

MINUTES of CAUCUS MEETING

Belize City Hall
June 16, 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. 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. Allan Pollard Jr. | Councilor |
| 11. Dr. Candice Pitts | Councilor |

Mrs. Stephanie Lindo-Garbutt, City Administrator

Mr. Rafael Sosa, Manager, Office of the Mayor

The meeting was called to order at 10:16 a.m. by Mayor Wagner after which he led his Councilors in reciting the Belize National Prayer.

Mayor Wagner recognized and commended Councilor Hylton and the staff of the Council's Public Health Department for teaming up with the Ministry of Health and carrying out the spraying for mosquitoes in the City.

Mayor Wagner expressed that he was pleased with the synergy among his Councilors and encouraged his Councilors to build on that synergy.

Mayor Wagner congratulated Councilor Pollard Jr. on being named as the new PUP Standard Bearer for the Queen's Square Constituency.

1.0 Corrections/Additions/Revisions to May 7, 2020 Minutes

- 1.1 Under 3.2, insert the following correction: *Mayor Wagner further stated that based on the Bond Covenant, the Council had to pay down \$4 MIL in debts.*
- 1.2 Under 3.5, insert the following correction: *Mayor Wagner stated that, to date, the Council has reduced its debt obligations by \$3 MIL plus and is close to becoming current with its payments to Belize Waste Control Limited.*
- 1.3 Under 3.6, add the following after the last sentence: ... *this action would free up the Tourism Head Tax as well as the Government of Belize Subvention.*
- 1.4 Under 6.0, insert the following sentence under the heading, **Repairs to Belize City Swing Bridge**: *The City Administrator was asked to exit the meeting room while the matter of the repairs to the Belize Swing Bridge was being discussed.*
- 1.5 Under 7.0, add the following under the heading, **2020 Retirement**: *The Council discussed the matter of retirement and agreed to discuss the matter further and to make a final decision at a later date.*

2.0 Ratification of May 7, 2020 Minutes

- 2.1 Councilor Goodin moved for the Minutes to be accepted with corrections/additions/revisions. Councilor Arnold seconded the motion.

3.0 Matters Arising from Minutes

- 3.1 **Logwood Street** – Councilor Vaughan stated that Logwood Street will be included in future infrastructure projects.
- 3.2 **Development Finance Corporation (DFC)** – Mayor Wagner informed about a meeting that was recently held between himself, the City Administrator and the management of the DFC. Mayor Wagner reported that the DFC is amenable to funding the Ring Road Park, Downtown Bus Stop and Traffic Light Systems.

- 3.3 **Urban Gardening Project** – Councilor Arnold reported that three Constituencies, i.e. Albert, Lake Independence and Mesopotamia, have already identified vacant lots. Councilor Arnold stated that the Valuation Manager has been asked to provide a report on the vacant lots as it relates to the status of the property taxes. Councilor Arnold stated that the vacant lots will be cleared and spread with black soil on July 17, 2020.
- 3.3.1 Councilor Arnold further shared that Green Patch Nursery in the City, Belize Botanic Gardens and another nursery in Cayo have been contacted and have all expressed their excitement in being a part of the Council’s Urban Gardening Project. Councilor Arnold informed that a Zoom conference call will take place between the Council and the three nurseries.
- 3.3.2 Mayor Wagner stated that the Council will provide the initial funding for the Urban Gardening Project. Mayor Wagner emphasized that building partnerships will be crucial for the Council in order for the Urban Gardening Project to succeed.
- 3.4 **Assessment Report on Belize City Swing Bridge** – The City Administrator will submit the assessment report, prepared by Mr. Carlton Young, to the Ministry of Works.
- 4.0 **Mayor’s Announcements/Updates/Motions**
- 4.1 Mayor Wagner informed that the Council will receive a donation of face masks and thermometers from the Embassy of the Republic of China (**Taiwan**). Mayor Wagner stated that the Council will also receive a \$25,000 financial contribution which will be earmarked for the Council’s Startup Accelerator Program.
- 4.2 Mayor Wagner informed that the Caribbean Local Government Forum (**CLGF**) will also provide funding to the Council (\$35,000 EUROS) for the Startup Accelerator Program and the Downtown Super Sale Initiative.

- 4.3 Mayor Wagner informed about the proposal that had to be fast tracked for the \$6 MIL funding due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Mayor Wagner shared that according to the Caribbean Local Government Forum (CLGF), the prospects of the partnership funding looks favorable.
- 4.4 **Bella Vista – Motion to Offset Future Taxes to be Paid by Residents in Advance Vis-a-Vis Chip & Seal of Sir Colville Young Street**
- 4.4.1 Mayor Wagner informed that the residents of the Bella Vista Community will be paying property taxes in advance for a period of four (4) years commencing 2020.
- 4.4.2 The City Administrator cautioned against the Council collecting property taxes in advance for a period of four (4) years. The City Administrator stated that the property taxes will be collected based on current assessments and could change if and when any reassessments occur.
- 4.4.3 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of an offset of future taxes to be paid (in advance for a period of four years) by the residents of the Bella Vista Community. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**
- 4.5 **Ring Road Park** - Mayor Wagner stated that Ring Road Park will be a sustainable child friendly park, a green park and a water park.
- 4.5.1 Councilor Gentle expressed her satisfaction with the design that the City Planner had created for Ring Road Park. Councilor Gentle underscored the importance for the Council to develop a sound maintenance plan for Ring Road Park.
- 4.5.2 Councilor Vaughan suggested that the Council do a land filling of the property on which Ring Road Park will be constructed.
- 4.5.3 The City Administrator informed that no construction bids were received for Ring Road Park. The City Administrator stated that this was because the City Planner did not complete the requisite information for potential bidders.

- 4.5.4 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to proceed with the Bill of Quantities and construction of Ring Road Park. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**
- 4.6 **Contract with GEL Quarry for Compacting of Five Streets in Lake Independence**
- 4.6.1 Mayor Wagner stated that the contractor will provide 855 loads of clay fill and 57 loads of hardcore materials.
- 4.6.2 The City Administrator asked about the source of funding for the infrastructure works. Mayor Wagner informed that the funds will be obtained from the proceeds of the Series II Municipal Paper.
- 4.6.3 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of a contract with GEL Quarry for the compacting of five streets in Lake Independence at a total cost of \$209,688.75. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**
- 4.7 **Ratification of Round-Robin Vote Ref: Engagent of Alpha Capital LLP as “Agent” & “Arranger” of “Darrel Bradley Municipal Bond” – ALL Councilors voted in favor – MOTION PASSED**
- 4.7.1 The City Administrator requested that the Minutes reflect the fact that she had expressed concerns about the engagement of Alpha Capital LLP with Mayor Wagner.
- 4.8 **Renewal of Increase in Atlantic Bank Overdraft Facility from \$1 MIL to \$1.2 MIL – ALL Councilors voted in favor – MOTION PASSED**
- 4.9 **Winning Bids for Street Works Put Out to Tender**
- 4.9.1 Mayor Wagner shared with his Councilors the summary of bids that were submitted along with the formula that was applied to arrive at the winning bids.
- 4.9.2 Councilor Vaughan stated that the Council will commence with the infrastructure works to Racoon Street Extension, Antelope Street Extension and Chapel Lane.

- 4.9.3 Councilor Elijio asked that the entire stretch of Causarina Street be upgraded.
- 4.9.4 The City Administrator stated that the “preliminaries” will be added to the contract costs for all twenty-two (22) streets.
- 4.9.5 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the winning bids for the twenty-two streets. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED** ✓
- 4.10 Financial Contribution to Belize Assembly for Persons with Diverse Abilities (**BAPDA**) – Mayor Wagner shared a request received from the Belize Assembly for Persons with Diverse Abilities (**BAPDA**) for a financial contribution.

Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of a financial contribution (\$2000) to BAPDA. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**

5.0 Procurement of Dump Trucks/Garbage Compactor Truck/Street Sweeper Truck

- 5.1 Councilor Vaughan stated that the Council’s need for the two dump trucks is an urgent one.
- 5.2 Deputy Mayor Norales informed that after the Council makes the required down payment to the supplier, the equipment will arrive in the country within two to three weeks.
- 5.3 Mayor Wagner stated that the funds for the purchase of the dump trucks/garbage compactor truck/street sweeper truck will come from the proceeds of the Series II Municipal Paper.
- 5.4 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the purchase of dump trucks (2), one garbage compactor truck and one street sweeper truck from Seremei LLC. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**

6.0 **Naming & Renaming of Streets in Belize City**

6.1 Councilor Vaughan presented the recommendations of the working committee that was formed to consider the naming and renaming of several streets and roundabouts in the City. The streets and roundabouts include:

- **Hutson Street** (to be renamed William Fonseca Street)
- **Goal Lane** (to be renamed Sister Caritas Lawrence Lane)
- **Partridge Street** (to be renamed Evan “X” Hyde Drive)
- **Regent Street** (to be renamed Dr. Dame Minita Gordon Drive)
- **Hands Roundabout** (to be renamed Therese Felix Roundabout)
- **Mahogany Street Roundabout** (to be renamed Eva Middleton Roundabout)
- **Market Square** (to be renamed City Hall Plaza or City Hall Square)
- **Regent Street West** (to be renamed Lindy Rogers Street)
- **Cork Street** (to be renamed Sir Alexander Hunter Street)
- **Pallotti Overpass** (to be renamed Sir Dr. Manuel Esquivel Overpass)

Other Recommended Names for Streets

- **Right Honorable Said Musa**
- **Ms. Glenda Lewis**
- **Mr. George Dakers**
- **Ms. Linda Usher**
- **Mr. David Fonseca**
- **Mr. Desmond Vaughan**
- **Ms. Birdie Sealey**
- **Mr. Nicholas Pollard Sr.**
- **Mr. Gilbert “Bertie” Ellis**

6.2 Councilor Pollard Jr. recommended that a digital poll be conducted to elicit the views of residents as they relate to the streets/roundabouts that have been identified for naming and renaming.

6.3 Councilor Goodin commended the initiative and agreed with Councilor Pollard Jr. that public consultation will need to take place. Councilor Goodin recommended that Goal Lane be renamed “Said Musa Lane”.

6.4 Mayor Wagner stated that the Council will have to conduct public consultation.

6.5 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the naming & renaming of streets/roundabouts in the City. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED** ✓

7.0 **Renewal of Contract with Ranger Security & Courier Services**

7.1 Deputy Mayor Norales informed that the committee of Councilors (Deputy Mayor Norales, Councilor Arnold, Councilor Goodin, Councilor Elijo) met with Mr. Hiram Longworth and pointed out several concerns and areas of improvement particularly as they relate to security services provided at the Council’s Traffic Department and Works Department. Deputy Mayor Norales stated that the committee submitted its report of said meeting along with its recommendations.

7.2 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the renewal of contract with Ranger Security & Courier Services for an additional three years. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**

7.3 The City Administrator recommended that the Council redraft the contract as it is vague in its current form.

8.0 **Estimate for Land Filling of Eternal Garden Cemetery**

8.1 Councilor Hylton presented an estimate for the land filling of the Eternal Garden Cemetery as prepared by the Planning Department.

8.2 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the estimate **(\$235,850.00)** for the land filling of the Eternal Garden Cemetery. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**

9.0 Budget for Urban Gardening Project

9.1 Councilor Arnold stated that the cost of each urban garden (10 Constituencies) will be \$2500.00 for a total cost of \$25,000.

9.2 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the budget for the Urban Gardening Project. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**

10.0 Installation of Traffic Light Systems (Chetumal Street/Albert Hoy Street, Central American Boulevard/Faber's Road)

10.1 Councilor Pollard Jr. shared that the traffic light system that was installed at the intersection of Central Boulevard & Neal Pen Road has been well received by residents.

10.2 Councilor Pollard Jr. presented proposals for the installation of two additional traffic light systems at the intersections of Chetumal Street/Albert Hoy Street and Central American Boulevard/Faber's Road.

10.3 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the installation of traffic light systems at the intersections of Chetumal Street/Albert Hoy Street and Central Boulevard/Faber's Road. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**

11.0 Renewal of Contract for Technical Manager, Building Unit

11.1 The City Administrator informed that Mrs. Ana Maria Espat has expressed her interest in renewing her contract for the post of Technical Manager of the Building Unit.

11.2 The City Administrator recommended an increase in remuneration.

11.2 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to authorize the Mayor to enter into contract negotiations with Mrs. Ana Maria Espat regarding the renewal of her contract for the post of **Technical Manager**, Building Unit. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**

12.0 Renewal of Contract for Mr. Olynn Kingston, Dreamlight Studios

12.1 Councilor Allan Pollard Jr. expressed his satisfaction with Mr. Olynn Kingston, Dreamlight Studios and recommended that the Council renews its contract with Mr. Kingston.

12.1 Mayor Wagner also expressed his satisfaction with Mr. Olynn Kingston and stated Mr. Kingston understands and appreciates the quality and standard of production that the Council expects from him.

12.2 Councilor Vaughan recommended that the “Voices of the City” Talk Show be produced by Dreamlight Studios.

12.3 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the renewal of the contract with Mr. Olynn Kingston, Dreamlight Studios. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**

13.0 Submissions to Building Unit

- Request by Mr. Louis Thompson, Flavor Fizz Shack to occupy/lease reserve areas to sell smoothies/shakes at various locations – **MOTION PASSED** for the following locations: **Coney Drive** (near to Transparent BPO), **Marine Parade** (across from Radisson Fort George Hotel), **Lake Independence Boulevard** (across from bus stop)

- Request by Mr. Jimmili Joseph to Occupy Piece of Reserve (Holy Emmanuel Street and Beatrice Smith Street) for the purpose of operating a snack shop – **MOTION PASSED** on the condition that the applicant renovates current building structure in conformity with the Council’s building standards.
- Request by Mrs. Linda Bautista Eck to lease/occupy a piece of land located in Driftwood Bay – **DENIED**
- Request by Mr. Hector Guerra to erect a sign in front of Medical Imaging Center located on Princess Margaret Drive for the purpose of advertising – **MOTION PASSED** (Applicant will be required to pay relevant fee charged by Council)
- Request by Mr. Javier Tun Jr., RT Auto & Sales Co. Ltd. to occupy a piece of reserve, located at Mile 4, George Price Highway for the erection of a sign – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request by Westrac Limited to erect a sign on the business’ compound for the purpose of advertising its products – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request by Mr. Keynan Flowers, Gwen’s Kitchen to expand existing structure located on Coney Drive Reserve – **DEFERRED** (Applicant proceeded with construction without receiving proper approval from Council).
- Request by Mrs. Claudia Amaya Mejia, C & R Fuit & Vegetable Shop, to continue to occupy reserve located at Philip Goldson Highway and Buttonwood Bay Boulevard – **MOTION PASSED** ✓

N.B. Councilor Arnold requested an excuse at 1:15 p.m.

14.0 **City Administrator's Report**

Financial Snapshot (May & June 2020)

Projections (**May**): \$443,746

May 2019: \$686,263, May 2020: \$956,261

- Increase of \$500,000 in property taxes

Projections (June): \$346,117

June 1 – 15, 2019: \$293,578

June 1 – 15, 2020: \$656,079

Staff Movements (April)

Total on call: 44

Total on leave: 290

May 1 – 15, 2020

Total on call: 2

Total on leave: 206

Total on study leave: 1

Total full-time: 225

Total on sick leave: 0

Total working remotely: 21



May 16 – 31, 2020

Total full-time: 267
Total on call: 5
Total on leave: 171
Total working remotely: 9
Total absent: 2

N.B. Councilor Goodin requested an excuse at 1:45 p.m.

Staff Movements (June)

June 1 – 15, 2020

Total on call: 16
Total on leave: 151
Total working remotely: 2
Total on study leave: 1

Salaries & Entitlements

Total salaries owed for April 1 – 15, 2020 **(\$129,345.38)**
Total salaries owed for April 16 – 30, 2020 **(\$129,620.39)**
Total salaries owed for May 1 – 15, 2020 **(\$85,530.29)**
Total salaries owed for May 16 – 31, 2020 **(\$82,873.13)**

Total salaries owed for April & May 2020 **(\$495,464.19)**
Total allowances for April & May 2020 **(\$68,095.00)**

Total deductions owed by staff **(\$145,000)**
Actual owed to staff **(\$350,464.00)**

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[Signature]

Mayor Wagner suggested that the Council should discuss with financial and lending institutions the offering of soft loans to Council employees for back-to-school expenses.

Cost Saving Measures (Revised)

Personal Emoluments

Salaries – **Actual** (\$8,265,684.48), **Budget** (\$8,431,865.00), **Savings** (\$166,180.52)
Councilors' Allowances – **Actual** (none), **Budget** (\$381,673), **Savings** (\$381,673)
Wages (temp workers) – **Actual** (none), **Budget** (\$78,577), **Savings** (\$78,577)
Overtime – **Actual** (\$96,981.29, **Budget** (\$387,925.17, **Savings** (\$290,943.88)

Personal Emoluments: \$1,404,936.28
Savings Travel: \$63,294.40
Savings Training: \$16,075

Savings Passage Grant (Christmas Bonus): \$87,588.01
Sister City Relationship: \$40,000
Street Culture Festival (reallocated to Urban Gardening Project): \$35,000
Youth & Sports Programs: \$58,000
Labor Day Bram: \$25,000
Mother's Day Program: \$10,000
Father's Day Program: \$10,000
HR Sister City: \$20,000

Total: \$1,734,893.69

Mayor Wagner stated that he wants the Council to conduct a Downtown Super Sale (Back-to-School Edition) on the last Saturday of July.

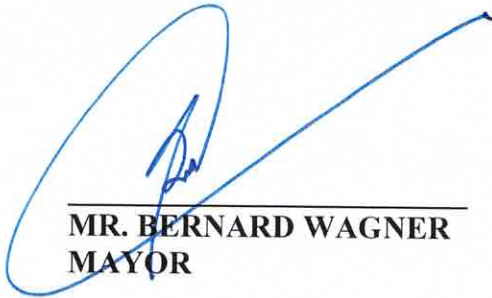
Updated Areas of Focus:

- ✓ Facebook Live Discussions (taxes and services)
- ✓ Financial Literacy for staff, residents
- ✓ Mental Health/Wellness (in-person and online sessions)
- ✓ Urban Gardening/Healthy Eats
- ✓ Summer Programmes (social media videos on basketball, bicycle repairs, etc.)
- ✓ Trade License Rebate 2021
- ✓ Property Tax Incentives 2021
- ✓ Grant Proposals (additional heavy equipment)
- ✓ Intranet Portal (training on BCC website)

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. Mayor Wagner moved the motion. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**

15.0 Adjournment

- 15.1 Councilor Elijio moved for the meeting to be adjourned. Councilor Pitts seconded. The meeting concluded at 3:20 p.m.



MR. BERNARD WAGNER
MAYOR



MRS. STEPHANIE LINDO-GARBUTT
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

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