

MINUTES of CAUCUS MEETING

Belize City Hall
July 21, 2020

Present:

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

Mrs. Stephanie Lindo-Garbutt, City Administrator

Mr. Rafael Sosa, Manager, Office of the Mayor

Apologies: Councilor Micah Goodin

The meeting was called to order at 10:11 a.m. by Mayor Wagner after which he led his Councilors in reciting the Belize National Prayer.

- 1.0 Corrections to June 16, 2020 Minutes
- 1.1 Under 4.4, replace the word “concreting” with “chip & seal”.
- 1.2 On page 14, under the heading “Cost Saving Measures (revised)”, insert the following correction: **Mother’s Day Program: \$10,000**

1.3 On page 15, insert the following as italicized: The City Administrator requested a motion for the Council to approve the write-off of *the interest on* property taxes for the months of May and June 2020.

2.0 Ratification of June 16, 2020 Minutes

2.1 Councilor Gentle moved for the Minutes to be accepted with corrections.
Councilor Elijo seconded.

3.0 Matters Arising

3.1 **Development Finance Corporation (DFC)** - Mayor Wagner informed of a recent conference call that he had with the DFC and stated that the Council is moving ahead with the Ring Road Park, Downtown Bus Stop and Traffic Light projects.

3.1.1 Mayor Wagner shared that the DFC was requesting of the Council that it provides collateral. Mayor Wagner further shared that he indicated to the DFC that the loan should not be collateralized. Mayor Wagner told the DFC that its offer of a loan to the Council should be based on the DFC's confidence in the City.

3.2 **Urban Gardening Project** – Councilor Arnold reported that the Collet and Port Loyola Constituencies have agreed to utilize the vacant lots that have been identified for urban gardens.

3.2.1 Councilor Arnold informed that a ZOOM conference call will be held with a herbalist who is located in Cayo.

3.2.2 Councilor Arnold shared that due to the Council's heavy-duty equipment currently being out of commission, no clearing of the vacant lots has taken place as yet.

3.2.3 Councilor Elijo recommended to Councilor Arnold that he seeks the expertise of Prosser Fertilizer.

- 3.2.4 Mayor Wagner requested that a start be made with one of the vacant lots.
- 3.3 **Belize City Swing Bridge** – The City Administrator reported that the City Engineer has sent a letter to the Ministry of Works Chief Engineer along with the assessment report that was prepared by Mr. Carlton Young of Young’s Engineering Consultancy Limited.
- 3.4 **Donation of Face Masks** – Mayor Wagner stated that the Council should donate face masks that it received from the Taiwanese Embassy to schools in the City. Mayor Wagner tasked the Mayor’s Aide with coordinating the distribution of face masks to schools.
- 3.5 **Belize City Accelerator Program (BCAP)** – Councilor Castellanos provided an update on the Belize City Accelerator Program (BCAP). Councilor Castellanos stated that the BCAP’s initial cohort successfully completed a two-week business training. Councilor Castellanos shared that the ten participants, who make up the initial cohort, have been provided with appliances, other equipment and supplies to enhance their small businesses.
- 3.5.1 Mayor Wagner stressed that the BCAP is a critical initiative of the Council and one that is too big to fail.
- 3.5.2 Mayor Wagner stated that the Council should engage the services of the entrepreneurs in order for them to start generating income.
- 3.5.3 Councilor Vaughan recommended that a fee be attached to the application for the BCAP.
- 3.5.4 Mayor Wagner shared that several businesses and organizations have expressed their interest in partnering with the Council by providing funding for the BCAP.
- 3.6 **Bella Vista Community Residents** – The City Administrator informed that the residents of the Bella Vista Community did not pay their property taxes in advance as indicated previously.



- 3.7 **Procurement of Heavy-Duty Equipment for Sanitation Department** – Deputy Mayor Norales informed that the Council will obtain the titles for the two dump trucks, one garbage compactor truck and one street sweeper by July 31. Deputy Mayor Norales stated that it will take three business days for US Customs to clear the trucks.
- 3.8 **Street Infrastructure Works** – Councilor Vaughan informed about additional infrastructure works which will include: Tigris Street (Mesopotamia), Nurse Seay Street (Caribbean Shores), Victoria Street (Pickstock), Cemetery Lane (Albert Street) and Banak Street (Collet).
- 3.9 **Renewal of Contract for Ranger Security** – The City Administrator informed that the contract for Ranger Security has been sent to the Council’s Attorney for redrafting. The City Administrator stated that the redrafting of the contract is not yet complete.
- 3.10 **Landfilling of Eternal Garden** – The City Administrator stated that the Bill of Quantities for the Landfilling of Eternal Garden was approved by the Council at its June 16, 2020 Caucus Meeting. The City Administrator shared that no contract has been signed as yet.
- 3.11 **Renewal of Contract for Technical Manager, Building Unit** – The City Administrator informed that Mrs. Ana Maria Espat did not express any issues/concerns with her contract renewal and did not request any increase in remuneration. The City Administrator shared that Mrs. Espat, however, took issue with the Acting Allowance she currently receives for holding over in the absence of the City Planner as prescribed by the Council’s General Administrative Rules (**GAR**).
- 3.12 **Gwen’s Kitchen** – The City Administrator reported that a meeting was held with Mr. Kenynan Flowers, Proprietor of Gwen’s Kitchen. The meeting included the City Administrator, the Valuation Manager, the Revenue Manager and the City Engineer. The City Administrator shared that Mr. Flowers provided a letter of clearance/approval from the Fire Department which makes way for him to obtain a Liquor License. The City Administrator stated that the Council will conduct a reassessment of the Trade License for Gwen’s Kitchen.



3.12.1 Councilor Elijio shared that Belize Water Services Limited (**BWSL**) is requesting a letter from the City Engineer in order for the company to install water for the vendors who currently occupy the Coney Drive Reserve.

3.13 **Downtown Super Sale (Back-to-School Edition)** – Mayor Wagner shared that after consulting with the Ministry of Health, the decision was made to hold off on the Downtown Super Sale (Back-to-School Edition) that was scheduled for August 1, 2020.

3.13.1 The City Administrator shared that the Council had already approached those businesses that usually participate in the Downtown Super Sale, namely Angelus Press Limited, Dibary, Brodies and A & R. The City Administrator stated that all the aforementioned businesses indicated that they would not have been able to participate in the August 1 Downtown Super Sale.

4.0 **Mayor's Motions/Announcements/Matters**

4.1 **Proposal from Mr. Cedric Flowers, Certified Public Accountant** – Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to retain the services of Mr. Cedric Flowers, CPA for FY 2020 and 2021. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**

5.0 **Renaming of Isaiah Morter Monument** – Councilor Vaughan recommended that the Isaiah Morter Monument to be renamed “Isaiah Morter Square”.

5.1 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the renaming of the Isaiah Morter Monument. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

6.0 **Cost Estimates for Covering of Manholes on Dean Street and Water Lane**

6.1 Councilor Vaughan presented the cost estimates for the covering of manholes on Dean Street and Water Lane.

6.2 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the cost estimates for the covering of manholes on Dean Street (**\$13,280.00**) and Water Lane (**\$3840.00**). **ALL** Councilors voted in favor - **MOTION PASSED**

N.B. The meeting reconvened at 1:30 p.m. Mayor Wagner asked Deputy Mayor Norales to chair the second half of the meeting.

7.0 **City Administrator’s Updates**

Financial Snapshot: Projections (July 2020) - \$1.6 MIL

July 1 – 15, 2020: \$338,758

June 1 – 15, 2020: \$371,719

7.1 The City Administrator reported that the Council is experiencing several maintenance issues with the new City Hall building. These include the following:

- **Plumbing** – water pump/pressure tank (Pump replaced, union snapped twice in same week, four repairs).
- **Lighting** – LED lights burn out due to condensation (Walls don’t go up to ceilings).
- **Elevator Shaft** – Water seeps in underneath and has to be pumped out regularly.
- **Ground Floor** – holds water in two areas due to improper slopes and design

- **Water Leaks** – four locations on 3rd Floor (Director of Administration Office, Communications Manager Office, lobby area, computer servers room), three locations on 2nd Floor (Planning Unit, computer servers room, Finance Department), restrooms, wall (\$17,000)

7.2 **General Updates:**

Municipal Court – renovation of former City Hall underway, exterior repairs underway, electrical and IT installations underway, relocation in August 2020

Summer Programs – basketball camp, community support, Youth Shadow Council, complemented by video series

September Celebrations – Plan A & B

- 7.3 The City Administrator informed that Ms. Monique Yearwood, Human Resources Manager, has tendered her resignation from the Council. The City Administrator shared that the HR Manager's last official day of work is **July 17, 2020**.
- 7.3.1 The City Administrator informed that, on the directive of the Mayor, the post of Human Resources Manager won't be filled right now. The City Administrator stated that the Director of Administration will hold over the post in the interim.
- 7.4 The City Administrator reported that the Council is currently processing deferred salary payments for staff for pay period April 1 – 15, 2020.
- 8.0 **Project Proposal for Open Lot Adjacent to Belize City Swing Bridge** – Councilor Castellanos presented a project proposal for the construction of a restaurant and park on the open lot that is located adjacent to the Belize City Swing Bridge.
- 8.1 Councilor Castellanos presented letters of clearance that have been provided by the Fire Department and the Ministry of Health.

- 8.1.1 Councilor Elijio stated that the location for the proposed project is gazetted for a fire hydrant.
- 8.1.2 Councilor Vaughan suggested that the City Administrator review the project proposal in more detail and to advise the Council accordingly before it makes a final decision on the project proposal.
- 9.0 **Vendor Proposals for DIGI Park** – Councilor Gentle presented applications for booths at the DIGI Park.
- Mr. Blayne Coleman, B’s Takeout – **APPROVED**
 - Ms. Sharlett McNab and Ms. Loraine Sanchez – **APPROVED**
 - Ms. Roshanda Williams – **APPROVED**
 - Mr. Enrique Depaz – **APPROVED**

10.0 Submissions to Building Unit

- Request from Crème De La Crème II for offsetting of trade and lease for investment made at Rock Wall Park – **MOTION PASSED** (offset approved for cost of constructing bathroom **ONLY**)
- Request from Cellular World to repair drainage and sidewalk at the corner of Queen Street and Eve Street (**no vote required**)
- Request from John Arana, Downtown Rejuvenation Project for the installation of interpretive signage on Albert Street, Regent Street and inside of Battlefield Park – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request from Fuxing Tan to construct a sidewalk, with drainage, and for the purpose of parking at the corner of Albert Hoy Avenue and Thomas Vincent Ramos Street – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request from Jershon Naj to construct a wooden structure (10’ x 10’) on Youth for the Future Drive for the purpose of selling tacos – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request from Jerson Portillo to construct a wooden structure in front of property, located at 9206 M & M Street in Lake Independence, for the purpose of selling food – **MOTION PASSED** (Structure must measure 10’ x 10’).
- Request from Tricia Reynolds to continue selling barbecue at the corner of Youth for the Future Drive and Ebony Street – **DENIED**



- Request from Mrs. Ana Maria Espat for the Council to institute a “No Off-site Parking” Policy for building projects in accordance with National Guidelines – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request from Mr. Tony Perdomo & Ms. Sarah Beck, Tony’s BBQ – **MOTION PASSED** (lease rate set at \$350.00/mth, cost of installing DIGI sign)
- Request from Marcella Meighan to construct a booth at the corner of Raccon Street & Seagull Street for the purpose of selling bread and bun - **DENIED**

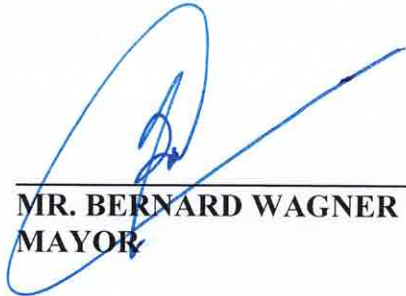
11.0 Other Business

- 11.1 Councilor Vaughan informed about COMEX Paints wanting to partner with the Council to paint the Pallotti Overpass.

12.0 Adjournment

- 12.1 Councilor Elijio moved for the meeting to be adjourned. Deputy Mayor Norales seconded the motion. The meeting ended at 3:07 p.m.





MR. BERNARD WAGNER
MAYOR



MRS. STEPHANIE LINDO-GARBUTT
CITY ADMINISTRATOR