

MINUTES OF ORDINARY CLOSED COUNCIL MEETING
October 18, 2018
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. Delthruide Hylton | Councilor |
| 7. Mr. Ryan Elijio | Councilor |
| 8. Ms. Aisha Gentle | Councilor |
| 9. Mr. Albert Vaughan | Councilor |

Mr. Rafael Sosa, Manager, Office of the Mayor

Apologies: Ms. Stephanie Lindo-Garbutt, City Administrator (medical certified leave)

Absent:

Dr. Candice Pitts, Councilor (out of the country)
Mr. Michael Norales, Councilor (out of the country)

Attendance by Invitation:

Mrs. Margaret McKenzie, Director of Legal Affairs
Mr. Troy Smith, Valuation Manager
Mr. Ervin Perez, Alpha Capital LLP
Mr. Christopher Coye, Alpha Capital LLP

The meeting was called to order at 2:14 p.m. by the Mayor after which he led his Councilors with the Belize National Prayer.

I. Presentation by Alpha Capital LLP (Belize City Council Municipal Paper)

The Mayor introduced Messrs. Ervin Perez and Christopher Coye of Alpha Capital LLP, Financial Advisors and invited them to deliver their presentation on the “Belize City Council Municipal Paper”.

Mr. Ervin Perez likened the “Municipal Paper” to an “IOU” and explained that the primary objective of the “Municipal Paper” is to smooth out the Council’s short-term cash flow variability and to reduce its short-term financing costs. He explained that the Council would offer the “Municipal Paper” at a borrowing rate of 3% - 3.46% as an alternative to giving property owners a 20% discount on their property taxes. Mr. Perez submitted that the issuance of the “Municipal Paper” would net the Council some \$5,000,000 - \$6,000,000 in funds.

Councilor Goodin shared his concern about the likelihood that the Ministry of Finance may deny the Council’s request to issue the “Municipal Paper”. In response to Councilor Goodin’s concern, Mr. Christopher Coye informed the Council that the Minister of Local Government, Dr. Carla Barnett, has expressed her support, in principle, for the “Municipal Paper”.

Councilor Pollard Jr. asked if Alpha Capital LLP would conduct a monitoring of the lending program. In response, Mr. Perez stated that the Council would conduct its own internal auditing and that additional monitoring would be carried out by an external fiscal agent.

Mr. Perez informed that the “Term Sheet”, which was previously shared with the Mayor, would need to be signed by the Mayor and the City Administrator. Alpha Capital LLP requested that the Council pass the relevant resolution in order that the “Municipal Paper” could proceed.

Mr. Christopher Coye opined that the Council must focus on identifying alternative sources of financing/revenue. Toward this end, he shared the idea of a paid parking system for Belize City. Mr. Coye described a Public Private Partnership (PPP) that the Council would enter into with a private investor. Essentially, the latter would undertake the cost of creating/establishing the paid parking system. Based on the partnership agreement, the Council could, then, assume ownership of the paid parking



system after a period of time. Mr. Coye further shared that a “prosperity fund” could be created which would earmark a percentage of the revenue generated from the paid parking system for the Council to carry out social projects.

Councilor Vaughan requested further explanation/clarification of the “Municipal Paper”.

Councilor Goodin stated that the “Municipal Paper” is a safe and innovative revenue generation idea.

Deputy Mayor Arnold shared that he was a part of the initial meetings that were held with Alpha Capital LLP to discuss the “Municipal Paper”. The Deputy Mayor went on to inform the Council about new income generating initiatives that will soon come onstream.

Mayor Wagner, then, moved a motion for the Council to pass a resolution for Alpha Capital to move ahead with the “Belize City Municipal Paper”.

ALL Councilors present unanimously voted in favor – MOTION PASSED.

II. Presentation by Mr. Clifford King, Ministry of Local Government (Trade License Reform/New Trade License Regime)

The Mayor introduced Mr. Clifford King and invited him to deliver his presentation on the Trade License Reform/New Trade License Regime.

Mr. King opened by sharing that he had made an initial presentation to a group that comprised Mayor Bernard Wagner, Deputy Mayor Oscar Arnold, Councilor Michael Norales and Mr. Troy Smith, Valuation Manager.

Mr. King shared that the Trade License Reform is part of a wider Trade & Tax Reform that is being currently undertaken by the Government of Belize. Mr. King asked the Mayor and Councilors to objectively consider the New Trade License Regime. He further shared that an initial attempt to reform the trade license regime was soundly rejected by the business sector.



Currently, the Average Rental Value (ARV) applied is 17% which yields the Belize City Council some \$4,000,000. Mr. King stated that applying an ARV of 25% would yield the Council an additional \$2,000,000.

Mr. King informed that once there is a final determination on the Annual Rental Value (ARV), businesses would be “locked in” for a period of three (3) years. He further informed that the New Trade License Regime was presented to the relevant Committee of the House of Representatives two years ago. The Committee, however, rejected the proposal as it was not satisfied that the increased Annual Rental Value of 25% was properly determined.

Mr. King shared that under the New Trade License Regime, square footage would be calculated based on “productive spaces” only, i.e. those spaces that are actually utilized to conduct business.

Deputy Mayor Arnold shared that with respect to the New Trade License Regime, a lot of work has already happened in Belize City. This is given the fact that Belize City was used as the pilot study.

Mayor Wagner informed about the resolution that was passed by the Council to reduce the Taxi Operator Fee from \$20.00 monthly to \$10.00 monthly. Mr. King urged the Council to consider the recommended fees/rates prescribed under the New Trade License Regime.

Mr. King asked if the Fort Street Tour Operators are all in possession of Trade License Certificates. Mayor Wagner indicated that the tour operators are all in possession of said Certificates.

Mrs. McKenzie asked about how streetside food vendors would be classified under the New Trade License Regime.

It was shared that the previous City Council had publicly declared that there would have been no increases in Trade License fees until the New Trade License Fee came into effect.



Following Mr. King's presentation, Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to support and adopt the Ministry of Local Government's Trade License Reform Initiative. Councilors voted in favor of the motion – MOTION PASSED.

Ratification of Minutes

Councilor Goodin moved for the Minutes of the August 28, 2018 Council Meeting to be ratified.

Councilor Gentle seconded the move. The Minutes were ratified without any amendments.

Motions/Resolutions

1.0 Child Friendly Municipality Strategy

- 1.1 Mayor Wagner shared about the recent convening of the Mayor's Association of Belize in Hopkins Village to develop the Child Friendly Municipality Strategy. The Mayor shared that all the Mayors collectively signed the strategy paper.
- 1.2 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to pass a resolution to support/adopt the Child Friendly Municipality Strategy.
- 1.3 ALL Councilors unanimously voted in favor of the motion – MOTION PASSED. ✓

2.0 Discount on Delinquent Property Taxes Interest Penalties

- 2.1 Mayor Wagner informed that in respect of delinquent property taxpayers, the Council will apply a 30% discount on the penalty value and NOT the principal amount. The discount will be applied retroactively to March 8, 2018. The Mayor subsequently moved a motion for the Council to approve the 30% discount on delinquent property taxes interest penalties.



2.2 ALL Councilors voted in favor of the motion – MOTION PASSED.

3.0 Last Saturday Sales Zone Initiative

3.1 Councilor Hylton took issue with the word “sale” sharing that the word doesn’t bear the same meaning for all merchants.

3.2 Councilor Pollard Jr. shared that some stores are prepared/willing to offer as much as 75% discount on items.

3.3 Deputy Mayor Arnold opined that some businesses may be reluctant to offer huge discounts given the fact that the “Downtown Super Sale” initiative will be the first of its kind.

3.4 Councilor Hylton made the point that the participating merchants must ensure that all perishable goods are not expired.

3.5 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the Last Saturday Sales Zone Initiative. ALL Councilors voted in favor of the motion – MOTION PASSED.

4.0 HOODLINKS Afterschool Sporting Program

4.1 Mayor Wagner shared that the HOODLINKS Afterschool Sporting Program is an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) initiative that is focused on Southside Belize City. The program will engage children in Southside Belize City in athletics, football, basketball, boxing, Judo and softball. The three locations will be as follows: Yarborough Sporting Field, Cumberbatch Field, Rogers Stadium. The Mayor shared that the IDB is covering the cost of the sporting equipment while the Belize City Council will be required to cover the cost of coaches for the various sporting disciplines.

4.2 Deputy Arnold expressed his desire for the program to engage as as many children as possible and for it to become self-sustainable.



- 4.3. **Councilor Vaughan shared concerns that the City Administrator had expressed about the HOODLINKS Afterschool Sporting Program, namely the need for better structuring of the program and Memoranda of Understanding between partners/collaborators.**
 - 4.4. **Deputy Mayor Arnold shared that while he appreciated the concerns expressed by the City Administrator, there was a lot of preliminary work and consultation that occurred before she came onboard the Council.**
 - 4.5 **Councilor Castellanos agreed that more structure needed to be added to the program.**
 - 4.6 **Councilor Gentle shared her concern that the National Sports Council (NSC) may want to politicize the sporting program.**
 - 4.7 **Following comments/concerns expressed on the floor, Mayor Wagner made the decision to postpone the motion. The Mayor tasked Councilor Goodin with ensuring that the program is provided with the proper structure and framework. Councilor Goodin committed to completing the task assigned.**
 - 4.8 **Mayor Wagner encouraged his Councilors to be bold and decisive when undertaking programs and initiatives particularly those programs and initiatives outlined in the Council's Manifesto.**
- 5.0 Memorandum of Understanding between Belize City Council and Ministry of Health Ref: Promotion of Wellness Spaces & Healthy Lifetsyles**
- 5.1 **Following a recent meeting between the Ministry of Health and the Mayors Association of Belize in Belmopan to discuss the promotion of Wellness Spaces & Healthy Lifestyles in all municipalities, Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to authorize him to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the Belize City Council and the Ministry of Health.**

5.2 ALL Councilors voted unanimously in favor of the motion – MOTION PASSED

6.0 Commencement of Manhole Covers Project

6.1 Mayor Wagner informed that a total of 1,101 manholes remain uncovered in Belize City. The Mayor emphasized the need for the Council to be bold and aggressive with the Manhole Covers Project.

6.2. Mayor Wagner further informed that Mr. Robert Meighan, Contractor, possesses the capital to move ahead with the Manhole Covers Project. The plan, as shared by the Mayor, is to initially cover manholes on King Street as a pilot project. The Contractor has indicated that he could complete the covering of the manholes on King Street within a month's time.

6.3 Councilor Goodin made a request for the contractor to consider hiring PUP constituents.

6.4 Councilor Vaughan informed that metal grill covers have been built for the manholes on Orange Street.

6.5 Councilor Pollard Jr. shared his observation that one of the sidewalks, alongside Orange Street, is virtually non-existent.

6.6 Councilor Vaughan informed that the management of all those streets spanning the Hands of Friendship Roundabout (Central American Blvd./George Price Highway) to Court House Wharf will be passed from the Ministry of Public Works to the Belize City Council.

6.7 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the commencement of the Manhole Covers Project. ALL Councilors voted unanimously in favor of the motion – MOTION PASSED.



7.0 Confirmation of Mrs. Stephanie Lindo-Garbutt as City Administrator with recommendation for salary increase of \$5000.00

- 7.1 Councilor Vaughan shared that while he supports the salary increase of \$5000.00 for the City Administrator, he was not privy to her employment contract.**
- 7.2 Mayor Wagner shared that in an earlier discussion, it was indicated that following her three-month probationary period, the City Administrator's annual salary would be increased from \$60,000 to \$65,000. The Mayor proceeded to share the results of the performance appraisal that he had completed for the City Administrator. The Mayor stated that given the results of the City Appraisal's performance appraisal, he was recommending the salary increase.**
- 7.3 Following a couple objections from the floor, the Mayor moved the motion for Mrs. Stephanie Lindo-Garbutt to be confirmed as City Administrator and for her annual salary to be increased from \$60,000 to \$65,000. The motion was passed by majority vote with two abstentions - MOTION PASSED.**

8.0 Appointments/Transfers

- 8.1 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the following appointments/transfers to be effected:**
- **Mr. Rafael Sosa, Manager, Office of the Mayor**
 - **Ms. Tamara Minto, Communications Manager**
 - **Ms. Monique Yearwood, Human Resources Manager (transfer)**
 - **Ms. Ursula Smith, Manager, Municipal Court (transfer)**
- 8.2 ALL Councilors voted in support of the motion - MOTION PASSED.**

9.0 Municipal Public Accounts Committee

- 9.1 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the establishment of a Municipal Public Accounts Committee. ALL Councilors unanimously voted in favor – MOTION PASSED.**

10.0 Renewal of Contract for City Engineer

- 10.1 Councilor Vaughan informed that the City Engineer, Mr. Floyd Williams, has been working without an employment contract since September 1, 2018. The Councilor recommended that Mr. Williams be given a new contract and that said contract be retroactive to September 1, 2018.**
- 10.2 Councilor Elijo recommended that the post of City Engineer be advertised and Mr. Williams be given the opportunity to apply.**
- 10.3 Following objections from the floor, the motion was approved by majority vote – MOTION PASSED**

Proposal Considerations: Mayor Wagner informed that business proposals submitted by Mr. Mark Reneau (snack shop, Newtown Barracks) and Mr. Jerrod Jenkins (Sensational Marine Parade and Belizean Beach) would be looked at.

Mayor's Announcements:

- 1.0 Mayor Wagner informed that works to be done on those streets approved via round robin would be put out to tender. Councilor Vaughan shared that at the request of the Area Representative for Lake Independence, Sybil Reyes Street will be replaced on the list with Croton Lane and Marigold Lane.**

- 2.0 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for fifteen percent (15%) to be added to the principal amount for Enrique Carballo for defaulting on the repayment of his loan. ALL Councilors vote unanimously in favor of the motion – MOTION PASSED
- 3.0 Mayor Wagner informed Councilors that the Belize City Council received a “verbal” Stop Order from the Department of the Environment (DoE) for the Charter House building project. It was agreed that Charter House would have to address the matter as it relates to clearance from the DoE.
- 4.0 Mayor Wagner informed Councilors of a press briefing scheduled for October 25, 2018. The Mayor shared that the press briefing will provide a report of the Council’s first six months in office.

Notices/Reports/Discussions/Information:

Councilor Hylton (Private Burial Ground) – Councilor Hylton shared that she received a report from the City Engineer informing her that Mr. Richard Rudon wants to operate a burial ground in the Faber’s Road area. Based on a report she obtained from the Ministry of Health, Councilor Hylton expressed her disapproval for Mr. Rudon to be permitted to operate said burial ground.

Councilor Goodin (PROTO Track & Field Event) – Councilor Goodin informed that the People Reaching Out To Others (PROTO) Foundation will be hosting a track & field event on November 4, 2018. PROTO is seeking permission to use the BTL Park.

Councilor Elijio (Caesar Ridge Road & Neal Pen Road) – Councilor Elijio shared that Caesar Ridge Road and Neal Pen Road are currently in deplorable conditions.



Councilor Elijio made an appeal for the Council to activate the School Feeding and School Gardening Programs. The Mayor asked Councilor Elijio to take the lead with both initiatives which he agreed to do.

Councilor Pollard Jr. (Traffic Light Project) – Councilor Pollard Jr. shared that the Taiwanese Government has gifted the Belize City Council with \$24,000 BZ to install traffic lights across the City. The Councilor informed that traffic lights will be installed at the following intersections: St. Thomas St./St. Joseph St., Central American Blvd./Neal Pen Road, Chetumal St./Albert Hoy St., Hydes Lane/North Front St. Councilor Pollard Jr. shared that the traffic light systems would be sourced from a Chinese supplier. Councilor Pollard Jr. provided everyone with a copy of the “Belize City Traffic Improvement Project”.

- **Councilor Elijio shared his concern about the Council using money from Taiwan to purchase traffic light systems from a supplier in mainland China.**
- **Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the “Belize City Traffic Improvement Project”. ALL Councilors voted in favor of the motion – MOTION PASSED**

Councilor Pollard Jr. (Belize City Transportation Plan) – Councilor Pollard Jr. shared that under the Belize City Transportation Plan, the Belize City Council is proposing to purchase twelve (12) Great Wall Wingle pickup trucks and twelve (12) Honda motorcycles from Caribbean Motors Limited. Councilor Pollard Jr. shared about the constraints the Traffic Dept. face given its shrinking vehicle fleet. Councilor Pollard Jr. shared that the pickup trucks and motorcycles would be distributed across the Council’s Departments/Units as follows:

**Traffic Dept. – 5 pickup trucks, 6 motorbikes
Paint Shop – 1 pickup truck
Special Constables Unit – 2 pickup trucks, 3 motorcycles
Works Dept. – 1 pickup truck, 1 motorcycle
Sanitation Dept. – 1 pickup truck
Cemetery Dept. – 1 pickup truck
PR Dept. – 1 pickup truck**



Public Health Unit – 1 motorcycle

- **Councilor Goodin shared that he had conducted his due diligence and expressed his concerns that the costs of the pickup trucks and motorcycles are inflated.**
- **Councilor Vaughan stressed the need for the new pickup trucks and motorcycles to be managed properly by the Belize City Council's Vehicle Care Unit.**
- **Deputy Mayor Arnold shared about the auxiliary costs that will arise with the purchase of the pickup trucks & motorcycles, i.e. fuel, parts, servicing, etc. The Deputy Mayor further shared that there is a prevailing culture whereby some employees of the Belize City Council have no regard for the assets of the Council. The Deputy Mayor expressed the need for that culture to change and for it to change quickly.**
- **Councilor Castellanos recommended that the purchase of new pickup trucks and motorcycles be treated as a matter of priority.**
- **Mayor Wagner informed Councilors that the purchase of the pickup trucks and motorcycles would have to be approved by the Ministry of Local Government. Notwithstanding the fact that Caribbean Motors Limited will provide 100% financing for the purchase of the pickup trucks and motorcycles, it was agreed that the Council would assemble a negotiating team. The negotiating team would comprise the Deputy Mayor, Councilor Pollard Jr. and Councilor Vaughan.**
- **Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to purchase pickup trucks & motorcycles from Caribbean Motors Limited. Councilors voted in favor of the motion – MOTION PASSED.**

Questions/Petitions from the Public:

Councilor Hylton shared that there are two constituents, namely from the Caribbean Shores Constituency and the Lake Independence Constituency who are seeking financial assistance for medical surgeries. Specifically, Councilor Hylton shared that the two constituents will be doing barbecue fundraisers and are requesting assistance with purchasing chicken. Mayor Wagner stated that the Council would support the two constituents.

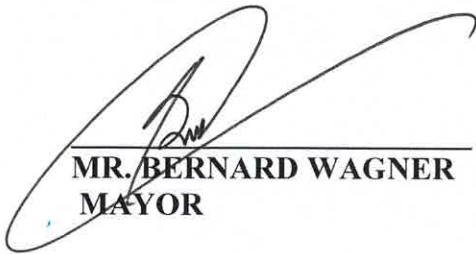
Councilor Goodin informed that the owner of Nery's Restaurant shared with him about the relocation of the Vital Statistics Unit next to his business. Councilor Goodin shared that the owner of Nery's Restaurant is asking for the Council's assistance with the allocation of parking space for his customers.

Speaking on Adjournment:

- Councilor Vaughan lauded the Mayor and the City Administrator for recently declining a "gift" from a Belmopan businesswoman and subsequently returning the "gift" to her.
- Councilor Elijo recognized and commended the work/efforts of the Mayor and the Council in looking after Racoon and Gibnut Streets in the wake of torrential rains.

The meeting concluded at 6:15 p.m. No date was set for the next Caucus meeting.

N.B. ALL resolutions were ratified, via round-robin, on November 1, 2018.



MR. BERNARD WAGNER
MAYOR



MRS. STEPHANIE LINDO - GARBUTT
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

