

## **MINUTES of CAUCUS MEETING**

Belize City Hall  
January 26, 2021

**Present:**

- |                               |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| 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. Delthruide Hylton      | Councilor    |
| 7. Mr. Ryan Elijo             | 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**

**Present by Invitation:**

**Mr. Eluide Miller, Manager In Training, Office of the Mayor**

**Major Lloyd Jones, Chairman & CEO, The Zephyr Group**

**Ms. Roxanne Marin, Aloe Vera Community, Neighborhood Watch & Beautification Group**

**The meeting was called to order at 10:27 a.m. by Mayor Wagner after which he informed all present that Councilor Pollard will be a bit late to the meeting.**

- 1.0** Councilor Vaughan led all in attendance in reciting the Peace Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi as he saw it fitting given the times we are currently facing.

### **Personal Reflections by Councilors**

Councilor Pitts offered some words of encouragement to all Council members in recognizing the progress made in carrying out their manifesto. She expressed that she is well pleased with the work that the Council completed during its time in office.

Councilor Pitts expounded on the fact that this Administration was expected to last no longer than 100 days in office but that the Council did not only survive but thrive. She urged all Councilors to reflect on their time in office as they go forth in their endeavors.

Councilor Pitts thanked Mayor Wagner for being supportive of her from the very onset. Subsequently, she thanked the City Administrator for working side by side with her and her fellow Councilors.

Councilor Arnold then expressed his gratitude to all Councilors and extended well wishes to all those seeking reelection. He asserted that he is beyond grateful that he got the opportunity to be a part of a Council that was truly "All about the people".

Mayor Wagner added that he was highly appreciative of Councilor Arnold and Deputy Norales and applauded them for their work as Deputy Mayor.

Councilor Elijo expressed his appreciation for all the times shared and all the lessons learned during his time as a Councilor. He wished Mayor Wagner and all Councilors well and declared that he would be supportive of them in all that they do going forward.

Deputy Mayor Norales voiced his appreciation for all Council members and for all that they brought to the table. He stated that he is of the belief that all members brought unique but relevant contributions to the team. Deputy Norales highlighted his appreciation for the Mayor and for always being available to offer advice and support when needed.

Councilor Vaughn highlighted the bond created between all Council members and expressed that he is beyond satisfied with the work that has been carried out. He expressed his gratitude for his fellow Councilors and for their contribution. He vowed to always support Mayor Wagner and expressed that it was an honor to serve under his leadership at the Council.

Councilor Castellanos stated that it has been an honor being a part of this Council. He expressed his appreciation for the Mayor and for all the Council members and their contributions throughout their time in office.



**COUNCILOR ELIJO LEFT MEETING 11:10 A.M.**

Councilor Gentle accentuated the growth harnessed by all members of the team during their time in office and urged all members to keep pushing forward.

**COUNCILOR ELIJO RETURNED TO MEETING 11:17 A.M.**

Lastly, Councilor Goodin communicated his gratitude for the Mayor and all Council members for their commitment in carrying out their manifesto. He stated that he is thankful for all the lessons learnt and for being given the opportunity to gain a wealth of knowledge.

**COUNCILOR GOODIN LEFT MEETING 11:22 A.M.**

**COUNCILOR CASTELLANOS LEFT MEETING 11:22 A.M.**

**DEPUTY MAYOR NORALES LEFT MEETING 11:23 A.M.**

**2.0 Ratification of November 24, 2020 Minutes**

- 2.1 Councilor Gentle moved for the ratification and acceptance of the November 24, 2020 minutes. Seconded by Councilor Hylton.

**DEPUTY NORALES RETURNED TO MEETING 11:25 A.M.**

**3.0 Matters Arising from Minutes**

- 3.1 Procurement of Heavy-Duty Equipment - The City Administrator revealed that the Council received one (1) compactor truck and one (1) Double Axle Dump Truck. The City Administrator stated that we have been experiencing issues with both pieces of equipment. However, the company is working with the Council in regards to those issues. The equipment is being operated with an overseer from the company.

- 3.1.1 Mayor Wagner and the City Administrator stressed the importance of the employees being properly trained and equipped to operate these pieces of machinery effectively.

- 3.1.2 Councilor Vaughan requested clarification from the City Administrator in reference to the other pieces of equipment that were to be procured.



- 3.1.3 City Administrator affirmed that the Street Sweeper required extra retrofitting before it can be delivered to the Council and therefore it would be delivered and paid for at a later date.
- 3.2 Assessing damages to portion of sidewalk that were caused by Belize Dry Cleaners City Administrator Lindo-Garbutt confirmed that the repairs have been completed. She also revealed that she received a request from the Belize Dry Cleaners to offset their taxes for works they are carrying out behind their establishment and that the Works Department will seek to quantify the works being carried out by the Belize Dry Cleaners.
- 3.3 Asset & Investment Agreement with M.Y. Investments Ref: Installation of LED Digital Billboards on the Pallotti Overpass - Councilor Vaughn encouraged the Council to work hand in hand with the business community and asked for some urgency in the offsetting of the taxes of the company.
- 3.3.1 Mayor Wagner stated that the Overpass is being power washed currently and questioned the progress of the digital boards.
- 3.3.2 The City Administrator declared that relevant contracts have been received and informed members that she has informed businesses that the Council is now working with a private entity and they can contact said entity if they are interested in displaying ads.
- 3.4 Mayor Wagner questioned plans for Henderson Avenue as it is in urgent need of attention.
- 3.4.1 Councilor Vaughan stated that that street was a part of another project that was not completed.
- 3.4.2 Mayor Wagner affirmed that the Council should make an effort to make much needed repairs to this street.

**COUNCILOR GOODIN RETURNED TO THE MEETING 11:30 A.M.**  
**COUNCILOR CASTELLANOS RETURNED TO THE MEETING 11:30 A.M.**

3.5 Concerns arising from construction being carried out by Mr. Roque Escalante - Councilor Elijio suggested that the Council will face issues with construction being carried out by Mr. Roque Escalante as he is not complying with the requirements of the Building Unit.

3.5.1 Councilor Vaughan revealed that Mr. Escalante has not been complying with Stop Orders issued by the Council. He refused to resubmit plans to show where people will park at the apartment complex on Sixth Street in Kings Park.

#### **COUNCILOR PITTS LEFT MEETING 11:42 A.M.**

3.5.2 Mayor Wagner highlighted that this is an ongoing problem with construction being carried out on 6th Street.

3.5.3 Councilor Arnold expressed that this could have been avoided if proper supervision was being carried out. He stated that this sets a bad precedent for others engaging in construction.

3.5.4 Councilor Elijio communicated that he had confronted Mr. Escalante and he was non-compliant. Councilor Elijio declared that three (3) Stop Orders have been issued to Mr. Escalante in an effort to get him to resubmit his application but to no avail.

#### **COUNCILOR PITTS RETURNED TO THE MEETING 11:48 A.M.**

#### **4.0 Presentations**

4.1 **Resource Mobilization for E-transit Network** – Major Lloyd Jones  
Presented study on Green Urban Transit System

4.1.1 Major Lloyd Jones outlined the key objectives of the New Green Transit Network. These objectives include improved efficiency and attractiveness, improved municipal connectivity and the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions.

4.1.2 Mr. Jones highlighted the major components of this project. These components include electric buses, maintenance facilities, charging infrastructure and renewable energy.



- 4.1.3 Mr. Jones declared that the Pilot Project consisted of 5-6 buses that would carry out runs from the Lake-I area to Downtown and back at a rate of (\$2) BZD and that existing bus operators would be given an opportunity to be a part of the project.
- 4.1.4 Mr. Jones revealed that the EU has agreed to grant the Council funding in the sum of (1.3) Million Euros to cover the cost of three (3) buses. The purchase of these buses is inclusive of all necessary charging infrastructure.
- 4.1.5 Mr. Jones expounded on some features of operation. These included; no cash transactions, senior citizens pass, free Wi-Fi, a 5:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. schedule and an e-Transit mobile application.
- 4.1.6 Mr. Jones expressed that this project is viable with projected revenues of (\$2,671,800) per annum and highlighted the importance of adapting and utilizing modern technology. Undertaking this project would also bring about additional opportunities for the Council through management contracts, maintenance contracts, transit sales and the creation of (66) jobs.
- 4.1.7 Councilor Pitts questioned the added security features that would come as a part of this project.
- 4.1.8 Mr. Jones highlighted that surveillance cameras will be in buses with a Center for monitoring during periods of operation. He also expressed that the phone application would assist in providing people with accurate information that would help to limit the amount of time they spend waiting at respective bus stops.
- 4.1.9 Councilor Gentle questioned if the buses will be compatible with streets.
- 4.1.10 Mr. Jones assured that the pilot project was designed taking into account the current condition of the relevant streets that are a part of the bus routes.
- 4.1.11 Mayor Wagner expressed his appreciation for the presentation made and underscored that this type of initiative is necessary for the modernization of the municipality.
- 4.1.12 Mayor Wagner moved a motion to declare that the Belize City Council agrees to be a part of the municipal E-Transit Network and to pledge its participation in the pilot project as proposed by Mr. Jones. Seconded by Councilor Goodin. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED.**

**Councilor Castellanos LEFT MEETING 12:10 A.M.**

- 4.2 **Aloe Vera Community, Neighborhood Watch & Beautification Group** – Ms. Roxanne Marin
- 4.2.1 Ms. Marin informed members of the meeting that the Aloe Vera Neighborhood watch was established in 2010 in an effort to reduce criminal activity in the area and to assist in the maintenance of the Aloe Vera Community.
- 4.2.2 Ms. Marin revealed that she requested assistance from the previous Administration on multiple occasions but was unsuccessful.
- 4.2.3 Ms. Marin requested that the Council assist the community by putting a long-term plan in place as it relates to street maintenance and garbage collection in the immediate area.
- 4.2.4 Ms. Marin also requested that the Council assist in carrying out some much-needed repair work on Aloe Vera St. going into Violet Lane and with the cutting of overgrown properties on Aloe Vera St. (Lord Right Estate)
- 4.2.5 Councilor Vaughan expressed his gratitude to Ms. Marin making her presentation. He declared that the City Administrator and the City Engineer recently visited the area and they had identified some areas of concerns. He also stated that they have recently done some work and ensured that culverts in the area were cleared.
- 4.2.6 Councilor Vaughan agreed that the streets surrounding Aloe Vera St. are in deplorable condition and that a plan must be made. Councilor Vaughan also urged that the Aloe Vera community work along with the Council in maintaining the area. He declared that the Council has made countless efforts to carry out works in the area but oftentimes residents of the area are reluctant to do their part in maintaining a clean environment.
- 4.2.7 Mayor Wagner reminded Ms. Marin that while he agrees that the streets require attention, the Council has been experiencing extreme financial constraints as a result of the ongoing Pandemic. Despite this, Ms. Marin was assured that the concerns of the Aloe Vera community will be addressed.





4.2.8 Councilor Goodin commended Ms. Marin for the work she has carried out throughout the City.

**Councilor Castellanos RETURNED TO MEETING 12:17 A.M.**

**5.0 Update on Street Works & Maintenance – Councilor Albert Vaughan**

5.1 Councilor Vaughan also highlighted that repairs were done on over a hundred (100) streets throughout the City while (31) of those streets were completely upgraded.

5.2 Councilor Vaughan stated that there are (13) streets that were recently identified as being in a deplorable condition and are currently being upgraded.

5.3 Mayor Wagner and Councilor Pitts urged Councilor Vaughan to share information on the progress of these upgrades going forward so that this information can be disseminated to the constituencies.

5.4 Mayor Wagner and all Councilors commended Councilor Vaughan for his continuous efforts in maintaining and upgrading streets across the City during his tenure.

**6.0 Presentation of Municipal Budget for FY 2021-2022 – Revenue Managers**

6.1 The City Administrator indicated that the proposed income for the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 is projected to be (\$28,795,909), thus budget being presented is balanced. She explained that several initiatives will be introduced in the upcoming fiscal year in an effort to increase revenues for the Council.

6.2 The City Administrator briefly outlined plans to launch a Rebate Program for Trade License and expounded on plans for the Sanitation Department becoming a revenue generating Department through the issuing of littering tickets.

**7.0 City Administrator's Report**

7.1 The City Administrator highlighted the (3) main areas of collection over the past (4) years. These include collection from property taxes, collection from the Traffic Department and collection from Fees & Services.



- 7.2 The City Administrator warned that we may see a decrease in revenues from taxes in 2021 due to the constraints brought on by the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- 7.3 The City Administrator highlighted the increase in expenditure for the year 2020/2021 and explained that this comes as a result of an aggressive Works and Maintenance Program
- 7.4 The City Administrator alluded to the fact that this Administration has spent significantly less on celebration costs as it has always been the focus of the Council to allocate resources to those areas that will have a lasting impact on the citizens of the City.
- 7.5 The City Administrator made notice of the fact that monthly recurring expenditure has remained consistent since the start of the Pandemic. This comes as a result of the Council's commitment to retain its full staff despite facing extreme financial constraints.
- 7.6 The City Administrator outlined some of the key achievements realized over the last (3) years:
- Launched Community Support Program
  - Adoption & Rehabilitation of Fred Westby Park
  - Establishment of Youth Shadow Council
  - Hosted 11 Downtown Super Sales (80+ business & avg. attendance of 15,000 citizens)
  - Launched Accelerator Program (34 Entrepreneurs benefited)
- 7.7 The City Administrator reported that Social Assistance contributions have been consistent throughout the term of this Administration, especially as it relates to sports, housing and education.

**COUNCILOR ALLAN POLLARD ARRIVED AT MEETING 1:13 P.M.**



**8.0 (i) Compensation for Mrs. Ana Maria Espat (during period as Acting City Planner)**

- (i) The City Administrator stated that Ms. Espat was asked to bring a counteroffer to the Council and recommended that the Council meet Mrs. Espat in the middle.
- (ii) Councilor Arnold expressed that he remains impressed with the work carried out by Mrs. Espat during her time as Acting City Planner and stated that he is in support of approving the counteroffer made by Mrs. Espat.
- (iii) Councilor Vaughan declared that he is also in support of approving the request made by Mrs. Espat.
- (iv) Mayor Wagner moved a motion approving payment of \$500/week to be made to Mrs. Espat for the period in which she held the position of Acting City Planner. Seconded by Councilor Goodin. ALL Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED.**

**COUNCILOR HYLTON LEFT THE MEETING 1:15 P.M.**

**(ii) Ratification of Round-Robin Vote Ref: Interdiction of Mr. Aldoray Najarro**

- (ii) (i) Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the ratification of Round-Robin Vote. Ref: Interdiction of Mr. Aldora Najarro. Seconded by Councilor Vaughn.

**(iii) Trade & Property Incentives**

- (iii) (i) The City Administrator shared that the Revenue Department has received a barrage of requests from Belize City residents for some measure of ease due to the financial constraints being experienced as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- (ii) The City Administrator declared that the Revenue Dept. is proposing a 15% discount up to the end of February and a 10% discount up to the end of March on all **current accounts**.
- (iii) Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of trade and property incentives for 2021/2022 as presented. Seconded by Councilor Arnold. ALL Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED.**



- (iv) Mayor Wagner requested that an amendment be made to Resolution No. 46 of 2018. Mayor Wagner moved a motion requesting approval from Councilors to give him authority to waive up to (100%) of interest penalties charged on delinquent property taxes retroactive to the **8th Day of March, 2018** for those owners who are paying the full principal owed. Seconded by Councilor Castellanos. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED.**

**COUNCILOR HYLTON RETURNED TO MEETING 1:18 P.M.**

- (vi) Mayor Wagner moved a motion for approval to give all Councilors the cell phones that were issued as a parting gift. Seconded by Councilor Hylton. **ALL** Councilors voted in favor - **MOTION PASSED.**

**6.0 Submissions to Building Unit – Ms. Carla Patnett, City Planner**

- Request from Assistant Commissioner of Police, Dr. A. Rosado for the Belize City Council to cover the installation cost (\$285) of new water services to the Police Booth at the Yarborough Green. Within three (3) months the ownership of the water meter is to be transferred to the Police Department - **MOTION PASSED.**
- Request from Belize Electricity Limited to keep the Reserve located behind their Corporate Headquarters free of obstruction for the purpose of enabling access to a proposed plan for electrical charging stations and parking – **MOTION PASSED.**
- Request from Ms. Avry Turner to lease and build structure in the Reserve Area on Mahogany Street between Causarina & Flamboyant Streets for the purpose of vending chicken – **MOTION PASSED.**
- Request from Mr. Blayne Coleman to construct extension on booth #10 at BTL Park – **DEFERRED.**
- Request from Hand in Hand Ministries (Ms. Abel Vargas) for the Belize City Council's partnership in the construction of homes by waiving the building application fee (\$50.00) and building permit fee (\$35.00) - **MOTION PASSED.**
- Request from Mr. Allen Logan to lease reserve area on New Road in front of Holy Redeemer Upper School – **DENIED.**
- Request from Mr. Andre Gonzales of Brodies Superfoods to construct a shed in Battlefield Park as a refuge for staff from the elements – **DENIED.**
- Request from Ms. Kimberly Searle to construct a new structure for existing “Kimmy Ling” fast food shop in Farmers Market Reserve – **DENIED.**
- Request from Ms. Regla Robateaux to lease parking space in front of Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital Parking Area and to construct a wooden structure for the purpose of vending tacos and beverages – **DENIED.**



10.0 **Other Business**

- 10.1 The City Administrator revealed that Mrs. Ana Marie Espat, Technical Manager, Building Unit has given notice to the Council expressing that she will not be seeking renewal of her contract and has recommended that Ms. Patnett, City Planner take up her position.
- 10.2 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of a lease agreement to Silvia Veliz for Booth #114 at City Hall - **MOTION PASSED.**
- 10.3 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of a lease agreement to Estefani G Quinteros for Booth #106 at City Hall - **MOTION PASSED.**
- 10.4 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of a lease agreement to Dorian Usher for Booth #110 at City Hall - **MOTION PASSED.**
- 10.5 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of a lease agreement to Rilo O Johnson for Booth #128 at City Hall - **MOTION PASSED.**
- 10.6 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of a lease agreement to Martin Blanco and Xiomara Perez for Booth #115 at City Hall - **MOTION PASSED.**
- 10.7 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of a lease agreement to Mikael and Shakera Sosa for Booth #102 at City Hall - **MOTION PASSED.**
- 10.8 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of a lease agreement to Curt and Jenna Bradley for Kiosk #12 at DIGI Park - **MOTION PASSED.**
- 10.9 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of a lease agreement to Teresita Vansen and Yolanda Parham for Kiosk #19 at DIGI Park - **MOTION PASSED.**
- 10.10 Councilor Elijio requested that the Council provide material in the “Gungulung” area so that much needed repairs can be carried out.
- 10.11 Councilor Vaughan notified that the City Administrator, Works manager visited the area recently and that they have recognized the necessary infrastructure needed.
- 10.12 Mayor Wagner thanked all in attendance for their contribution to the meeting and expressed that he is pleased with how productive it was.

**11.0 Adjournment**

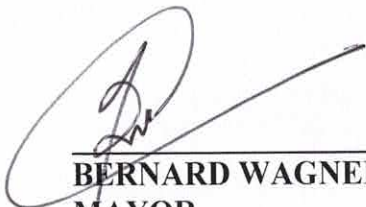
11.1 Councilor Elijio moved for the meeting to be adjourned. Seconded by Councilor Hylton. Meeting adjourned at 2:17 p.m.

  
ALBERT VAUGHAN  
COUNCILOR

  
JAVIER CASTELLANOS  
COUNCILOR

  
ALLAN POLLARD JR.  
COUNCILOR

  
MICAH GOODIN  
COUNCILOR

  
BERNARD WAGNER  
MAYOR

  
STEPHANIE LINDO-GARBUTT  
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

