

**MINUTES of CAUCUS MEETING**

Belize City Hall  
October 22, 2019

**Present:**

- |                               |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| 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 Elijo             | Councilor    |
| 8. Ms. Aisha Gentle           | Councilor    |
| 9. Mr. Albert Vaughan         | Councilor    |
| 10. Mr. Michael Norales       | Councilor    |
| 11. Dr. Candice Pitts         | Councilor    |

**Mrs. Stephanie Lindo-Garbutt, City Administrator**

**Mr. Rafael Sosa, Manager, Office of the Mayor**

**Attendance by Invitation:**

**Mr. Hubert Pipersburgh, LED Manager**

**Mr. Adrian “Danny” Madrid, National President, Association of Justices of the Peace & Commissioner of the Supreme Court**

**The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Mayor Wagner after which he led his Councilors in reciting the Belize National Prayer.**

Mayor Wagner remarked that the Caucus Meeting of October 22, 2019 was the first official Caucus Meeting at the new City Hall.

Mayor Wagner shared that the Council's first priority, with regards to the new City Hall, was to negotiate its funding. Mayor Wagner further shared that his Council wanted to create a City Hall that would be for the benefit of future City Councils.

Mayor Wagner reminded his Councilors to stay focused the Council's Manifesto and timeline for its completion.

## **1.0 Corrections to and Ratification of July 23, 2019 Minutes**

- 1.1 Under "Apologies", omit reasons in brackets.
- 1.2 On page 7, item 7.9 should read as follows: The City Administrator stated that the Council has been able to produce a lot with little **resources**. The City Administrator reported that the Council's sixteen Departments are underperforming.
- 1.3 Councilor Castellanos moved for the Minutes to be accepted with corrections. Councilor Norales seconded.

## **2.0 Matters Arising from Minutes**

- 2.1 **Thermoplastic Paints** - The City Administrator informed that no update was available.
- 2.2 **Subcommittee for Naming of Streets** - Councilor Pitts asked about the composition of the sub-committee for the naming of streets in the City. Councilor Pollard Jr. stated that when an initial meeting was convened, only he, Councilor Vaughan and Councilor Castellanos were present. Councilor Pitts suggested to the subcommittee Chairman, Councilor Pollard Jr. that a WhatsApp chat group be created for the subcommittee.
- 2.3 **Road Marking Applicator** – The City Administrator reported that the Council has been unable to identify a local supplier. The City Administrator further reported that a road marking applicator has been found online at a cost of \$11,000 US. The City Administrator stated that the road marking applicator will be procured as soon as the resources become available.



- 2.4 **Urban Gardening Project** - Councilor Pitts inquired about the status of the Urban Gardening Project.
- 2.4.1 Mayor Wagner informed Councilor Pitts that the Urban Gardening Project will be funded with the proceeds of the Municipal Paper. Mayor Wagner shared that the Council is awaiting the completion of the audited financial reports from Mr. Cedric Flowers, Certified Public Accountant.
- 2.4.2 Deputy Mayor Arnold remarked that the current design of the urban garden is unsustainable.
- 2.4.3 Mayor Wagner reminded Councilor Pitts to visit with Dr. Clara Cuellar, Executive Director of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) regarding the Association's urban gardening program.
- 2.4.4 Councilor Vaughan shared about an individual who coordinates a 4-H Club and who could offer some support and advice with respect to urban gardening. Councilor Vaughan reported that the Coordinator of the 4-H Club did not return to the Works Department. Councilor Vaughan also shared that two abandoned lots, located in the King's Park Area, have been identified for urban gardening.
- 2.4.5 Councilor Elijio shared that there are several schools that have expressed interest in Urban Gardening.
- 3.0 **Presentations**
- 3.1 **Proposal for Belize City Social Entrepreneurship Zone** – Mr. Hubert Pipersburgh
- 3.1.1 Mayor Wagner shared about a meeting that took place with a Jewish Philanthropist during his visit to New York City in the latter part of September where he represented the Caribbean Local Government Forum at the United Nations General Assembly.
- 3.1.2 The LED Manager shared that the Belizean Diaspora in New York has linkages with individuals and groups in New York who would like to work with the Belize City Council.

- 3.1.3 The LED Manager reported that he and Major Lloyd Jones, who both traveled to New York, met with the Jewish philanthropist. The LED Manager shared that, at the meeting, they made a presentation to the philanthropist of a mapping of the Collet Constituency. The LED Manager stated that the Collet Constituency was randomly chosen.
- 3.1.4 The LED Manager stated that the creation of the Belize Social Entrepreneurship Zone is a project that would require some \$6,000,000 US. The LED Manager reported that a proposal for the said project has been sent to the philanthropist and that a conference call would follow in the coming week.
- 3.1.5 Mayor Wagner stated that the goal of the project would be to inject capital into the Collet Constituency and to create an economic zone on the southside of the City. Mayor Wagner further stated that the project will be centered on impacting the lives of marginalized residents and families in lasting and meaningful ways.
- 3.1.5 The LED Manager shared that \$2,000,000 US will be earmarked for micro-financing. The LED Manager stated that the \$6,000,000, if provided by the philanthropist, will be in the form of a **grant** and not a **loan**.
- 3.1.6 Deputy Mayor Arnold asked the LED Manager to share with him the mapping of the Collet Constituency that was done.
- 3.1.7 Councilor Pitts asked if other Constituencies would be able to access the grant.
- 3.1.8 Councilor Goodin stated that the idea of a Social Entrepreneurship Zone for the City is a commendable one as it would fuse physical and social infrastructure for the upliftment of the lives of residents.
- 3.2 **Request from Association of Justices of the Peace and Commissioners of the Supreme Court – Mr. Adrian “Danny” Madrid.**
- 3.2.1 Mr. Adrian Madrid shared that the Belize Association of Justices of the Peace was formed in 1989 with a total of nine chapters.

3.2.2 Mr. Madrid stated that the Association is appealing to the Council for it to consider two requests: (i) the allocation of a permanent office space (with a secretary) at the new City Hall for the Association to conduct its daily business; (ii) the allocation of a space for the Association to conduct its monthly meetings.

3.2.3 Mayor Wagner recommended to Mr. Madrid that the Association waits for the Council to relocate its Municipal Court to the old City Hall on North Front Street. Mayor Wagner stated that the Council would, then, be in a better position to consider the Association's requests.

#### 4.0 **Mayor's Announcements/Matters/Updates**

##### 4.1 **Ratification of Council Resolution to Appeal Candice Miller Judgment**

4.1.1 Mayor Wagner shared that Mr. Anthony Sylvestre Jr. informed that Judge Courtney Abel is currently out of the country. Mr. Sylvestre Jr. further informed that the twenty-one-day period, within which the Council must officially file its appeal, will commence on the date of Judge Abel's return to the country.

4.1.2 Mayor Wagner shared that the Council has begun the process of assembling a legal legal team which will appeal the judgment handed down by Judge Abel. The legal team will comprise Mr. Eamon Courtenay, SC, Glenn D. Godfrey & Associates, Mr. Anthony Sylvestre Jr. and Mr. Richard Bradley (BCC's In-house Attorney).

4.1.3 Councilor Pollard Jr. rose in support of the Council's decision to appeal and expressed that he was pleased with the legal team that the Council is assembling.

4.1.4 Councilor Goodin rose in support of the Council's decision to appeal and urged the Council to be united in its position.

4.1.5 Councilors Pitts, Norales, Castellanos, Gentle and Vaughan all rose in support of the Council's decision to appeal.

- 4.1.6 Councilor Hylton expressed her concern about the costs associated with such an appeal and asked if the Council would be able to afford the costs.
- 4.1.7 Deputy Mayor Arnold remarked that the Council would have to consider the costs associated with taking its appeal all the way to the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ).
- 4.1.8 The City Administrator shared that from the time Candice Miller filed her claim against the Council, she has kept the Council abreast of the case at all previous Caucus Meetings. The City Administrator further shared that, at the last Caucus Meeting, held in July, she had informed the Council of the trial dates.
- 4.1.9 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the ratification of the Council Resolution to appeal the Candice Miller Judgment. ALL Councilors voted in favor - **MOTION PASSED**

## 4.2 Updates on Recent Trips to New York and Florida

- 4.2.1 Mayor Wagner shared that during his trip to New York, he delivered a presentation to to the United Nations in his capacity as a Board Member of the Caribbean Local Government Forum (CLGF)
- 4.2.2 Mayor Wagner informed that he hosted two successful town hall meetings with the Belizean Diaspora in New York and Florida respectively. Mayor Wagner shared that the Council will establish a “help desk” for the Belizean Disapora. The LED Manager will coordinate the “help desk”.
- 4.2.3 Mayor Wagner shared that the Council will soon enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will serve to formalize a Sister City Relationship with the the City of Fort Lauderdale in Florida, U.S.A.
- 4.2.4 Mayor Wagner shared about a recent courtesy visit that was paid to him by the Ambassador of Venezuela to Belize. Mayor Wagner shared that, during the courtesy visit, the Ambassador of Venezuela shared about his country’s desire for one of its coastal cities, Puerto Azul to enter into a Sister City Relationship with Belize City.

**4.3 Update on BCC Municipal Paper**

4.3.1 Mayor Wagner informed that subscriptions will be offered after November 15, 2019.

4.3.2 Mayor Wagner shared that the Council has already oversold bonds.

4.3.3 Mayor Wagner shared that Mr. Cedric Flowers, Certified Public Accountant, has informed the Council that audited financial reports will be completed by the end of the week.

4.3.4 Mayor Wagner stated that the Council would have to meet to prioritize the projects that will be funded by the Municipal Paper.

4.3.5 Councilor Goodin asked about infrastructural works with respect to Holy Emmanuel Street. Mayor Wagner stated that the costs for concreting Holy Emmanuel Street would be too significant and that there is the possibility that Central Government may take on the concreting.

4.3.5 Councilor Goodin asked about the proposed low-income housing program. Mayor Wagner stated that the Council will have to move ahead with the proposed program.

4.3.6 Councilor Goodin inquired about Ring Road Park. Councilor Elijio proceeded to give an update. Councilor Elijio informed that a bathroom has been installed for the homeowner and that the City Planner will sit with the Council's Legal Advisor to draft a lease agreement between the Council and the homeowner.

**4.4 Trade License Reform**

4.4.1 Mayor Wagner stated that the Trade License Reform Initiative is moving slowly. Consequently, the Ministry of Local Government has informed the Council that Trade License rates will remain unchanged.

**4.5 Update on Repairs to Belize City Swing Bridge**

- 4.5.1 Mayor Wagner stated that the Council's decision to proceed with repairs to the Belize City Swing Bridge came about as a result of numerous complaints/concerns expressed by residents. Mayor Wagner shared that the Council proceeded to contract the services of Mr. William Lindo Sr.
- 4.5.2 Mayor Wagner shared that panels were ordered from the Mennonites and installed along the entire length of the walkway. Mayor Wagner further shared that the Swing Bridge has been repainted and that six new lights will be installed to allow for better visibility in the nighttime.
- 4.5.3 The City Administrator shared that the Swing Bridge underwent a thorough check/diagnosis and that the painting includes a top layer that will last for a few years.
- 4.5.4 Mayor Wagner shared that the cost of the repairs to the Swing Bridge totals approximately \$100,000 BZ and that the repairs are scheduled to be completed at the end of October.
- 4.5.5 Mayor Wagner shared that the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) will assist the Council with the design for a new and modern bridge. Mayor Wagner stated that a new, modern bridge would form a part of the legacy of the current Council.

**5.0 Municipal Policing Conference in Panama**

- 5.1 Deputy Mayor Arnold shared about a Central American Regional Conference on Municipal Policing that he recently attended in Panama. Mr. Rachime Linares, Special Constable Coordinator and Mr. Enrique Carballo, Executive Director of the Mayors Association of Belize, were also a part of the Belize delegation to Panama.
- 5.2 Deputy Mayor Arnold shared that the United States Government has retooled the Municipal Police of Costa Rica and Panama with more sophisticated uniform and Equipment.





- 5.3 Deputy Mayor Arnold shared that surveillance cameras in other Central American countries record not only criminal/illicit activities but also positive, law-abiding things done by their countries.
- 5.4 Deputy Mayor Arnold shared that the Municipal Police in other Central American countries perform not only enforcement functions but are also involved in social programs.
- 6.0 **Renewal of City Engineer's Contract** – Councilor Albert Vaughan
- 6.1 Councilor Vaughan informed that the City Engineer's contract expired on **September 1, 2019**. Councilor Vaughan shared that he, the Mayor and the City Administrator met with the City Engineer earlier in the week to discuss the renewal of his contract.
- 6.2 The City Administrator informed that the City Engineer's contract is being renewed based on certain conditions. The City Administrator shared that the termination clauses of the contract are being amended. The City Administrator further shared that City Engineer's gratuity are being changed from 10% to 20% given the fact that there has been no increase in his base salary.
- 6.3 Mayor Wagner stated that the post of City Engineer is a critical post. Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the renewal of the City Engineer's contract through to March 31, 2021. Deputy Mayor Arnold, Councilor Pitts, Councilor Goodin, Councilor Gentle, Councilor Castellanos, Councilor Pollard Jr., Councilor Vaughan and Councilor Norales all voted in favor. Councilor Elijio voted against the motion while Councilor Hylton abstained – **MOTION PASSED**
- 7.0 **Ratification of Letter of Intent Between BCC and UTech** – Councilor Micah Goodin

- 7.1 Councilor Goodin shared that the Honorable Cordel Hyde, PUP Area Representative for the Lake Independence Constituency, had made an initial contact with the University of Technology (**UTech**) which paved the way for his visit to the University. Councilor Goodin was accompanied to Jamaica by the Council's Sports Coordinator.
- 7.2 Councilor Goodin shared that during his visit to Utech, discussions were held around opportunities for collaboration between the Belize City Council and the University of Technology in the sporting disciplines of football, basketball, track & field and volleyball.
- 7.3 Councilor Goodin shared a Letter of Intent that was formulated between the Belize City Council and the University of Technology. Councilor Goodin further shared that the next step will be for both entities to formally enter into a Memorandum of Understanding.
- 7.4 Mayor Wagner stated that the Council's undertaking with the University of Technology falls in line with the Council's Manifesto commitments as they pertain to Sports. Mayor Wagner expressed that the Council should move aggressively to enter into MOU with Utech.
- 7.5 Councilors Pollard Jr. and Castellanos congratulated Councilor Goodin for his initiative with the University of Technology.
- 7.6 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the ratification of the Letter of Intent between the the Belize City Council and the University of Jamaica. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**
- 8.0 Rehabilitation of Taylor's Alley Basketball Court – Councilor Micah Goodin**
- 8.1 Councilor Goodin reported that a basketball court was recently constructed on George Street in the Queen's Square Constituency. Councilor Goodin stated that the initiative was a part of the Council's Manifesto commitment to create youth friendly spaces across the City.

8.2 Councilor Goodin shared that a similar initiative will be carried out in the Taylor’s Alley Area. Councilor Goodin stated that the initiative will see the basketball court in Taylor’s Alley be facelifted. Councilor Goodin shared that it will be a joint initiative between himself and Councilor Pitts.

8.3 Councilor Pitts shared that the young men who reside in the Taylor’s Alley and “Pregnant Alley” areas are unable to utilize the basketball court located on Euphrates Avenue due to gang rivalry.

8.4 Councilor Gentle shared about a property located on Reggae Street that used to be a basketball court.

9.0 **Youth Shadow Council** – Councilor Micah Goodin

9.1 Mayor Wagner urged Councilor Goodin to get the Youth Shadow Council off the ground.

10.0 **City Administrator’s Presentation (Monthly Report for September 2019)**

10.1 **Financial Performance**

**Income 2018**

Taxes: \$351,024  
Traffic: \$368,331

**Income 2019**

\$244,810  
\$434,831

**Expenses 2018**

Personal Emoluments: \$687,214  
Travel & Subsistence: \$2872  
Materials & Supplies: \$16,687  
Maintenance Costs: \$12,012

**Expenses 2019**

\$804,143  
\$25,712  
\$40,969  
\$172,114

- Office supplies are now ordered on a quarterly basis.
- A total of twenty-four (24) new hires during the period July – September



**Key Observations:**

- Current property tax collections improved during the second quarter of 2019.
- The Traffic Department is now meeting its revenue targets.
- Personal emoluments are still within the budget.
- Travel & Subsistence, Social Assistance, Celebrations/Festivities are over the budget.

**10.2 Corporate Credit Card for BCC**

10.2.1 Mayor Wagner introduced a motion for the Council to apply for a corporate credit card that will be used mainly for foreign travel and online purchases.

10.2.2 The City Administrator informed that the application will be made to the Atlantic Bank Limited and the credit card will carry a credit limit of \$10,000 US. The cardholders will include the Mayor and the Finance Department.

10.2.3 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to obtain a corporate credit card from the Atlantic Bank Limited. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**

**10.3 Accrued Vacation Leave**

10.3.1 The City Administrator informed about the Revenue Manager, the Acting Finance Director, the Works Manager and the City Engineer who have all accrued significant vacation days.

10.3.2 Mayor Wagner requested of the City Administrator that she and the HR Department develop and present a plan/schedule as to how the matter of the accrued vacation days will be addressed.



#### 10.4 **Disciplinary Committee Matters**

##### Queenie Goodin Matter (**deferred**)

David Tillett Matter – The City Administrator informed that while on interdiction, Mr. David Tillett will be required to attend a Disciplinary Committee (DC) hearing. Additionally, Mr. Tillett will be required to provide the Council with regular updates on his court case.

Councilor Elijio recommended that the Council goes the route of a DC hearing.

Councilor Vaughan asked if the Disciplinary Committee could try Mr. Tillett before his court case concludes.

It was decided that the Council will go the route of a DC hearing as it pertains to the matter of Mr. David Tillett.

Councilor Vaughan asked about Council employees, Mr. Glenn Leslie and Ms. Jordine Sutherland. Councilor Vaughan shared that termination was recommended for both employees following their DC hearings.

The City Administrator informed that the letter of termination for Mr. Glenn Leslie is pending due to an appendix that has been requested from the Council's Legal Advisor. The City Administrator reported that the minutes of the DC hearing for Ms. Jordine Sutherland have been prepared and reviewed.

## 10.5 Legal Matters

Candice Miller Judgment - Judgment will be appealed after Judge Abel's judgment has been perfected.

Boar House – The Council has issued a demand letter. Councilor Pollard Jr. shared that the owners of the Board House want to settle their outstanding payments to the Council.

CWU Mediation (Cecil Jenkins and Shana White) – The City Administrator informed that both ex-employees of the Council are requesting to be reinstated. Additionally, Mr. Cecil Jenkins is requesting payment for emotional distress.

Mayor Wagner stated that the Council will not make any financial offer to Mr. Cecil Jenkins. Mayor Wagner said that the Council will continue to participate in the mediation process.

## 10.6 Contracts/Managerial Appointments/Study Leave

Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the appointment of Mr. Richard Bradley as the Council's Legal Director for the contract period October 1, 2019 to March 31, 2021. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**

Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the appointment of Mr. Simeon Alvarez Jr. as Sanitation Manager. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**

The City Administrator informed that the City Planner has commenced a Master's Degree program in Milan, Italy and is requesting study leave. The City Administrator recommended that the Council recruits a qualified individual who will assume the post of Assistant to the City Planner. The City Administrator shared that she will discuss with the Building Unit Manager the possibility of her holding over in the absence of the City Planner.

- 10.7 **BCC Christmas Luncheon** – The City Administrator recommended that each Department holds its own Christmas social which will be partially funded by the Council.

Mayor Wagner stated that the Council will have to find the funds to hold the interdepartmental Christmas Luncheon.

10.8 **Updates on New City Hall**

- camera surveillance system installed
- backup generator installed
- fire alarm system installed
- elevator installation almost complete
- furniture procurement almost complete
- City Planner preparing drawings for remodeling of old City

11.0 **Other Business**

- 11.1 Councilor Gentle shared about a proposal for a bar and grill (Caribbean Breeze Grill) to operate at the former Pier One location. It was decided that the principals of the proposed business will be invited to present their proposal to the Council.
- 11.2 Councilor Goodin recommended that the Council takes on the development of the former Pier One location and undertake something similar to the Santa Monica Pier located in Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.



### 11.3 Submissions to Local Building Unit

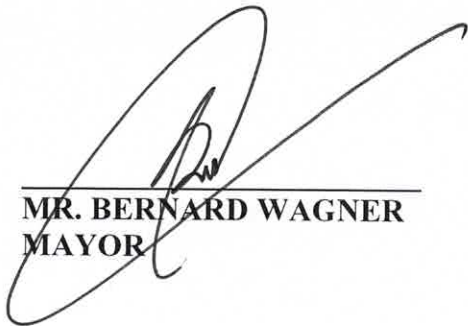
- Request from Ms. Consuelo Estrada, Meat Shop Owner, for removal of outer shelves and installation of new wall for booths #37 and #38 at the Michael Finnegan Market. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor (no offset) – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request from Mrs. Delfina Cowo for installation of metal mesh and raising of floor for booths #59A and #59B at the Michael Finnegan Market. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor (no offset) – **MOTION PASSED**
- Request from Mr. Tony Perdomo & Ms. Sarah Beck (Tony's Barbecue) for installation of metal frame under the overpass near the Flag Monument – **ALL** Councilors voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**
- The City Administrator stated that the proprietors of Tony's Barbecue will need to sign a lease agreement given the business is located on the Council's reserve.
- Request from Mr. Amador Pott to lease and erect a small wooden structure at the foot of the BelChina Bridge for the purpose of selling food – **REQUEST DENIED**
- Request from Mrs. Nadine Pelayo for the expansion of structure for Crème De La Crème on Princess Margaret Drive – **REQUEST DENIED**

11.3 The City Administrator informed that in addition to Shell One Stop, the Council has made arrangements for the purchase of fuel from the PUMA Gas Station located at the Pound Yard. The City Administrator stated that the long-term solution will be for the Council to become a commercial customer and to provide its own fuel.



12.0 **Adjournment**

Councilor Gentle moved for the meeting to be adjourned. Councilor Norales seconded the motion.



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**MR. BERNARD WAGNER**  
**MAYOR**



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**MRS. STEPHANIE LINDO-GARBUTT**  
**CITY ADMINISTRATOR**