

MINUTES of CAUCUS MEETING

May 21, 2019
Belize City Hall

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 Elijo | Councilor |
| 8. Ms. Aisha Gentle | Councilor |
| 9. Mr. Albert Vaughan | Councilor |
| 10. Mr. Michael Norales | Councilor |

Mrs. Stephanie Lindo-Garbutt, City Administrator

Mr. Rafael Sosa, Manager, Office of the Mayor

Apologies:

Councilor Dr. Candice Pitts (out of the country)

Attendance by Invitation:

Ms. Tamara Minto, Communications Manager

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by Mayor Wagner after which he led his Councilors in reciting the Belize National Prayer.

1.0 Corrections to April 9, 2019 Minutes

- 1.1 On page 2, under 2.3, change **Joseph Kee's Lawyer** to **Pier One Matter**.
- 1.2 On page 3, separate Renewal of City Administrator's Contract and Social Assistance. Also include support for renewal of the City Administrator's contract registered by Deputy Mayor Arnold and Councilor Goodin.
- 1.3 On page 7, under 12.1, move last paragraph to **Other Business** section of Minutes.
- 1.4 On page 7, under 13.3, it should read, Mr. **Umberto** Martinez and not **Humberto** Martinez.
- 1.5 On page 8, under 13.6, add the following: The Board of Survey also probed into the Council's expenditures. The Board of Survey has been an annual exercise; however, this is the first time that the issue of the Council's expenditures has been scrutinized.
- 1.6 Councilor Goodin moved for the Minutes of the April 9, 2019 Caucus Meeting to be accepted with amendments. Councilor Gentle seconded the motion.

2.0 Matters Arising from Minutes

2.1 Dredging of Zeitown and North Creek Canals

- 2.1.1 Mayor Wagner commended Councilor Vaughan for the dredging of the Zeitown and North Creek Canals that is ongoing.
- 2.1.2 Councilor Vaughan expressed his thanks to the Mayor and his technical team for the recent site visit they conducted to observe the dredging of the canals.

2.2. BTL Park Leases

- 2.2.1 Mayor Wagner requested an update on the BTL Park Leases.

2.2.2 The City Administrator informed that the Assistant Parks Manager has compiled the relevant information and has passed it on to the Director of Legal Affairs.

2.3 Manhole Covers Project

2.3.1 Councilor Vaughan shared that the Council is almost halfway with the completion of the Manhole Covers Project. Councilor Vaughan stated that he will ask the City Engineer to provide an updated list of manholes covered by the following week.

2.3.2 The City Administrator stated that she will ask the City Engineer to include the names of streets, on which manhole covers are installed, in subsequent reports.

2.4 Drainage Works

2.4.1 Councilor Vaughan thanked Councilor Norales for the ongoing cleaning/clearing of drains in the City.

2.4.2 Mayor Wagner lauded the drainage works that were recently carried out on Cleghorn Street.

2.5 Littering Tickets

2.5.1 Mayor Wagner informed that the Ministry of Local Government had indicated that it would provide the Council with littering tickets for issuance. Mayor Wagner shared about a littering ticket, in the amount of \$2000.00, that was recently issued to a business next to City Hall.

2.5.2 The City Administrator informed that the Council received a donation of fifty (50) garbage drums that will be placed strategically in the City. The City Administrator stated that the Council continues to employ its “3-E Approach”.

2.5.3 Councilor Vaughan and Deputy Mayor Arnold asked about what action(s) will be taken against residents who are caught with illegal sewer connections. Councilor Vaughan suggested that the Council collaborates with the Ministry of Health.

- 2.5.4 Councilor Castellanos recommended that, initially, the Council should issue a stern warning, *before issuing a fine*, to those residents who are caught with illegal sewer connections.
- 2.5.5 Councilor Norales informed that the Council recently had a meeting with the Ministry of Health and that both parties agreed to develop a plan of action.
- 2.6 **Contract for Champion Security System Limited**
- 2.6.1 The City Administrator informed that the MIS Manager has provided an estimate for surveillance cameras.
- 2.7 **Gabourel Lane Speedbump**
- 2.7.1 Councilor Goodin asked about the erection of a speedbump on Gabourel Lane.
- 2.7.2 Councilor Vaughan informed that he has tasked the Works Manager with making a site visit and determining a way forward.
- 3.0 **Presentation on BCC Flag Design Competition** - Ms. Tamara Minto, Communications Manager
- 3.1 Ms. Minto shared that the Council's Public Relations Department received over fifty submissions for the Flag Design Competition. After reviewing all the submissions, the PR Department created a shortlist of three submissions.
- 3.2 Councilor Goodin expressed that none of the three shortlisted designs represented the Council.
- 3.3 Councilor Gentle stated that she could not vote for any of the three designs.
- 3.4 Councilor Norales suggested to the Communications Manager that she prepares a PowerPoint Presentation and shares it with the Mayor and Councilors.

- 3.5 Deputy Mayor Arnold acknowledged the efforts of the PR Department and suggested that more time be afforded for the selection process.
- 3.6 It was decided that the Council would extend the deadline for the submission of designs and inform those persons who already sent in their submissions.
- 3.7 The Communications Manager shared the Belize City Council's Calendar of Events for the remainder of 2019 and a PR Request Form that has been developed and shared with the Council's Departments.

4.0 Mayor's Motions

4.1 Parking Meters

- 4.1.1 Mayor Wagner shared that the Mayors Association of Belize welcomes the proposed implementation of parking meters in all nine municipalities because the initiative is bipartisan.
- 4.1.2 Councilor Vaughan rose in support of the motion for the installation of parking meters and expressed his wish for the Council to revisit the proposal for the removal derelict vehicles that was submitted by Men @ Work Towing & Impound Company Limited. Councilor Vaughan stated that the company's proposal ties into the parking meter proposal.
- 4.1.3 Councilor Goodin expressed his support for the proposed implementation of parking meters and recommended that the Council conducts public consultations.
- 4.1.4 Mayor Wagner explained that the motion is simply for the Council to pass the relevant resolution in order for the process to commence.
- 4.1.5 Councilor Castellanos shared that a common theme, shared during his recent trip to the Kingdom of Bahrain, was the need for local governments to identify alternative sources of revenue.
- 4.1.6 Deputy Mayor Arnold shared that he hopes that the Council would earn some long-term benefits from the implementation of the parking meters.

4.1.7 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the implementation of parking meters. **ALL** Councilors voted unanimously in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

4.2 City Spin Proposal

4.2.1 After reviewing the City Spin Proposal, which is for a spin cycle gym and a food & drink bar to be operated at the former Pier One location, Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the City Spin Proposal. All Councilors present, except for Councilor Elijio who abstained, voted against the motion.

4.3 Procurement Contracts Ref: Acquisition of Essentials for New City Hall

4.3.1 Mayor Wagner shared about the procurement contracts that the Council will enter into for the acquisition of an elevator, back-up generator, furniture/fixtures and appliances for the new City Hall.

4.3.2 Mayor Wagner moved a motion to authorize the Mayor to enter into procurement contracts with the following suppliers: Weld Struck Welding Service (elevator), Caribbean Property Developers (furniture/fixtures), Mr. Alberto Riverol (appliances), Caribbean Property Developers (back-up generator), Belize Trade Center (furniture & fixtures for first and second floors). **ALL** Councilors voted in favor of the motion. **MOTION PASSED**

4.4 Formalization of MOU Between Belize City Council (BCC) and Central Building Authority (CBA)

4.4.1 Mayor Wagner shared that the Memorandum of Understanding (**MOU**) between the Belize City Council (**BCC**) and the Central Building Authority (**CBA**) would center around the two entities working together to process building permits and to share fees equally for the period February 21, 2018 to March 31, 2019.

4.4.2 The City Administrator informed that the Council has made collections, on behalf of the Central Building Authority (CBA) since July of 2018. Councilor Elijio corroborated what the City Administrator said.

4.4.3 The City Administrator shared that the CBA had provided the Council with a second MOU.

4.4.4 Mayor Wagner stated that the Council would have to seek further clarification.
MOTION DEFERRED

4.5 No Objection Letter for Stake Bank Project

4.5.1 Mayor Wagner moved a motion to authorize the Council to issue a “No Objection Letter” to Stake Bank Enterprise Limited for a Cruise Tourism Development Project On Stake Bank Caye. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

4.6 Addendum to Infrastructure Works Contract Ref Bella Vista Streets

4.6.1 Mayor Wagner moved a motion to authorize the Mayor to proceed with placing an addendum to the Infrastructure Works Contract for Bella Vista streets signed between the Belize City Council and RJB Construction and dated **February 12, 2018**. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

4.7 Appointment of Heritage Financial Services Limited as Fiscal Agent for Bond Offering

4.7.1 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the appointment of Heritage Financial Services as Fiscal Agent for the Belize City Council 2019 Series 1 Municipal Paper. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

5.0 Youth & Sports Budgets – Councilor Micah Goodin

5.1 BCC Summer Basketball League 2019

5.1.1 Councilor Goodin presented the budget for the BCC Summer Basketball League 2019.

5.1.2 Mayor Wagner shared that the lion’s share of the budget will be covered by business donations. Mayor Wagner stated that he views the BCC Summer Basketball League not in light of its financial costs but, more importantly, in light of the impact that the program will have on some 500 plus youths.

- 5.1.3 Councilor Gentle rose in support of the budget and expressed her concern about how the organizers of the Summer Basketball League will address injuries that may be sustained by the youth participants. Councilor Goodin shared that support/assistance of the Belize Red Cross will be enlisted.
- 5.1.4 Councilor Hylton recommended that the organizers engage the youth participants in the clean-up at the conclusion of the tournament. Councilor Hylton stated that the clean-up should not be left to the Council's Sanitation Department.
- 5.1.5 The City Administrator expressed her concern about having employees of the Council serve as officials for the tournament.
- 5.1.6 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the budget for the BCC Summer Basketball League 2019. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

5.2 BCC Summer Baseball Program 2019

- 5.2.1 Councilor Goodin presented the budget for the BCC Summer Baseball Program 2019.
- 5.2.2 Mayor Wagner stated that he fully supports the initiative because it represents one of the Council's Manifesto Pledges.
- 5.2.3 Deputy Mayor Arnold shared that there exist two baseball groups that are currently feuding.
- 5.2.4 Councilor Goodin stated that he would not concern himself with the internal politics of the two feuding groups. Councilor Goodin shared that his main concern has to do with the impact that the Summer Baseball Program will have on the youth participants.
- 5.2.5 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the budget for the BCC Summer Baseball Program 2019. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

5.3 BCC Art Night

- 5.3.1 Councilor Goodin presented the budget for the BCC Art Night and shared an overview of the event. Councilor Goodin shared that the Art Night will see some twenty-five young people from the City engaging in painting under the tutelage of a professional artist.
- 5.3.2 Deputy Mayor Arnold lauded the Art Night initiative and asked if the easels would be reusable for future events. Councilor Goodin stated that the easels would become the property of the Council.
- 5.3.3 Councilor Allan Pollard Jr. informed that the Council, under Special Events, would be hosting an event called “Saturday Night Light”. Councilor Pollard Jr. suggested to Councilor Goodin that the Art Night be a part of the “Saturday Night Light” event. Councilor Goodin agreed with Councilor Pollard Jr.’s suggestion.
- 5.3.4 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the budget for the BCC Art Night. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

N.B. The City Administrator shared that she was not privy to the three aforementioned budgets prior to the Caucus Meeting.

Councilor Goodin shared that he has embarked on an initiative to raise \$10,000 which will serve as an educational fund for secondary and tertiary students. Councilor Goodin shared that the \$10,000 will be raised through barbecue sales. Councilor Goodin further shared that a brief ceremony will be held to award scholarships to students who will be selected by Area Representatives and Standard Bearers.

6.0 Traffic Writing Test Proposal – Councilor Allan Pollard Jr.

- 6.1.1 Councilor Pollard Jr. stated that the current Traffic Writing Test is archaic and tedious. Councilor Pollard Jr. shared that the proposed new Traffic Writing Test will be in the form of a software which will be uploaded to tablets. Councilor Pollard Jr. shared that the software will be bilingual (English and Spanish).

6.1.2 Councilor Pollard Jr. informed that the testing room area at the Traffic Department will be renovated and that two surveillance cameras will be installed to prevent any cheating on the Traffic Writing Test.

6.1.3 Mayor Wagner commended Councilor Pollard Jr for the proposal. Mayor Wagner urged Councilor Pollard Jr. to share the software with the MIS Manager.

6.1.4 Deputy Mayor asked about whom would be in possession of the source code for the Writing Test software.

6.1.5 Councilor Goodin applauded the efforts of Councilor Pollard Jr. and expressed his full support for the Traffic Writing Test proposal. Councilor Goodin stated that the proposal is an excellent one as it will revolutionize the services provided by the Council.

6.1.6 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the Traffic Writing Test Proposal. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

6.1.7 Mayor Wagner reiterated that the Traffic Department needs to step up its enforcement. Councilor Castellanos recommended that the Traffic Department deploy Traffic Officers more strategically across the City.

6.1.8 Councilor Vaughan recommended that the minutes of the Traffic Management Committee be shared with the Mayor & Councilors.

6.1.9 Mayor Wagner asked about the fifty (50) buckets of Thermoplastic Road Marking Paint that were recently procured for the Traffic Department. Councilor Pollard Jr. informed that the buckets of paint are still at the Santa Elena Northern Border. Councilor Vaughan suggested that the Council hires a truck driver in Corozal to transport the buckets of paint from the Northern Border to the City.

7.0 City Administrator's Matters

7.1 Christian Workers Union (CWU)

7.1.1 The City Administrator informed that the new Labour Commissioner had written to the Council requesting that the Council provide justifications for the termination of former employees, Mr. Cecil Jenkins and Ms. Shana White. The City

Administrator shared that Council had to furnish a vast number of documents. The City Administrator informed that the Labour Commissioner will conduct a mediation session in Belmopan on **Friday, May 31, 2019**.

7.1.2 The City Administrator shared that the Christian Workers Union (CWU) has requested that the Council reinstate both former employees. The City Administrator informed that both former employees have been paid their gratuities in full.

7.1.3 Councilor Elijio opined that the Council is bending too much to the CWU and suggested that a team, comprising Councilors, be assembled to interface with the CWU before the Union meets with the Mayor.

7.1.4 Councilor Goodin stated that labor unions are an integral part of the democratic process. Councilor Goodin recommended that the Council take along its Legal Advisor to the mediation session in Belmopan.

7.2 Trade License Re-evaluation Exercise

7.2.1 The City Administrator informed that the Council needs to foot an additional \$9000 for the ongoing Trade License Re-evaluation Exercise. The City Administrator shared that the budget was originally estimated at \$12,000.

7.2.2 The City Administrator informed that the CWU has requested that the Council covers subsistence costs for Council employees who are participating in the Trade License Re-evaluation Exercise. This is in addition to the Council covering transportation, accommodation and meals for employees. Mayor Wagner stated that he supports the payment of subsistence to those employees.

7.3 Champion Security System Limited Price Quotation

7.3.1 The City Administrator shared the review of the price quotation submitted by Champion Security System Limited that was done by the MIS Manager.

7.3.2 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the price quotation submitted by Champion Security System Limited. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

7.4 Council Vacancies

- 7.4.1 The City Administrator informed that three vacancies have been advertised externally, **Vehicle Care Coordinator**, **Assistant to City Engineer** and **Back Hoe Operator** respectively.
- 7.4.2 The City Administrator informed that a total of six applications has been received for the post of Vehicle Care Coordinator. A total of nine applications have been received for the post of Back Hoe Operator. One application only has been received for the post of Assistant to City Engineer. As for the latter, the City Administrator asked for the Council's approval for the post of Assistant to City Engineer to be re-advertised. The City Administrator shared that the new advertisement would state that the salary will be negotiable. The Council gave its approval for the post to be re-advertised with the salary being negotiable.
- 7.4.3 Councilor Vaughan shared that he was approached by two qualified applicants who both expressed concern about the salary for the post.

7.5 Resignation of Parks Manager

- 7.5.1 The City Administrator informed that Mr. Louis Thompson Jr., Parks Manager, has tendered his resignation.

7.6 BCC Staff Appreciation Day

- 7.6.1 The City Administrator informed that the Council will host a Staff Appreciation Day on **May 24, 2019**. The Staff Appreciation Day will commence with a church service after which everyone will travel to Old Belize for a day of fun activities on the beach. The City Administrator shared that the Staff Appreciation Day will combine Labour Day, Mother's Day and Father's Day. A skeletal staff, comprising Traffic Officers, Special Constables and Park Rangers will report to normal duty; however, they will still receive lunch, tokens and a day back.

7.7 Appointment of MIS Manager

7.7.1 The City Administrator informed that Mr. Rene Cardona, MIS Manager will now be engaged with the Council five days per week. Mr. Cardona was previously engaged three days per week. Mr. Cardona's pay entitlements remain the same and his remuneration package will now include benefits he is entitled to as a manager.

7.7.2 Councilor Goodin rose in support of the appointment of Mr. Rene Cardona as MIS Manager. Councilor Goodin shared that, as the Councilor responsible for MIS, he is very pleased with the performance of Mr. Cardona.

7.7.3 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the appointment of Mr. Rene Cardona as MIS Manager. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

8.0 Other Business

8.1 Councilor Eljio lamented the worsening crime situation in the City and suggested that the Council should consider undertaking an anti-crime campaign.

8.2 Deputy Mayor Arnold suggested that the campaign be tied into the Summer Basketball League. Deputy Mayor Arnold suggested a slogan – "Shoot a Ball Not a Gun"

8.3 Deputy Mayor Arnold shared a brief update on recent meetings of the EOC.

8.4 Councilor Castellanos shared a report on his recent trip to the Kingdom of Bahrain and presented the Mayor with a small token from the Kingdom.

8.5 Councilor Goodin raised the case of Sanitation Department employee, Ms. Shirley Smith who was recently appointed to her post as Sanitation Supervisor. Councilor Goodin shared that Ms. Smith is desirous of acquiring a motorcycle to aid in the execution of her duties.

8.6 The City Administrator stated that it was unfortunate that Ms. Smith did not approach her previously given the fact that motorcycles purchased from Caribbean Motors Ltd.

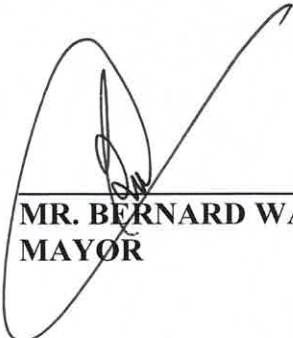
were recently sold to Council employees. The City Administrator stated that she will meet with Ms. Smith to see how best the Council could facilitate her request.

8.7 Councilor Goodin raised the concern of a resident who informed that he hasn't been able to obtain a driver's license due to the fact that he is in arrears with his property tax.

8.8 Councilor Vaughan stated that the Council needs to take a hard look at the system that was put in place by the previous Mayor that disallowed people with property tax arrears from accessing the services of the Traffic Department.

9.0 Adjournment

9.1 Councilor Gentle moved for the meeting to be adjourned. Councilor Hylton seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.



MR. BERNARD WAGNER
MAYOR



MRS. STEPHANIE LINDO-GARBUTT
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

