Thursday, January 8, 2026 - 3:30 p.m.

Special Meeting

Present: Mayor Esther E. Manheimer, Presiding; Vice-Mayor S. Antanette Mosley; Councilman Bo Hess; Councilwoman Sheneika Smith; Councilwoman Sage Turner; Councilwoman Maggie Ullman; Interim City Manager Ben Woody; City Attorney Brad Branham; and City Clerk Magdalen Burleson

Absent: Councilwoman Kim Roney

Mayor Manheimer welcomed DK Welsey, her family and members of the community for attending this special occasion of swearing in the new City Manager. Mayor Manheimer was pleased to say that DK is a seasoned local government executive with over 25 years of progressive leadership in city and county management. She is recognized for transforming organizations, fostering strong community partnerships, and leading with integrity, innovation, and accountability. For the past six and a half years, she has served as an Assistant County Manager with Buncombe County and now brings her expertise and enthusiasm to the City of Asheville.

Resident Superior Court Judge Jacqueline Grant administered the oath of office to new City Manager Dakisha (DK) Wesley, to be effective January 12, 2026.

Ms. Wesley said that today she pledged her commitment to the City of Asheville. She expressed her gratitude to Mayor Manheimer, Vice-Mayor Mosley and each City Council member for the confidence they have placed in her with this appointment. She thanked all those who have taken their time to be here today - her mother, family, friends, Buncombe County employees, and members of the Asheville community. She said this is a place where vision becomes direction, where collaboration becomes progress, and where the future of Asheville takes shape. She is committed to leadership that listens and moves with thoughtful, intentional haste - realizing the complexities of public service which will require that she tap into wisdom and understanding beyond herself to lead most effectively. The core of her pillar of her management philosophy is that the organization operates in excellence. We accomplish the goal together by prioritizing continuous improvement and cultural alignment to deliver superior value specifically to Asheville residents. We also stand together in a period of recovery from Tropical Storm Helene, which tested our infrastructure, our preparedness, and our resilience. Asheville demonstrated its strength. Recovery is not simply rebuilding - it's reimagining, reinforcing, and rising stronger than before. She is committed to ensuring that our recovery is strategic, equitable, and grounded in long-term resilience. Our City faces complex challenges - housing affordability, infrastructure needs, climate resilience, workforce stability, and public safety among them. None of these issues can be solved in isolation. They require partnership between government, community organizations, businesses, residents, and regional partners. We will meet these challenges with integrity, collaboration, and fortitude. Every decision will be grounded in data, shaped by community voices, and guided by a commitment to fairness. Together we can build a future marked by connection, excellence and hope. She looked forward to serving alongside City employees and the community. She thanked City Council again for their trust.

On behalf of City Council, Mayor Manheimer invited everyone to the welcome reception at 4:00 p.m. for Ms. Wesley at Pack's Tavern in the Century Room..

At 346 p.m., Mayor Manheimer adjourned the special meeting.

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City Clerk Mayor