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May. 25, 2013

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa began the formal transition of power to his successor on Thursday, hosting Mayor-elect Eric Garcetti for breakfast at Getty House where he told reporters that the city councilman had his "full support."

Garcetti, who defeated City Controller Wendy Greuel on Tuesday, will not take office until July 1. But he and his team have already begun to prepare the policy initiatives that he hopes will allow him to "hit the ground running on day one," as he said during a news conference afterward.

Though the two men have had any icy relationship in recent years as the city has struggled to right its finances, Villaraigosa said he "couldn't be more excited" to welcome Garcetti to the official residence and had valued his friendship over more than a decade.

"This is a man who has a record — 12 years on the City Council, council president for good portion of that time — somebody who is going to hit the ground running when it comes to leading this city, and he will have my full support," said Villaraigosa, who had remained neutral in the race even though many of his advisors were working for Greuel.

Garcetti said that Villaraigosa had been "an inspiration and a friend," and he corrected Villaraigosa's recollection of how long they had known each other — noting that when he was a professor at Occidental College, he had served on the then-state assemblyman's advisory group.

“I’m looking forward to a very seamless transition,” Garcetti said. “We’ve weathered

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more accountable.

“You focus on those basics and big things happen,” Garcetti said.

After the mayors’ breakfast of orange juice, pastries, eggs, fruit and yogurt, one of the first tasks facing Garcetti was a City Council vote Thursday on the budget.

Villaraigosa said last month that he thinks there should be no raises for any city employees between July 2014 and June 2017 — and that such a move would create a surplus in 2017.

When asked whether he agreed with that position, Garcetti cautioned that he would not view any money saved as “a surplus.”

“Unless things turn around, we’re not going to be looking at any new contracts and any raises,” Garcetti said. “It’s not a surplus. I want to be clear. What it will do is it will restore our city services that we’ve cut. Right now, we’re barely trimming any trees. We’re fixing too few sidewalks. Our response times need to go down in the fire department. We need to restore those. That should be our first priority before raises.

“So it’s going to be very important to me that when we sit down with any new contracts that we look at that first. And unless, you know, the economy roars back with double-digit growth — and I don’t think any of us anticipate that — we’re going to have to continue to keep things tight in order to get those services back that the people deserve.”

“That includes DWP,” he said when pressed by a reporter about whether he was also referring to contract negotiations with the city’s Department of Public Works utility, in which employees have higher average salaries than other workers.

Garcetti said Villaraigosa had given him a great deal of practical advice over breakfast, including how to keep his bearings as he takes office.

He said Villaraigosa had given him guidance “about the life of making sure you stay

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