

## Council President Zac Bears Remarks - January 9, 2024

Thank you Mr. Clerk. It is an honor to serve the people of Medford and I thank them for placing their trust in me for a third term on this council. Thank you to my colleagues for your support making me President-Elect last month and electing me as Council President for 2024.

All of you and residents may have seen that our agenda looks a little bit different tonight, a bit more modern. Modernization is going to be a theme of this City Council term, as we adopt new technologies and new approaches to accomplish even more than we have in my first two terms on the Council.

I want to thank the entire team in the City Clerk's Office, including City Clerk Adam Hurtubise, Assistant Clerk Sylvia DiPlacido, Principal Clerk Janice DePace for their hard work to support this Council, and especially Head Clerk Annie Kelly who worked diligently alongside Clerk Hurtubise and I to get our "CivicClerk" software off the ground in time to put together the agenda for this meeting.

I want also want to thank Medford Community Media Director Kevin Harrington and his team for helping to install these new monitors to improve our hybrid meetings, and for the work we will do over the next few months to upgrade the audio system in the Council Chambers, bring Council meetings to YouTube livestreaming, and hopefully even more!

There are three principles I intend to follow as I guide this Council: collaboration, planning, and trust.

I know that if we ground our work in those principles, we will be able to accomplish big things and deliver the results that residents want to see from their local government.

Later tonight, I will present two items that will help organize us towards those principles: a new committee structure and a governing agenda

framework for our 2024-2025 term. I know these will help this Council collaborate better, plan better, and build trust across city government and with residents.

Nothing can get done in city government without collaboration. I am so proud of the work the Council did last term to work together and advance our shared goals and pass several major ordinances including the Zoning Recodification that will serve as the foundation for our zoning project this term.

But collaboration within the Council is not enough. We have made progress on the Budget Ordinance and setting up the Financial Task Force agreed to in the budget agreement President Morell and I reached with the Mayor in June. I look forward to working with Vice President-Elect Collins to establish strong collaboration with the Mayor and her administration. This Council has and will continue to reach out in good faith on every initiative and invite the collaborative approach we know will be needed to succeed and deliver results for Medford.

Collaboration is a first step, but in order to get anything done we need a plan. I have been focused on better planning since my first day in office, and I was glad to assist in the development of our city's first Comprehensive Plan as well as support the implementation of the Housing Production Plan, Climate Plan, and more. I also proposed the Medford Better Future Budget Plan last May to proposed immediate, targeted changes to our city charter and city ordinances to improve our budget process and planning to fund the solutions to the big challenges our community faces. I'm glad that some of that plan has been incorporated into the Budget Ordinance and Financial Task Force.

The Governing Agenda framework and Committee Structure that I'll present later is another element of planning that will help improve the Council's work product, process, and make all of our efforts more transparent to residents and the public.

Finally, getting big things done comes down to trust. Trust among elected officials, trust among key public and private stakeholders, and trust of the residents and public in what their city government is doing.

We have major projects ahead: an updated budget process and passing a near-\$200 million general fund budget for the next two years; recommendations of the Financial Task Force around potential Prop 2.5 debt exclusions or overrides; comprehensive citywide zoning reform and implementation of several major plans; and the drafting of a new city charter to propose to the Mayor and State Legislature based on the work of the study committee.

To accomplish those huge tasks, we need the trust of the public.

I commit to lead this Council in the spirit of openness and transparency, to provide a clear plan for our work to the public, and to tell the public the truth to the fullest extent possible, even when the truth is hard to hear.

Thank you again for your trust in electing me as Council President, and I will work to continue earning that trust.