

MINUTES of CAUCUS MEETING

Belize City Hall
February 18, 2020

Present:

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| 1. His Worship Bernard Wagner | Mayor |
| 2. Mr. Oscar Arnold | Deputy Mayor |
| 3. Mr. Allan Pollard Jr. | Councilor |
| 4. Mr. Micah Goodin | Councilor |
| 5. Mr. Javier Castellanos | Councilor |
| 6. Ms. Delthrude Hylton | Councilor |
| 7. Mr. Ryan Elijio | Councilor |
| 8. Ms. Aisha Gentle | Councilor |
| 9. Mr. Albert Vaughan | Councilor |
| 10. Mr. Michael Norales | Councilor |
| 11. Dr. Candice Pitts | Councilor |

Mrs. Stephanie Lindo-Garbutt, City Administrator

Mr. Rafael Sosa, Manager, Office of the Mayor

Attendance by Invitation:

Mr. Hubert Pipersburgh, LED Manager
Ms. Erin Garnett, Acting Communications Manager
Mr. Rene Cardona, MIS Manager

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m. by Mayor Wagner after which he led his Councilors in reciting the Belize National Prayer.

Mayor Wagner thanked his Councilors for being present for what he stated was a very important Caucus Meeting.

1.0 Corrections to and Ratification of January 21, 2020 Minutes

- 1.1 Under 2.1.1, the last sentence should read as follows: The City Administrator stated that the employment contract that was presented to Mr. Bradley was a standard employment contract used at the Council.
- 1.2 Under 2.1.4, the first sentence should read as follows: The City Administrator informed that Mr. Bradley had received two paychecks but did not cash either of them.
- 1.3 Under 2.6, the first sentence should read as follows: The City Administrator reported that the owners of the Little Boar House are awaiting a response from the Council in respect of their outstanding lease payments.
- 1.4 Under 2.8.8, change \$25,000/mth to \$2500/mth.
- 1.5 Under 4.3, add the following sentence: It was also noted that there would be property reassessments conducted on properties that have carried out expansions and remodeling.
- 1.6 Under 7.5, Proposal for Mingle & Baywatch Neighborhood Buffalo Grill, add one more item (7.5.3) to state the following: The proposal was deferred to the March Caucus Meeting.
- 1.7 Councilor Goodin moved for the Minutes to be accepted with corrections. Councilor Gentle seconded.

2.0 Matters Arising from Minutes

2.1 BCC's In-house Attorney

2.1.1 Mayor Wagner informed that he received a letter from Mr. Richard Bradley in which Mr. Bradley indicated that he is relinquishing his post as the Council's In-House Attorney. Mayor Wagner further informed that Mr. Bradley requested remuneration up until January 31, 2020.

2.2 Update on Achievement of Council's Six Manifesto Priority Items

2.2.1 Priority Item #1 (**Waiving of Trade License for First-Time Entrepreneurs**) – The City Administrator informed that the Valuation Manager will take the proposal to the next meeting of the Trade Licensing Board.

2.2.2 Priority Item #2 (**Establishment of Belize City Fund to Provide Microfinancing for Small Business and Start-Up Businesses**) - Mayor Wagner informed that the Council has received \$20,000 from the Insurance Company of Belize (**ICB**) for the micro-financing program.

2.2.3 Priority Item #3 (**Urban Gardening**) – The City Administrator reported that the Programs Manager has identified a vacant lot in the Lake Independence Constituency.

Mayor Wagner asked about the vacant lot in the Mesopotamia Constituency that was previously identified by Councilor Pitts.

Councilor Pitts shared that the property owner had already given permission for the vacant lot to be used for a period of three years.

- 2.2.4 Priority Item #4 (**Consult with Residents Before Preparing and Presenting Annual Budgets**) – The City Administrator informed that the Council will make a presentation to residents at the Freetown Public Meeting.
- 2.2.5 Priority Item #5 (**Enhance and Restore Iconic Belize City Venues as Top Tourist Destinations**) – The City Administrator stated that there was no progress to report as the Communications Manager is currently on vacation leave and the PR staff is occupied with the planning and organizing of the “Voices of the City” radio show.

Mayor Wagner stated that is critical for the respective Managers to move expeditiously with achieving the six priority items as this would see the Council achieving fully its Manifesto.

2.3 **Belize Breaking News (BBN)**

- 2.3.1 Councilor Pitts asked if the contract with Belize Breaking News (**BBN**) has been signed already.
- 2.3.2 Mayor Wagner informed that the Council has entered into contracts with other media organizations namely KREM Radio/KREM TV, VIBES Media and SHAMAX Productions. Mayor Wagner stated that the Council would never be able to dictate to the media houses what their content should be.
- 2.3.3 Councilor Vaughan stated that he had offered his support for the contract with BBN based on the assurance that was given by Councilor Goodin.
- 2.3.4 The City Administrator informed that the contract with BBN has been signed for a monthly payment of \$2500. The City Administrator further informed that BBN has already invoiced the Council for the first month.

2.4 Compensation for Cecil Jenkins and Shana Whyte

2.4.1 Mayor Wagner informed that Mr. Cecil Jenkins and Ms. Shana Whyte have received their compensation packages and both individuals have signed an “Oath of Secrecy”. Mayor Wagner further informed that their attorney, Mr. Darrell Bradley is yet to sign the “Oath of Secrecy”.

2.5 Demolition and Relocation of Fort George Tourism Zone Gateway

2.5.1 Councilor Vaughan asked for an update on the demolition and relocation of the Fort George Tourism Zone Gateway.

2.5.2 Mayor Wagner informed that the deadline for the submission of tenders is **February 21, 2020**. Mayor Wagner stated if no tenders are received, the Works Department will have to carry out the demolition and relocation.

3.0 New Business

3.1 Resolution to Amend the 2020 Series Municipal Paper Offering from \$6 MIL to \$10 MIL

3.1.1 Mayor Wagner informed that the Council’s Audited Financial Statements and Prospectus are now complete. Mayor Wagner further informed that a press conference will be held on **February 27, 2020** at 10:00 a.m. to officially launch the Municipal Bond.

3.1.2 Mayor Wagner stated that the reason for the increase in the Municipal Bond offering is due to the increased interest on the part of institutional investors.

3.1.3 Councilor Elijio stated that the increase from \$6 MIL to \$10 MIL represents a 66% increase.

3.1.4 Mayor Wagner stated that the Council will be able to execute a lot of infrastructural works and to erase long-term debts. Mayor Wagner further stated that \$4 MIL will be used to liquidate debts.

- 3.1.5 Councilor Vaughan stated that the Council will need to urgently purchase equipment.
- 3.1.6 Councilor Castellanos remarked that the increase in the Municipal Bond offering is a clear indication of investor confidence in the Council.
- 3.1.7 Mayor Wagner stated that he is now in receipt of the certified Audited Financial Statements from Mr. Cedric Flowers and will table for approval at the March Caucus Meeting. Mayor Wagner informed that the external audit costs the Council \$84,000.
- 3.1.8 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for an increase in the 2020 Series Municipal Paper Offering from \$6 MIL to \$10 MIL. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

4.0 **Parking Lot Management Agreement Between Belize City Council and Almog Holdings Limited** – Mr. Hubert Pipersburgh, LED Manager

- 4.1 The LED Manager shared that the proposed parking lot can accommodate a total of sixty-five parking spaces. The LED Manager stated that the LED Department conducted a survey aimed at determining the feasibility of the parking lot.
 - 4.1.1 Councilor Pitts asked about the principals of Almog Holdings Limited. Councilor Pitts also inquired about the credibility of the company.
 - 4.1.2 Mayor Wagner stated that the Council has conducted its due diligence with respect to the company and its owners.
 - 4.1.3 The City Administrator shared that the lease agreement does not provide for a parking attendant. The City Administrator further shared that the Council would need to consider subletting in order to generate revenue. The City Administrator stated that the offset, proposed by Almog Holdings Limited, is not an equitable one.
 - 4.1.4 Councilor Elijio asked about how the Council would ensure that its employees pay for parking.

4.1.5 Deputy Mayor Arnold remarked that the Council would break even if its employees utilize the parking lot. Deputy Mayor Arnold stated that the parking lot would be a win-win situation for the Council.

4.1.6 Mayor Wagner stated that the parking lot provides a short-term solution to the parking challenges that exist in the Downtown Area.

4.1.7 It was agreed that the matter of subletting would be revisited and renegotiated before Council votes on the lease agreement.

5.0 **Presentation of New BCC Website** – Ms. Erin Garnett, Acting Communications Manager

5.1 The Acting Communications Manager made a presentation on the Council's revamped website.

5.1.2 The Acting Communications Manager shared that the Council's website displays new and added features, e.g. Diaspora Desk, forms for Council's Departments.

5.1.3 Councilor Pollard Jr. recommended that the forms be listed under a general heading and not by Departments. A two-week deadline was given for the completion.

6.0 **Presentation/Demo on Traffic Department Electronic Testing** – Mr. Rene Cardona, MIS Manager

6.1 The MIS Manager provided a presentation/demo on the Traffic Department Electronic Testing.

6.1.1 The MIS Manager shared that the Traffic Department's Written Test is being converted to an electronic test. The MIS Manager stated that the electronic test will be administered on the Moodle platform with the Safe Browser Operating System.

The MIS Manager explained that the Safe Browser Operating System converts a computer to a kiosk.

6.1.2 The MIS Manager stated that the electronic test could be administered in multiple languages.

6.1.3 A deadline of mid-April was given for the completion.

7.0 Submissions to Building Unit

- Request from Coastal Zone Management Authority & Institute (**CZMAI**) to erect sign in front of property, located at Princess Margaret Drive, for the purpose of installing a visitor directory – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request from Mr. Ian Gaynair to construct a structure on reserve (Lacroix Boulevard/Holy Emmanuel Street) for the purpose of selling purified water – **MOTION PASSED**

N.B. Councilors Pitts and Pollard Jr. abstained.

- Request from Ms. Stella Rudon to remove two booths in front of Parcel #616, Block #45, Lake Independence – (**DEFERRED**) – requires further investigation
- Request from Mr. Jesus Echeverria to construct roof overhang for booth #32A at Michael Finnegan Market – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request from Mr. Kevin Tillett, Arthrium Technology to sell cell phones and accessories next to Brodies (near to Battlefield Park) – **DENIED**
- Request from Ms. Claudia Amaya to remain on reserve (Philip Goldson Highway/Buttonwood Bay) for the purpose of selling fruits & vegetables – Council will await decision of the Court.
- Request from Mrs. Ana Maria Espat, Building Unit Manager for “No Off-site Parking” Policy – (**DEFERRED**)
- Request from Ms. Angela Wagner, Central Bank of Belize to make alterations to sideway to create ease of access to Bank’s property – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request from Mr. William Quan c/o Mr. Antonio Quan to construct parking space on reserve (University Drive/Freshman Lane” for apartment tenants – **DENIED**

- Request from Sir Andie to reconstruct/remodel bus stop located on Central American Boulevard, across from entrance of Jane Usher Boulevard (sponsored by Belize Global Travel Services) – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request from Mr. Martin Pollard to sell barbecue in Mule Park (facing Belize Bank entrance) - **DENIED**

8.0 Election of New Deputy Mayor

8.1 Mayor Wagner stated that Councilor Oscar Arnold has served the Council well as Deputy Mayor for two consecutive terms. Mayor Wagner further stated that Councilor Arnold always held over well in his absence.

8.2 Councilor Arnold stated that it was a pleasure to have served as Deputy Mayor and thanked Mayor Wagner and his fellow Councilors for their support. Councilor Arnold further thanked Mayor Wagner for the confidence that he placed and maintained in him throughout his two terms as Deputy Mayor.

8.3 Nominations

8.3.1 Councilor Micah Goodin was nominated by Councilors Castellanos and Pitts.

8.3.2 Councilor Michael Norales was nominated by Councilors Elijio and Hylton.

8.4 Votes Casted

Councilor Michael Norales

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Councilor Delthrude Hylton
Councilor Ryan Elijio
Councilor Albert Vaughan

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Councilor Javier Castellanos

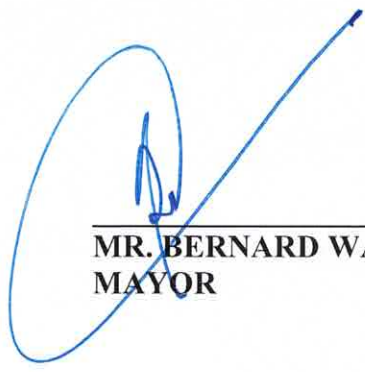
8.5 Voting Results

Councilor Michael Norales (**6 votes**), Councilor Micah Goodin (**4 votes**)

8.5.1 Councilor Michael Norales was elected as the Council's new Deputy Mayor for the period March 2020 – March 2021.

9.0 Adjournment

9.1 Councilor Hylton moved for the meeting to be adjourned. Councilor Gentle seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.



MR. BERNARD WAGNER
MAYOR



MRS. STEPHANIE LINDO-GARBUTT
CITY ADMINISTRATOR