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**SUBJECT:** Duluth City Council Announces 2023 Leadership

**BY:** Kelli Latuska, Public Information Officer

## **Duluth City Council Announces 2023 Leadership**

[Duluth, MN] At their first scheduled Council session in 2023, members of Duluth City Council elected new leadership for the year. Outgoing Council President Arik Forsman called for the nomination of a new Council President at the meeting, and Councilor Noah Hobbs offered the nomination of Fifth District Councilor Janet Kennedy. The Council voted unanimously to elect Kennedy to the position. This marks the first time in Duluth's history that a woman of African American heritage holds the position.

"This is an historic time for all Duluthians and this election lifts up the voices of our African American community that has supported me throughout the years," said Council President Janet Kennedy. "I am honored my council colleagues have chosen me to serve and lead as the Duluth City Council President and the first African American to serve in this role. I offer this legacy to my mother and father--children of sharecroppers who in the 1960's came to Duluth for work at the Air Force Base from Columbus, Mississippi. They are US citizen refugees from the South as part of the Northern migration in search of a better life.

Understanding city complexities as a whole, along with my strong roots in the District Five Western Duluth community, we will make a difference together for everyone. I look forward to supporting council colleagues, working with City staff and workers who do their jobs every day to ensure we have safe and healthy communities to live, work, and play. I will lead with action, curiosity, openness, and a willingness to actively listen. "

City Council President Kennedy went on to express gratitude, "Thank you to all my supporters and mentors, with a special thanks to outgoing Council President Forsman for your authentic leadership, and newly-elected Council Vice President Randorf. Let's do this! Lastly, as a servant leader, I truly believe that a community will prosper when everyone is walking on even ground."

Outgoing Council President Arik Forsman provided some reflection on the leadership change, "It was my privilege to turn over the Duluth Council President gavel to Janet

Kennedy at our first meeting of 2023. The opportunity to serve on the council leadership team the past two years with our first female Council President of Native American heritage and now our first female Council President of African American heritage was quite an honor. I'm proud our council was productive, low-drama, and people-focused during those two years, and I look forward to working with all of my colleagues in the year ahead."

The council also elected Third City Council District Councilor Roz Randorf to the position of Council Vice President at the meeting. Elected to her council seat in 2019, Council Vice President Randorf is in the middle of her first term on City Council.

"The important policy and decision-making work conducted by the Duluth City Council culminates during our agenda sessions and City Council meetings," said Randorf of her work on the council. "To do this work effectively and in a manner that aligns with our promise of civility takes the guidance of a strong leadership team. I would like to thank outgoing President Forsman for his very successful term and congratulate incoming Council President Janet Kennedy. I look forward to her thoughtful leadership and am very honored by my nomination to work with her as Vice President as we look forward to a productive year ahead."

Duluth City Council leadership terms are one year and run January to December. City Council meeting schedules, agendas, and further information regarding the City Council are on the City of Duluth Council page at <https://duluthmn.gov/city-council/>.

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