

Ssebuwufu elected KCCA Speaker as NUP tightens grip on council

BY SHABIBAH NAKIRIGYA

KAMPALA. National Unity Platform (NUP) councillor John Mary Ssebuwufu has been elected Speaker of the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) Council after defeating the National Resistance Movement (NRM) candidate, Kalule Ali Ssalongo, in a closely contested vote.

Ssebuwufu secured 18 votes against Kalule's 16 in an election conducted through a secret ballot yesterday. One ballot was declared invalid after a councillor wrote names for their choice for the Speaker and deputy Speaker positions despite the exercise being restricted to the Speaker's race.

The election exercise, which commenced at 1.25pm, was presided over by Buganda Road Court Chief Magistrate, Ritah Neumbe Kidasa. NRM councillor Amon Bagonza, who arrived late, despite appearing first on the voting register, was allowed to cast his vote 10 minutes after the other 34 councillors had voted.

Mr Ssebuwufu was nominated by Godfrey Luyombya and seconded by James Mubiru, while Mr Kalule was nominated by James Munyomba and seconded by Aidah Zawedde.

Candidates pitch experience, welfare agenda

Addressing councillors before voting, Mr Ssebuwufu described KCCA as "a very complex institution" that requires experienced

and competent leadership.

"This is the only capital city we have in Uganda. We are going to pass policies, ordinances, budgets and oversee city administration. You need somebody who is knowledgeable, skilled and able to analyse reports for the good of Kampala," Mr Ssebuwufu said.

He urged councillors to rise above party loyalties and vote based on merit and capability.

"Leave aside deep-rooted party positions. The people who elected you expect capable leadership," he added.

Mr Ssebuwufu said the council looks up to the leadership for guidance.

It is our mandate to initiate viable policies and structural recommendations to this council. It is our mandate to debate, refine and crystallise them into actionable decisions," he said.

Meanwhile Mr Kalule campaigned on councillors' welfare and improving relations between the technical and political wings of the authority.

"I will lobby for improved welfare to match East African regional standards, push for health insurance and better working conditions for members," he pledged.

Mr Kalule also promised to advocate a social security scheme for councillors.

"I pledge to promote cooperation, strong oversight and improved welfare for councillors, for the success of the city administration, depending on collective responsibility," he said, adding that the council is ready to work



The KCCA Council Speaker, Mr John Mary Ssebuwufu, receives the instruments of power yesterday. PHOTO/IBRAHIM KAVUMA

closely with the executive arm to deliver effective leadership for Kampala residents.

Namazzi is deputy speaker

In the race for deputy speaker, NUP's Olive Namazzi defeated independent councillor Nicho-

las Kwarijja after polling 20 votes against 15.

Ms Namazzi anchored her campaign on inclusivity, welfare and gender-responsive leadership.

"We must rise above political parties and think about the pe-

ple of Kampala, traders, casual workers and families struggling to survive," she said.

Mr Kwarijja, who represents workers, campaigned on unity and political balance within council operations.

"The unity of this council is

not expressed in words alone, it is expressed by the way we vote and work together," he said.

Ssebuwufu promises inclusive leadership

In his maiden speech shortly after taking office, Mr Ssebuwufu pledged to lead the council with fairness, discipline and inclusiveness regardless of political affiliation.

"This is a multi-partisan council. The true beauty of democracy lies not in uniformity of thought, but in our ability to manage our differences for the common good. Whether you voted for me or held a different view, I am now your servant. I am dedicated to serving you with utmost diligence and absolute fairness," he added.

Presiding officer commends peaceful poll

Chief Magistrate Kidasa congratulated the councillors for conducting what she described as a "peaceful and orderly election process."

She expressed optimism about the future of the council under the newly-elected leadership.

"It is my prayer that God enables this council to work with the leaders you have elected for the betterment of the people in this city and Uganda at large," Ms Kidasa added.

This term, the KCCA council will have 35 members, including the Lord Mayor. NUP has 14 councillors, NRM 15 and one independent.