City Council will build on history and rebuild Martinsville to be one of the best cities in America. City Council welcomes her with open arms.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:00pm.

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Karen Roberts, Clerk of Council

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LC Jones, Mayor