

**TOWN OF GARLAND  
OATH OF OFFICE CEREMONY & ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021  
6:00 PM**

The Oath of Office Ceremony & Organizational Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Garland was conducted at the Garland PFW Baptist Church Fellowship Hall on Thursday, December 2, 2021, at 6:00 pm.

The following members of the Board of Commissioners were present:

**Austin Brown  
Carolyn R. Melvin  
Jo A. Strickland  
Barbara A Peterson**

Also, present: Winifred H. Murphy, Mayor, Commissioner Elects, Andy Johnson and Ralph Smith, Jr., Town Clerk Pamela Cashwell, Deputy Clerk Annette Ricketson, Reverend and Mrs. Dewey Ball, Mr. & Mrs. Jerol Kivett, Mrs. Emily Williams of the *Sampson Independent* and Mrs. Sylvia Chestnutt of the *Sampson Weekly*. There were approximately thirty-five citizens in attendance.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Winifred H. Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and welcomed everyone in attendance. Town Clerk, Pamela Cashwell, was present recording notes for the minutes. Mayor Murphy stated she is honored to participate in this historical meeting tonight in passing the torch to Mayor Elect Austin Brown. She stated she was the first female and black mayor for the town and Mayor Elect Austin Brown will be the youngest mayor for the town. She offered words of encouragement to the new mayor and board members. She thanked all the citizens for their love and support of her during her tenure as mayor.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE**

Master Zayn Strickland led the attendees in the recitation of the pledge.

**INVOCATION**

Reverend Dewey Ball stated he and Mrs. Virginia Ball were honored to be asked by Mayor Elect Austin Brown to participate in this oath of office ceremony tonight. Reverend Ball spoke of being a pastor in the Town of Garland dating back to 1997 and having watched Austin grow from a young boy to the man he is today. He noted Austin was like a son to him and his wife. He stated Austin was always willing to help them in anyway he could. Reverend Ball spoke of life in Garland and how this small community cared for each other and was supportive of each other noting how easy it was to make friends at local restaurants. He encouraged the citizens to work together and support each other. He offered words of wisdom to Mayor Elect Austin Brown, when making decisions for the town, ask yourself is it fair to everyone,

always remember, you do not always have to be right, and in times when opinions differ, you can come to an agreement to disagree. He asked the current and new board members to collaborate with the mayor and to support one another. Reverend Ball then delivered the invocation.

#### **CERTIFICATION OF ELECTIONS**

Clerk Pamela Cashwell read the certified election results as follows for the November 2, 2021 Municipal Elections.

**Town of Garland Mayor:**

**Austin Brown- 182 votes**

**Kevin Mote- 8 votes**

**Town of Garland Board of Commissioners:**

**Andy Johnson- 118 votes**

**Ralph Smith, Jr.- 112 votes**

**Jo Strickland- 97 votes**

**LaTonya B. Montgomery- 72 votes**

**Eddie Bronson, Jr.- 71 votes**

**Sean Melvin- 69 votes.**

Mayor Pro Tem Austin Brown made a motion to accept the certified results as stated, seconded by Commissioner Carolyn R. Melvin, and carried unanimously.

#### **OATH OF OFFICE**

Clerk Pamela Cashwell administered the Oath of Office for Mayor of the Town of Garland to Austin Brown while his wife stood by his side holding their family bible and surrounded by other family members. Clerk Cashwell congratulated and introduced Mayor and Mrs. Brown for the first time.

Mayor Austin Brown administered the Oath of Office for Commissioner of the Town of Garland to Andy Johnson while his wife stood by his side holding their family bible and surrounded by other family members. Mayor Brown formally introduced and presented Commissioner Andy Johnson.

Mayor Austin Brown administered the Oath of Office for Commissioner of the Town of Garland to Ralph Smith, Jr. while his wife stood by his side holding their family bible and surrounded by other family members.

Mayor Austin Brown administered the Oath of Office for Commissioner of the Town of Garland to Jo A. Strickland while her grandson stood by her side holding their family bible as family members looked on.

### **MAYORAL ADDRESS**

Mayor Austin Brown addressed the audience members, thanking them for attending this important and historical meeting, noting tonight, he was sworn in as the youngest mayor in the town's history. He thanked his biggest support system; his family, noting he owes them a debt of gratitude. Tearfully, Mayor Brown also acknowledged his late grandmother, Mrs. Madelene Brown, who played a pivotal role in his life, and he thanked her for contributing to him being who he is today. To the 182 voters who supported him, he thanked them for their trust in him to lead the town as their mayor. He stated for the voters who did not support him, "he prayed they could work out their differences, because all of this isn't for me, it's for we." He noted working together we can make greatness continue to grow in Garland. To the Board of Commissioners, he tasked them with keeping the promises they made to their supporters during campaigning. He noted we must continue to work on streets with additional paving, water & sewer infrastructure, bringing back some type of police protection, supporting our seniors and the Garland Senior Center as well as recreational activities of all types. He said citizens who put their trust in us, are watching us and we must all do what is right for Garland and for our biggest gift, which is our citizens. He stated he is honored and excited to embark on a new year with the new board serving with him and he looks forward to making sure Greatness truly grows in Garland.

### **APPOINTMENT OF MAYOR PRO TEM & OATH OF OFFICE**

Mayor Austin Brown informed the board it was time for them to appoint the person amongst the five of them who they would like to serve as Mayor Pro Tem. Commissioner Andy Johnson made a motion to appoint Commissioner Carolyn R. Melvin as Mayor Pro Tem, seconded by Commissioner Ralph Smith, Jr., and carried unanimously.

Mayor Austin Brown administered the Oath of Office for Mayor Pro Tem of the Town of Garland to Carolyn R. Melvin while her husband and son stood by her side holding the bible for her swearing in ceremony. Mayor Brown congratulated Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn R. Melvin.

Mayor Austin Brown also thanked everyone involved in the planning and execution of this meeting tonight, noting how nice the decorations and facilities look for this ceremony. He also thanked Reverend & Mrs. Dewey Ball for attending and for their support of him always.

### **BOARD ORGANIZATION**

Mayor Austin Brown announced the following committee appointments:

#### **Finance/Administration**

**Carolyn R. Melvin- Chair**

**Barbara A. Peterson- Co-Chair**

**Mayor Austin Brown**

**Buildings**

**Barbara A. Peterson- Chair**  
**Jo A. Strickland- Co-Chair**

**Parks & Recreation**

**Carolyn R. Melvin- Chair**  
**Ralph Smith, Jr.- Co-Chair**

**Public Works (Water, Sewer, Garbage)**

**Ralph Smith, Jr.- Chair**  
**Andy Johnson- Co-Chair**

**Safety**

**Jo A. Strickland- Chair**  
**Ralph Smith, Jr.- Co-Chair**

**Streets**

**Andy Johnson- Chair**  
**Jo A. Strickland- Co-Chair**

**Cemeteries**

**Barbara A. Peterson- Chair**  
**Carolyn R. Melvin- Co-Chair**

**Planning Board Liaisons**

**Andy Johnson**  
**Jo A. Strickland**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**None received.**

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CONDOLENCES**

**Condolences: The Town of Garland sends our sincerest condolences to all of those who have recently lost loved ones.**

**Town of Garland Christmas Dinner-Thursdays, December 19, 2021, 6pm.**

**Town Hall closed December 23-27, 2021, in observance of the Christmas Holiday**

**Tow Hall closed December 31, 2021, in observance of the New Year Holiday**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Commissioner Jo A. Strickland made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Barbara A. Peterson and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:33 pm. Reception followed the adjournment of meeting.**

**Board Approved:**

  
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**Austin Brown, Mayor**

  
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**Pamela Cashwell, Town Clerk**