

MINUTES of CAUCUS MEETING

February 19, 2019
Belize City Hall

Present:

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

Mrs. Stephanie Lindo-Garbutt, City Administrator

Mr. Rafael Sosa, Manager, Office of the Mayor

Attendance by Invitation:

Mr. Hubert Pipersburgh, LED Manager
Major Lloyd Jones, Zephyr Services Limited

Apologies: Mr. Allan Pollard Jr, Councilor

The meeting was called to order at 3:09 p.m. by Mayor Wagner after which he led his Councilors in reciting the Belize National Prayer.

1.0 Ratification of January 15, 2019 Minutes

- 1.1 Councilor Elijio pointed to the statement in 10.3 and requested a change from “good/loyal PUPs” to “marginalized Belizeans”.
- 1.2 Councilor Goodin moved that the Minutes of the January 15, 2019 Caucus Meeting be ratified. Councilor Elijio seconded the motion.

2.0 Matters Arising from Minutes

- 2.1 City Engineer's Contract** - The City Administrator informed that the City Engineer's new contract has been signed and sealed.
- 2.2 Relocation of House/Homeowner on Ring Road** – The City Administrator reported that the Council is in the process of procuring landfill material and drafting a lease agreement for the homeowner. The City Administrator shared that the house, to be purchased from the Mennonites, will be owned by the Council and not the current homeowner.
- 2.2.1** Mayor Wagner shared that the process of relocating the homeowner has been going smoothly.
- 2.3 Men @ Work Towing & Impound Co. Ltd.** – The committee, which was formed to review the proposal from Men @ Work Towing & Impound Co. Ltd. at the January 15, 2019 Caucus Meeting, convened on February 6, 2019.
- 2.3.1** Following its meeting, the committee decided that the Council should retain control and information management of its traffic zones. The committee also decided that the Council should assume responsibility for the wheel locking clamps.
- 2.3.2** The committee requested of Men @ Work Towing & Impound Co. Ltd. that it provides a price structure not only for derelict vehicles but also for towing and garaging vehicles parked in No Parking Zones.
- 2.3.3** Councilor Vaughan shared that the Traffic Management Committee would like to know what direction the Council will take with respect to derelict vehicles. Councilor Vaughan urged the Council to move forward aggressively on the matter of removing derelict vehicles across the City.
- 2.4 New Hirings** – Mayor Wagner informed that the total number of new hirings currently stands at 87. Mayor Wagner opined that the Council may have to put a moratorium on any further hirings.
- 2.5 Candice Miller Claim** – The City Administrator informed that the Candice Miller Claim has been sent to mediation.

- 2.6 **Financial Updates** – The City Administrator requested that financial updates be provided to the Council on a quarterly basis as opposed to a monthly basis. Mayor Wagner informed the City Administrator that her request was noted.
- 2.7 **Youth Shadow Council** - Councilor Goodin asked about the committee that was formed to review the the proposed framework for the “Youth Shadow Council”. Councilor Pitts shared that there was no update available from the committee. Mayor Wagner urged the committee to treat the establishment of the Youth Shadow Council with priority.

Presentations:

I. JBS Foods – Mr. Hubert Pipersburgh, LED Manager

The LED Manager shared that JBS Foods, a Canadian company based in Alberta Canada, is recruiting Belizeans for permanent employment as Meat Cutters. The LED Manager further shared that a team from JBS Foods will visit Belize on April 24, 2019 to vet potential applicants and that the Mayor and Councilors could refer/recommend potential applicants to the LED Unit. The LED Manager shared a video presentation from JBS Foods and informed that he had conducted due diligence to confirm the authenticity of the company.

- Mayor Wagner welcomed the opportunities being provided to Belizeans by JBS Foods.

II. New Green Transit Network – Major Lloyd Jones, Zephyr Services Limited

Major Jones shared a powerpoint presentation on the proposed New Green Transit Network. He outlined the objectives of the New Green Transit Network as follows: (i) to improve efficiency & effectiveness, (ii) to shift the demand from private cars to electric buses and taxis, (iii) to improve municipal connectivity. Major Jones informed that the Belize Electricity Limited (BEL) has indicated its willingness to partner with the Council for the building/installation of electric charging stations.

Mayor Wagner shared that at the last meeting of the Mayors Association of Belize, the Transport Department had made a presentation in which it expressed its favorableness towards the idea of a modern Belize City Metro Bus System.

Councilor Castellanos shared that a proposal is on the table to establish an umbrella taxi operator federation that would conglomerate all existing taxi unions.

The City Administrator shared that there are some monies available from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) that could be used to conduct the feasibility study for the New Green Transit Network.

Deputy Mayor Arnold shared that Bravo Motors Ltd. had introduced electric cars at their Placencia Branch. The Deputy Mayor stated that the size of the electric bus fleet would have to be carefully considered given the narrow width of Belize City streets. The Deputy Mayor further shared that the ranges of buses would be particularly important when it comes to disaster evacuations.

3.0 Mayor's Announcements & Matters

3.1 **Bridging Loan** - Mayor Wagner shared that it was his hope the "Belize City Council Municipal Paper" would have materialized in time for the Council to furnish the new Commercial Center. Mayor Wagner introduced the discussion for the Council to acquire a \$800,000 bridging loan from Heritage Bank to furnish the building. Mayor Wagner shared that Heritage Bank currently holds most of the securities for the \$3.8 MIL loan that was acquired by the previous Council. Mayor Wagner informed that the current Heritage Bank loan is at nine percent (9%) interest rate and would see the Council making a monthly payment of \$71,000.00. Mayor Wagner explained that as soon as the "Belize City Council Municipal Paper" materializes, the \$800,000 bridging loan will be struck off.

3.1.1 Councilor Vaughan stated that the Council has to act proactively and move into the New Commercial Center even if the works are not completed. Councilor Vaughan expressed his support for the bridging loan from Heritage Bank.

3.1.2 Mayor Wagner moved for a motion authorizing the Mayor and the Council to approach Heritage Bank for a \$800,000 bridging loan to furnish the new Commercial Center. All Councilors present, except for Councilor Elijio who abstained, voted in favor of the motion. **MOTION PASSED**

- 3.2 **Bus Stop on Regent Street West** – Mayor Wagner shared that he was in receipt of a letter from a local businessman regarding the bus stop located on Regent Street West.
- 3.2.1 Councilor Vaughan shared that Councilor Pollard Jr. had proposed that the bus stop be relocated to Albert Street immediately in front of the First Caribbean Bank.
- 3.2.2 Deputy Mayor Arnold informed that residents of the immediate area had objected when it was first proposed that the bus stop be located on Regent Street West. Deputy Mayor Arnold stated that the buses are the cause for the destruction of a lot of Manhole covers. Deputy Mayor Arnold further shared that one of the businesses located on Regent Street West has offered to pay for the erection of a speedbump.
- 3.2.3 Councilor Castellanos stated that there needs to be stepping up of enforcement.
- 3.2.4 The City Administrator shared that the letter in question was copied to key Council Managers and their respective Councilors for action, i.e. Traffic Dept., Public Health Dept., Sanitation Dept. and Special Constable Department.
- 3.2.5 Mayor Wagner recommended that the Council engages with the bus owners.
- 3.3 Rebranding of BCC's Buildings** – Mayor Wagner stated that he and his Councilors had inherited a Council whose employees were demoralized.
- 3.3.1 Mayor Wagner stated that he would like for all the Council's buildings to conform with the enhanced image of the new Commercial Center. Mayor Wagner proceeded to share the illustrations for the rebranding of the Council's buildings with his Councilors. Mayor Wagner shared that the total works for the rebranding of the Council's buildings would cost some \$50,000 - \$60,000.
- 3.3.2 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval for the refurbishment/rebranding of all Council buildings. All Councilors present, except for Councilor Gentle who abstained, voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

3.4 Dredging of North Creek and Zeitown Canals (DEFERRED)

4.0 Contract for Excavation of Belama Phase III and Gungulung Canals - Councilor Vaughan referred everyone to the Council's Timeline for 80% Completion of its Manifesto Commitments. Councilor Vaughan shared that the excavation of the Belama Phase III and Gungulung Canals are listed as priorities on the Timeline.

4.1 Mayor Wagner stated that the Council would have to wait for the "Belize City Municipal Paper" to materialize in order to carry out the excavations. **(ITEM DEFERRED)**

5.0 Swift Hall Declaration on Domestic Violence/Launch of Community Support Program – Councilors Pitts shared that the original Declaration, signed at Swift Hall on January 30, 2019, will be framed and placed inside of City Hall. Councilor Pitts informed that another copy of the Declaration will be signed by the Mayor and Councilors and placed inside of the new Commercial Center.

5.1 Councilors Pitts further shared about a plan to conduct a citywide outreach that will aimed at gathering the signatures of City residents.

5.1.1 Councilor Pitts informed that the Grief Therapist will conduct seminars with employees from the Council, Mayor and Councilors on February 25, 2019. Subsequent seminars will be held with employees from the Council's other Departments. Councilor Pitts shared that there will be a total of thirteen (13) seminars and that the seminars are aimed at introducing the Council's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to its employees.

5.1.2 Councilor Pitts shared that in commemoration of Women's Month (March 2019), the Council will honor and highlight a woman from each Constituency in the City, i.e. a total of ten (10) women. Councilor Pitts further shared that the honorees will be hosted by the Mayor at a luncheon.

6.0 Youth & Sports

6.1 **Fitness Program** – Councilor Goodin informed that the Council's Fitness Program was suspended on February 14, 2019 due to the decline in participation from the Council's employees. Councilor Goodin stated that the Council was not getting value for money.



- 6.2 **Weekend Street League** – Councilor Goodin informed that the Weekend Street League will be deferred to the Council’s Downtown Super Sale Zone event scheduled For the end of March.
- 6.3 **BCC/SMART Family Fun Day (Kite Contest Edition)** – Councilor Goodin shared about the budget for the BCC/SMART Family Fun Day scheduled for **March 9, 2019** at the Memorial Park. Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the budget for the BCC/SMART Family Fun Day. All Councilors present voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**
- 6.4 **Dominoes Tournament** – Councilor Goodin shared about the budget for the five-week dominoes tournament being sponsored by the Council. Councilor Goodin shared that tournament will take place over the course of five consecutive Sundays commencing **March 17, 2019** and concluding **April 14, 2019**. It was agreed that the tournament would officially be named the “Mayor of Belize City Dominoes Tournament. Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the budget for the dominoes tournament. All Councilors present voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**
- 6.5 **Tribute to Isaiah Morter** – Councilor Goodin shared about the budget for the Tribute to Isaiah Morter to commemorate Black History Month. Councilor Goodin shared that restorative works would be conducted to the Isaiah Morter Statue and that the enclosure would be repainted.
- 6.5.1 Councilor Vaughan suggested that an invitation be sent to businesses in the immediate area for them to partner with the Council on the initiative.
- 6.5.2 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the budget for the Tribute to Isaiah Morter. All Councilors present voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**
- 6.6 **2019 Interoffice Football Competition** – Councilor Goodin shared about the budget for the 2019 Interoffice Football Competition.
- 6.6.1 Deputy Mayor Arnold shared that while he supports the inclusion of Council employees on the Interoffice Football Team, he would be open the Council inviting the participation of other footballers.
- 6.6.2 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the budget for the 2019 Inter-office Football Competition. All Councilors present voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

7.0 City Administrator's Matters

7.1 Confirmation of Appointments for Managerial Posts – Mayor Wagner moved Motions for the following appointments to be confirmed:

Ms. Melony Dawson – CEMO Liaison Officer

Mr. Darrel Bell – Market Manager

Ms. Barbara Martinez – Manager, Cemetery/Public Health

All Councilors present voted in favor of the motions. **MOTIONS PASSED**

7.2 Stipend/Fuel Allowance for Chairman of Liquor Licensing Board – The City Administrator proposed a monthly stipend of \$500.00 and a weekly fuel allowance of ten (10) gallons for the Chairman of the Liquor Licensing Board.

7.2.1 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the stipend and fuel allowance for the Chairman of the Liquor Licensing Board. All Councilors present voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

7.3 Appointment of Members to Valuation Appeals Board – The City Administrator explained that the Valuation Appeals Board would hear complaints/appeals from businesses that have issues with their Trade License assessments.

7.3.1 The City Administrator recommended that Mr. Troy Gabb Sr. and Major Lloyd Jones be appointed to serve on the Valuation Appeals Board.

7.3.2 Councilor Vaughan asked if the search for members could be expanded. The City Administrator reminded the Councilors that she had provided a matrix, back in November of 2018, for them to nominate persons.

7.3.3 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the appointment of Mr. Troy Gabb Sr. and Major Lloyd Jones to the Valuation Appeals Board. All Councilors present, except for Councilor Hyton, voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

8.0 Submissions to Local Building Unit – Councilor Elijio presented requests submitted to the Local Building Unit.

8.1 Mayor Wagner moved motions for the approval of the requests submitted after which the Council made the following decisions based on the Planning Department’s recommendations:

- Request from Mr. Guy Hyde to Occupy Reserve Corner South Creek/Fairweather Street – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request from Mr. Christopher Obando to Lease or Occupy a Piece of Reserve on Coney Drive in Front of Transparent BPO to Sell Fast Food – **REQUEST DENIED**
- Request from Ms. Sarita Sabido to Erect Two Signs Along Queen Street Sidewalk to Advertise the Location of Bucky’s Coffee & Gift Shop – **REQUEST DENIED**
- Request from Mr. Bertrand Gillett to Occupy Reserve at 1441 Coney Drive Near Transparent BPO – **REQUEST DENIED**
- Request from Mr. Mordecaio Cal to Lease or Occupy a Piece of Reserve on Coney Drive in front of Transparent BPO to Sell Fast Food – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request from Mrs. Nadine Pelayo to Enclose Existing 10’ x 12 ‘Deck for Crème De La Crème on Princess Margaret Drive – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request from Mrs. Marlene Laing to Lease a Piece of Reserve on Mahogany Street Near Western Avenue to Sell Food – **REQUEST PENDING**
- Request from HRCU to Put Bridge Across Hydes Lane to Facilitate Workers Commuting from One Department to the Other – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request from Ms. Heidi Hernandez to Sell Tacos on the Western Approach at the Foot of Pound Yard Bridge (5:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. daily) – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request from Dr. Cervantes to Lease a Piece of Reserve on Mahogany Street Near Western Avenue (request to be revisited)
- Request from Ms. Natalie Jelensperger and Mr. Derek Chong to Name a Street “The French Avenue” located on the George Price Highway (request to be revisited)
- Request from Mr. Zi Hue He to Offset Cost of Construction of Structure Located Over West Collet Canal Between Pound Yard and Vernon Street Bridges – **MOTION PASSED**

The City Planner informed that the previous Council had authorized the construction of the structure over the West Collet Canal and that the business is a bakery.

Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the lease payment to be increased to a \$1000.00/mth. All Councilors present voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**



- 8.2 It was shared that a request has been received from Mr. Jose Chan to erect four (4) pedestrian ramps at the corner of Central American Boulevard & Neal Pen Road.
- 8.2.1 Councilor Norales recommended that the Council writes urgently to the Ministry of Works and request for the erection of pedestrian ramps.
- 8.2.2 Councilor Vaughan requested of the City Administrator that she convenes a meeting, at the earliest, with the Ministry of Works in order that the Council could get an update on all outstanding projects/works.
- 8.3 Appointment of Building Unit Manager – The City Administrator informed that Mrs. Ana Maria Espat of Strukture Architects Ltd. has expressed interest in the post of Building Unit Manager. A motion was moved for Mrs. Ana Maria Espat to be appointed to the post of Building Unit Manager. All Councilors voted in favor.
MOTION PASSED

9.0 Other Business

- 9.1 **Pier 1** - Councilor Gentle made a request for the Pier 1 space to no longer be granted Liquor License. Councilor Gentle made an appeal for the Pier 1 space to be a child friendly space.
- 9.1.1 Mayor Wagner stated that any proposal in respect of the Pier 1 space would be premature given the fact that the Council is yet to receive the keys to the property.
- 9.1.2 The City Administrator informed that February 28 is the deadline for Mr. Joseph Kee to turn over the keys to Pier 1.
- 9.1.3 The City Administrator informed that Mr. Kee appears to be no longer inclined to challenge the Council's decision to terminate his lease for Pier 1. The City Administrator further informed that Mr. Kee has started to clear out his items.
- 9.1.4 The Deputy Mayor asked if tenants, like Mr. Kee, were required to render a deposit in the event of any damages that may have occurred to the property.
- 9.1.5 Mayor Wagner stated that he would want the Council to collectively determine what will be done with the Pier 1 space/location.

10.0 National Resource Center for Inclusive Education (NARCIE) – Councilor Hylton shared that NARCIE has submitted a request to the Council for it to take on Special Needs children who could possibly work at the Council.

10.1 Councilor Norales recommended that the Council takes more time to consider the the request from NARCIE.

10.1.1 Mayor Wagner expressed his concern about exposing Special Needs children to to potential occupational hazards.

11.0 Update on Street Works & Maintenance – Councilor Vaughan provided the following update:

- **3rd Street (Completed at the end of January)**
- **Bird's Isle Street (Completed at the end of January)**
- **Heusner Street (nearing completion)**
- **Custard Apple Street (Completed at the end of January)**
- **A-Street (in the beginning phase)**
- **Simon Lamb Street (works underway)**

12.0 Vehicle Care Coordinator – Councilor Vaughan stated that a replacement needs to be identified for the former Vehicle Care Coordinator, Mr. Joseph Lawrence.

12.1 Councilor Eljio recommended Mr. Danny Hemmans, Senior Mechanic, for the post.

12.1.1 The City Administrator recommended that the Council advertises the post given the fact that the post requires someone who possesses other knowledge & skills in addition to mechanical skills.

13.0 Social Assistance – Councilor Eljio shared about two families from the Lake Independence Constituency who are in need of Social Assistance. Councilor Eljio shared that one family's house collapsed while the other family's house was burnt down.

Everyone moved for the meeting to be adjourned.



MR. BERNARD WAGNER
MAYOR



MRS. STEPHANIE LINDO-GARBUTT
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

