

MINUTES OF REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Caucus Room, Belize City Council

October 17th, 2024

10:00 a.m.

Present at the meeting were the following:

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| 1. Mr. Bernard Wagner | Mayor |
| 2. Mr. Allan Pollard Jr. | Deputy Mayor |
| 3. Mr. Javier Castellanos | Councillor |
| 4. Mr. Evan Thompson | Councillor |
| 5. Mr. Edmund Kwan | Councillor |
| 6. Mr. Sherwin Garcia | Councillor |
| 7. Mrs. Stephanie Hamilton | Councillor |
| 8. Mr. Malcolm Nunez | Councillor |
| 9. Mr. Dorian Usher | Councillor |
| 10. Mr. Eluide Miller | Councillor |

Absent with Reason:

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| 1. Ms. Kaya Cattouse | Councillor |
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| Mr. Albert Vaughan | City Administrator |
| Ms. Carissa Casanova | Administrative Manager, Office of the Mayor |

Mayor Wagner called the meeting to order at 10:18 AM.

1.0 Belize National Prayer

1.1 Mayor Wagner led all present in reciting the National Prayer of Belize.

2.0 Welcome Remarks

2.1 Mayor Wagner welcomed those present and thanked them for participating in the business of the people each month.

2.2 The Mayor then stated that the last Council meeting for 2024 would be held in November. He added that the Council would reconvene in January of 2025, and further advised that there will be a lot happening in 2025.

2.3 Mayor Wanger then explained that the idea of live-streaming Council meetings is being explored. He shared that this initiative would enhance the Council's efforts to be more transparent and give the public better insight into the work that is done during the meetings.

2.4 Mayor Wagner then concluded by explaining that the Council has been one of the leaders in transparency and reiterated that the Councillors could begin to look forward to those live-streamed meetings.

3.0 Ratification of the August 6th, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes

3.1 "10.25" change to "hundreds of thousands of dollars"

3.2 "4.10" change to "the number of interested drivers"

Deputy Mayor Pollard and Councillor Nunez arrived at 10:25 am.

3.3 Councillor Garcia moved for the minutes to be ratified, seconded by Councillor Kwan.

3.4 "12.1" Deputy Mayor Pollard recommended that deliberations be included in the meeting minutes.

3.5 Councillor Castellanos recommended that information on the property and the purpose of the acquisition also be included.

3.6 "13.4" change to "further changes the mindset of Councillors."

3.7 "12.2" justify the withdrawal of the motion.



4.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

4.1 Feedback has been received from persons who were previously interviewed for the e-taxi driver positions; they expressed concerns regarding the associated fees.

4.2 Mayor Wagner explained that the e-taxi drivers will utilize the Mi Driva app along with the traditional method. Drivers will be required to pay \$90 per day to the Council as part of the “rent-to-own” agreement. A portion of their \$90 payment will be used to cover maintenance and charging costs, while any additional fares earned by the driver will be theirs to keep. After 5-6 years, if the drivers work hard, and are diligent, the vehicle will be theirs.

4.3 Mayor Wagner further explained that the arrangement he described is very similar to the existing framework; the difference is that the drivers get to have ownership of the taxis after 5-6 years.

4.4 In addition to the daily payment which does not provide for any days off, the vehicles have been equipped with a geofence that requires prior approval before the vehicles are allowed to leave city limits.

4.5 Mayor Wagner then acknowledged that there would not be any oversight for runs conducted by the driver when they are not using the app. To ensure that the Council does not incur any losses, the issue of limited oversight is circumvented through the \$90.00 daily fee.

4.6 Councillor Nunez noted that because the vehicles are electric, the drivers will not incur the additional cost of fuel.

4.7 Mayor Wagner then advised that the vehicles would be stationed at the E-transit depot. He explained that the intention is to avoid sniping customers from traditional taxi operators.

4.8 The Council’s PR Department is setting up a WhatsApp number where calls can come in and taxis can be dispatched. However, if the taxis are on their way back from making a run, and someone flags them down, they would be allowed to take those runs.

4.9 “13.1” Councillor Castellanos requested an update on the proposed pension scheme and stipend for City Councillors.

4.10 The City Administrator advised that the matter had not been addressed, but that he had notified the Director of Finance, and they have discussed the process that would be required for the adjustment to the Councillor’s stipends, but there has been no progress.

4.11 Mayor Wagner advised that the matter should be fast-tracked.

4.12 The City Administrator advised that there are two concerns. He recalled that during the first Council meeting, the matter of the stipend for Councillors was discussed. During the meeting, Councillor Miller had committed to addressing the stipend, but there hasn't been much progress in this regard either.

4.13 The City Administrator suggested that he and the Finance Director meet with Councillor Miller to address both the stipend and the pension for Councillors so that one comprehensive package can be submitted to the Ministry of Local Government.

4.14 Councillor Miller advised that he, Deputy Mayor Pollard, and Councillor Castellanos have met and prepared a proposal for the increase in Councillors' stipends. Councillor Miller then explained that the increase has been accounted for in the proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

4.15 Councillor Miller stated that the information could be shared with the Finance Director at any point, as it would be his responsibility to submit the request to the Department of Local Government.

4.16 The City Administrator emphasized the importance of ensuring that both matters were included in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

4.17 Councillor Miller explained that the proposal contains the justification for the increased stipends and a comparative analysis of the stipends of similar boards and other municipalities.

4.18 Deputy Mayor Pollard advised that the proposed adjustments are to align the stipends and allowances with changes to the scope of their work since the implementation of the Belize City Council Act.

5.0 Announcements by the Mayor

5.1 Mayor Wagner advised that he did not have much to share by way of announcements, but informed the Councillors that he was meeting with representatives from JICA regarding efforts to replace the Swing Bridge, and finalizing plans to travel to Samoa for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

6.0 General Updates from the City Administrator

6.1 The City Administrator advised that four individuals have been recruited to fill the need for personnel in the Cemetery Department. He added that there are plans to take on an additional four persons to address the abandoned properties.

6.2 The City Administrator then noted that the garbage situation at the Belize City transfer station remains unchanged. He stated that the contractor obtained by the Belize Solid Waste Management Authority is unable to meet the growing demand for garbage removal from the transfer stations nationwide.

6.3 The City Administrator then explained that the dredging of the Belama Canals is imminent and advised that a motion would be presented later in the meeting.

6.4 Regarding the Junk Yard on Faber's Rd., the City Administrator advised that the issue was at a standstill, but that there would be a presentation to advise on the direction that the Council is moving with respect to this issue.

6.5 The City Administrator also noted that approval has been given for the Council to proceed with the demolition of the old HR building at Old City Hall, he suggested that the space can now be used for parking at that location.

6.6 The City Administrator then advised that a presentation would also be shared by Mr. Javier Tun, who has proposed a solution to the issue of derelict vehicles in the city. This would provide an opportunity for revenue expansion in which the Council would not bear the cost of the investment needed to establish the program.

6.7 The City Administrator then requested permission from the mayor to allocate 5 minutes each, to the Finance Director, the Director of Administration, and the Director of Communications to present their respective reports.

6.8 The Director of Communications, Ms. Erin Garnett, advised that she would be sharing highlights from the Public Relations and Programs Departments.

6.9 The Director of Communications notified the Council that the fourth cohort of the Youth Shadow Council has successfully been launched. She indicated that the Belize City Council is currently the only municipality in the country that has launched this program. Furthermore, the Youth Shadow Council has expanded to include a 12th participant who will now be shadowing the City Administrator.

6.10 This year, the Youth Shadow Council consists of 7 females and 4 males, with an all-female leadership. Communications training for participants has been completed, with training in project management, municipal finance, and advocacy pending. Performance criteria will also be developed to measure their participation in the program.

6.11 The Communications director then provided an update on the Urban Garden Project. She indicated that the Programs Department is looking to integrate cucumbers, habaneros, cilantro, and other plants into the project. Ms. Garnett further advised that the project is being carried out with guidance from the Ministry of Agriculture, and plants that have better chances of thriving are being cultivated.

6.12 The Youth Connect Student Hub currently has 70 registered students, with 40 attending daily for about 30 minutes- 4 hours per day. The hub is currently at capacity, which indicates that it is being utilized by the public. The Council is also looking to expand by adding a new location, which is a part of the Council's manifesto promise.

6.13 With respect to the Child Advisory Body, the Director of Communications & Marketing indicated that the Councillors had participated in the donation of cleaning supplies to primary schools in the city, and the distribution of 1500 school bags.

6.14 The Director of Communications then shared updates from the Public Relations Department. She noted that the department had spearheaded many of the Council's September initiatives including the lighting of the overpass, the flag-raising ceremony, the 10th Bram, the Belize @ 43 mural, the Independence Day Parade, and the 21st Bash. She thanked the Councillors for their participation in these events.

6.15 Since the last Council meeting, the PR Department has identified two (2) new ways to connect with the public. Those methods include the Siti Talk morning show, which has aired 11 episodes, with Councillor Usher posed to be the next guest.

6.16 The second new method for connecting with the public is the launch of the Council's monthly, digital newsletter. The director highlighted that there are no other municipalities that issue a newsletter, therefore this initiative demonstrates the Council's leadership in communication when compared to other City or Town Councils.

6.17 The director concluded her report by sharing upcoming initiatives, these include the launch of the Youth Shadow Council introduction videos, the Anniversary Super Sale, the launch of the Smart Parking facility (previously the NICH Parking Lot), the launch of the e-taxi program, and the Albert St. West Infrastructure Project launch.

6.18 Councillor Castellanos stated that he was very impressed with the student hub operations and commended the efforts to expand.

6.19 Councillor Garcia acknowledged that the hub was full, but requested information on how residents could sign their children up. The director advised that the program would be re-evaluated in January to see if additional spaces can be accommodated. The Director of Communications then concluded her presentation.

6.20 The Director of Administration, Ms. Sharlene Rudon, began her presentation by informing the Council that the HR Department met with key personnel involved in the development of the Grid System initiative. The purpose of the meeting was to determine the resources that would be needed to successfully launch the project.



6.21 Ms. Rudon then advised of the formation of an HR Committee, which held its first meeting. The members of the committee, which is chaired by Councillor Miller, include the City Administrator, the Director of Administration, the Administrative Manager, and the Human Resources Manager.

6.22 The purpose of the HR Committee is to manage the development and enhancement of employee-related Council policies and procedures, intending to strengthen the Council's workforce.

6.23 The Director of Administration then explained that the Council is partnering with the Health Education and Community Participation Bureau (HECOPAB) to conduct a health clinic. Basic health screening tests, including glucose and hypertension testing, and health education sessions will be provided.

6.24 Regarding staffing, the director informed the Council that 16 new persons were recruited to various Council departments, with interviews being held to fill various vacant positions.

6.25 Additionally, training for the e-bus conductors will be carried out in the areas of customer service and public relations, and sensitization training on the Council's employee handbook, the General Administrative Rule (GAR), will be carried out with managers.

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6.26 Highlights for the Parks & Playground Unit included the maintenance of the parks and medians throughout the city. The Council collaborated with the Belize Tourism Board on the rehabilitation of Lake I Park, and the final components of that initiative are coming to an end. The security booth has been received, and beautification efforts continue at the park through BTB's efforts.

6.27 The Parks Department is working closely with the Revenue Department to bring in all fees owed to the Council from vendors at the Digi and Memorial Parks.

6.28 The Jane Usher Park was adopted by G.A. Roe and Sons, and a design concept was submitted for final approval by the Council.

6.29 Updates from the MIS Department involved the development of the Belize City Council App. The director informed those present that the IT Manager is meeting with the developers to determine the scope and cost of the project.

6.30 CEMO is currently monitoring the weather conditions, and the last update from the Met Service advised that heavy rainfalls would be experienced, with rain accumulation of about 4-6 inches of rain.

6.31 Disaster Preparedness Training with the various subcommittees is continuous. The Director of Administrator concluded her presentation and was excused from the meeting.

6.32 The Director of Finance, Mr. Alex Nolberto, was then asked to provide his report on the developments occurring in the eight (8) departments that he oversees. These departments include the Traffic Administrative, Enforcement, Market, Finance, Valuation, Revenue, and the Municipal Court Departments.

6.33 The Finance Director advised the Councillors that the participation of the managers and Councillors in the ongoing budget exercise is crucial for planning and ensuring that resources are allocated for initiatives that the Councillors may want to undertake in the upcoming fiscal year.

6.34 The City Administrator emphasized that Mayor Wagner would want the Councillors to participate in the budget exercise especially as it relates to the running of programs for the Council.

6.35 The Finance Director explained that when initiatives are executed, it's the staff's responsibility to ensure that the resources are available, therefore the Council is moving toward a more participatory process.

6.36 Councillor Hamilton recalled that in the previous budgeting cycle, the Councillors were called together to review the budget before it was submitted to the Ministry of Finance. She inquired whether that was still a part of the procedure and whether any planned initiatives, especially those relating to tourism should be submitted to the Local Economic Development Manager.

6.37 Mayor Wagner advised that the same exercise in which they reviewed the budget, would be carried out.

6.38 The City Administrator advised that it was best to work with the team first so that all projects can be submitted before the revision is done.

6.39 The Director of Finance advised that most managers have been working with their teams to develop the initial draft of the budget to be submitted to the Ministry of Local Government by the end of the month or the middle of next month.

6.40 The director then explained that he is proposing a special project to enhance revenue generation. He noted that the Municipal Court is an integral part of the revenue team, but there have been some challenges that require the allocation of additional resources to the department. There are about 4,000 accounts that need to be addressed, which will be paid for from the revenues generated from the success of the operation. He stated that there is the possibility for additional properties to be auctioned and clearing up of outstanding property taxes.

6.41 The E-transit project is doing quite well. Revenues from this project are averaging about \$30,000 monthly. Additionally, the project is expanding and morphing into the E-taxi initiative.

6.42 The Director of Finance further advised that they are working to link property taxes with the issuance of trade and liquor licenses, to encourage business owners to stay up to date with their property taxes.

6.43 In reference to the public auction, the director indicated that it was a successful auction which they would like to repeat at least once per quarter. He advised that once the special project is completed additional properties will be identified.

6.44 Mayor Wanger advised that the court processes have to be kept active, as the files are not being sent to the court.

6.45 The City Administrators encouraged the Councillors to go directly to the directors if they have any queries and they can provide the requested information.

6.46 Mayor Wagner informed those present that the City Administrator has now been with the Council for six months. He praised both the Administrator and the Councillors for their efforts during this period, and acknowledged the significant challenges the Council has faced, but noted their ability to consistently regroup and overcome obstacles. Each Councillor has played a vital role in this success.

7.0 Notices

7.1 Councillor Castellanos advised that he was approached by residents who are complaining that there are too many speed bumps on Regent St.

7.2 The City Administrator explained that the speed bumps were installed to manage the flow of traffic to allow vehicles to exit the parking facility without incident.

8.0 Questions

8.1 No matters were tabled.

9.0 Petitions

9.1 Councillor Castellanos advised that a resident by the name of Raymond Jones, who operated a small business at the foot of the swing bridge, has requested to resume operations, which include playing and teaching drumming, at that location.

9.2 Councillor Castellanos then explained that a resident complimented the e-bus service and explained that she was looking forward to its expansion. She did however bring to his attention, that after paying the conductor, she did not receive a ticket, even after asking for one. Councillor Castellanos further stated that the resident was alluding to the possibility of theft on the part of the conductor.

9.3 Mayor Wagner advised that the audit team conducts occasional spot checks on the buses.

9.4 The City Administrator advised that the conductors and drivers would be provided with name tags so that if there are any issues, specific individuals could be identified and held accountable.

9.5 Mayor Wagner further advised that one of the drivers has already been terminated, and another's behavior is being monitored. He explained that the Council expects the best in customer service.

9.6 Councillor Castellanos then shared the concern of another resident regarding the traveling amusement rides that are being accommodated. He explained most of the amusement rides would not be allowed to operate in other countries due to a lack of safety measures.

9.7 The City Administrator advised that when the rides come to the city, the City Planner, and City Engineer are responsible for conducting inspections. If they sign off on the operations, it is expected that they are safe to operate.

9.8 Deputy Mayor Pollard noted that he found it necessary to request that the City Engineer pay a visit to the rides, due to the placement of the generator. He further advised that the fumes from the generator were being carried by the wind into residents' homes.

9.9 Deputy Mayor Pollard then indicated that he had a petition on behalf of a resident, who indicated that their son was involved in a motorcycle accident.

9.10 Deputy Pollard further explained that in some instances, cyclists are not following the traffic laws, while in other cases, drivers do not respect the cyclists.

9.11 Deputy Mayor Pollard then petitioned the Council, on behalf of the resident, for measures to be taken to sensitize the public about the traffic laws. He recalled that the written driver's test does not specifically address the rules of safety for driving amongst motorcycles.

9.12 He further advised that the Council should also educate motorcyclists and have them understand that they too have a responsibility to adhere to the same traffic laws as other motorists.

9.13 Councillor Nunez then advised that he had a petition on behalf of the residents in the neighborhood behind Berger Field at the intersection of Ebony St. and Sarstoon St. He advised that a request is being made for stop signs to be placed in this area so that motorists are able to identify who has the right of way.

9.14 Councillor Nunez was advised that there is a stop sign in the area, but it is not respected. Councillor Garcia suggested that a speed bump be installed instead.

9.15 Councillor Garcia further emphasized the need to ensure that motorcyclists are fully cognizant of their responsibilities on the road by sharing an incident that he had recently witnessed.

10.0 Presentation of Reports from Councillors

10.1 Councillor Usher advised that there were no updates from the Cemetery Department.

10.2 Councillor Nunez advised that the Director of Communications and Marketing had already provided a comprehensive update on the progress being made by the Youth Shadow Councillors. He added that the Programs Department assisted with the Council's many activities during the September Celebrations.

10.3 Councillor Nunez then thanked the former Programs Manager, Mr. Devin Daly, for his service to the Council and explained that he had moved on to other opportunities.

10.4 Councillor Nunez further advised that he and the Programs Coordinator, Mr. Micheal Fritz, met with the group FYI who does a lot of mindset education, he explained that it was a beneficial discussion on ways to strengthen the mindset of residents.

10.5 Councillor Kwan explained that he is seeking the indulgence of the Council in procuring equipment for the Enforcement Department, as they are in dire need of equipment such as radios and motorcycles. He then advised that a list of everything being requested will be developed and submitted for consideration.

10.6 Councillor Miller advised that the Local Economic Development Unit continues to engage with the Belizean diaspora abroad. The LED Manager, and PR Manager, along with Councillor Castellanos attended the Belize Park Festival in New York.

10.7 Councillor Miller commended the MIS Department for providing important support for various live streamed events hosted by the Council for the September Celebrations.

10.8 The Department also continues to lead the Council's efforts with Telepin, the company behind the Digi Wallet app, which is working on the development of the Belize City App. Mr. Juan Carlos Namis, whose company, eData, currently manages the current system is also on board with assisting in the development of the app.

10.9 Councillor Miller noted that he had asked that some much-needed chairs be purchased for the MIS Department, and those have been received. He thanked the City Administrator for the procurement. Additional requests from the department include the procurement of punch clocks for the market and traffic departments. Councillor Miller further asked that these items be secured as soon as possible.

10.10 The Traffic Admin team has been performing very well. They have once again surpassed their monthly target and have set a new goal to bring in revenues of up to \$600,000 in the month of October.

10.11 Councillor Miller emphasized that it's not just about bringing in the revenues but about ensuring that the regulations are being enforced, and that safety is being promoted.

10.12 Councillor Miller further advised that he, Councillor Kwan, and the Enforcement team have been working closely with the Police Department to conduct checkpoints. He noted that residents sometimes complain but stated that the need for enhanced enforcement is evident.

10.13 As it relates to facility upgrades, Councillor Miller advised that temporary works have begun to improve the environment for the employees at the Traffic Department. Identifying a new and more comfortable workspace for the team remains a priority for the Council.

10.14 Councillor Miller then explained that he recently participated in the half marathon that was coordinated by Councillor Cattouse and commended her on its success. He encouraged the other Councillors to join in next year's half marathon. He further acknowledged Councillor Garcia for being a member of the Belize City Council's Dragons basketball team and invited the other Councillors to attend upcoming games.

10.15 Councillor Miller concluded by informing the Council that he was accredited to attend several meetings being held at the Commonwealth Local Government Forum and hopes that he will be able to attend.

10.16 In his report, Councillor Thompson advised that security efforts at the market have recently been enhanced by using a logbook. After signing in, security personnel then conduct a walkthrough at the start of every shift. He further explained that with the State of Emergency being lifted, there are additional criminal elements in the immediate area, and the increase in patrols should provide an added measure of safety.

10.17 Councillor Thompson then mentioned that the Parks Department was still in possession of the Market Department's Power washer which is needed to conduct a proper cleaning of the garbage room.

10.18 Councillor Thompson advised that the Council has been in communications with Honourable Anthony Mahler, and a proposal is being prepared for a shed to be installed over the market. He stated that the Council's support would be needed and explained that they were in the process of seeking out an estimate for the cost of the upgrades.

10.19 Mayor Wagner advised that once the pumping station is handed over to the Council, the market area should be secured, and the market manager should assume administration of the pumping station market. Additionally, he suggested that installing a refrigeration system would be ideal to support the fisherfolk in the area, enabling them to relocate from their current location at the bridge. Although the market has already been constructed, its operations will become more streamlined once the Council takes over its administration.

10.20 In her report, Councillor Hamilton advised that the LED Unit continues to lead the Council's efforts to connect with the diaspora. She explained that they continue to work to build better relationships with Belizeans living in LA, Miami, and Chicago.

10.21 Councillor Hamilton then stated that the Council was well represented at the New York Park Fest by Councillor Javier Castellanos who provided a dynamic address to the event attendees. The Council's participation was also enhanced by the active participation of the Communications and LED Managers. The Council's display booth at the festival was well attended, and the team was effective in answering questions and queries.

10.22 Mayor Wagner announced that representatives from the City of Miramar are scheduled to visit Belize in November, with the proposed dates for their visit being from November 18th to 22nd.

10.23 Councillor Castellanos reported that he recently appeared on the Council's weekly talk show along with the City Planner. Councillor Castellanos also noted that the department was recently recertified by the Central Building Authority and can now begin to process building permit applications.

10.24 The CEMO Unit continues to monitor the weather as the Hurricane Season begins to wind down.

10.25 Regarding the New York Park Festival event, Councillor Castellanos advised that he participated on the mayor's behalf. The event took place on September 7th, in Brooklyn New York. He added that the Council was a sponsor of the event; both the representation was great, the reception received by event participants was great. Councillor Castellanos then noted that Ministers, Hon. Rowdell Ferguson, and Hon. Anthony Mahler, were also in attendance.

10.26 Deputy Mayor Pollard reported that in September, the entire works team has been on the ground ensuring that preparations for the September Celebrations were in place. He commended the team for the work they put in and noted that residents were able to enjoy the festivities in a safe and clean environment.

10.27 Deputy Mayor Pollard also reported that the patching of streets continues across the city. He advised that the entire length of Lake I Blvd. and a section of Faber's Rd. have been address. Additionally, remedial work was carried on St. Thomas St. which is still pending rehabilitation. He noted that the works team has been trying to keep up with the scattered rains, but it has proven to be a challenge.

10.28 Deputy Mayor Pollard further advised that Nurse White St. has been completely concreted, and the residents are happy for the most part. Cemetery Ln has also been concreted, and the team will soon be moving on to the rehabilitation of F St. pending upgrades from BWS.

10.29 Deputy Mayor Pollard confirmed that the department has been receiving the requested materials. He also reported that some streets in Belama Phase 3 had large craters, but preliminary work has been completed, and the craters have been filled with all-in material as a temporary solution.

10.30 Deputy Mayor Pollard then advised that the budget process has begun, and the works team has ensured that the needed equipment has been accounted for. He added that next year promises to be both a strong and productive year for the Council and expressed that he remains hopeful that the team will be well equipped as the Council's high season approaches.

10.31 The Deputy Mayor then explained that there are plans in the budget to expand the workspace at the Works Department. He explained that the Sanitation and Works Departments have been sharing the same space for some time now, and the plan is to get the department back to its own space.

10.32 There are also plans to improve the paint shop, and the cost of thermoplastic paint applicators have been factored into the department's proposed budget. The thermoplastic paint will be used to properly mark pedestrian ramps, and curb linings across the city.

10.33 Deputy Mayor Pollard further explained that there is a significant gap in the traditional methods currently used by the Council for street markings. Procuring the thermoplastic applicators will enhance the Council's capacity, bringing it up to the level of other municipalities.

10.34 Deputy Mayor Pollard then report that he had the opportunity to attend the Innovative Cities Summit along with the City Planner. He thanked Mayor Wagner for the opportunity to participate and shared that it was a successful trip; they were able to engage with stakeholders in attendance and made a presentation on the floating boardwalk that is being planned to revitalize the Foreshore area.

10.35 Deputy Mayor Pollard shared that the representatives from GCOM were excited about Belize City's participation in the summit. They were particularly excited that one discussion on the mayor's trip to Panama has now led to conversations about a feasibility study and designs for the proposed boardwalk.

10.36 Deputy Mayor Pollard advised that all indications are that once the feasibility study has been completed, the Council will be able to access funding for the installation of the boardwalk.

10.37 Mayor Wagner congratulated Deputy Mayor Pollard for leading the Council's participation at the conference and highlighted the importance of having a representative present. The GCOM team is scheduled to be in Belize in November to conduct planning sessions on how the Council will advance its Climate Action Plan. This plan is a crucial component of the boardwalk project and will aid in securing funding.

10.38 Mayor Wagner further advised that the model of the boardwalk that Deputy Pollard was able to see is stable, so although the boardwalk is floating it will not move along with the waves. The boardwalk will be environmentally friendly and will include both LED and recreational components. The project will also aim to address climate resiliency and will reduce coastal erosion.

10.39 Deputy Mayor Pollard noted that once implemented, this new technology will cause all eyes to be on Belize as we would be the first in this region to apply this method.

11.0 Request for leave to move the adjournment of the Council on a definite matter of urgent public importance.

11.1 No matters were tabled.

12.0 Motions by Mayor & Councilors

12.1 Councillor Garcia moved a motion for the Council to approve the proposed design for Jane Usher Park which was submitted by G.A. Roe & Sons Ltd. Seconded by Councillor Miller.

12.2 Councillor Miller asked if the area representative had seen the draft design. Councillor Garcia confirmed that Hon. Gilroy Usher contributed to the design as well. MOTION PASSED.

12.3 Councillor Garcia moved a motion for the Council to approve a request by Mr. Arlton Willaims, to offset costs incurred for repairs to booths 16 & 17 at Digi Park, with the monthly rental fee of the booths. Seconded by Councillor Kwan.

12.4 The City Administrator requested clarity on what the total value of the offset would be. Councillor Garcia confirmed that the invoices for the completed works were received, and the cost is known.

12.5 Mayor Wagner advised that the works would need to be certified and quantified by the City Engineer.

12.6 Councillor Kwan inquired what the dollar value of the offset would be. Councillor Garcia indicated that it would be a total of \$9,241.00.

12.7 Councillor Miller advised that the length of the lease is only for a 1-year period, meaning that the rental fees could only be offset for that period.

12.8 MOTION PASSED. The Council agreed to offset the fees for the rental of booth 16 & 17 at Digi Park, for a period of 1-year, for repairs done to the booths by Mr. Arlton Williams.

12.9 Deputy Mayor Pollard advised that the offset period should have a clear start and end date.

12.10 Councillor Garcia moved a motion for the Council to approve the rental of an additional booth at the Memorial Park, by Mr. Derek Nisbet. Seconded by Councillor Miller.

12.11 Councillor Thompson shared his belief that if the individual already has a booth, it would only be fair for someone else to have an opportunity to lease a booth.

12.12 Councillor Usher inquired if Mr. Nisbet's rent is up to date for the first booth. Councillor Garcia confirmed that the rental was up to date. MOTION APPROVED.

12.13 Councillor Garcia moved a motion for the Council to approve the rental of a kiosk at the Memorial Park to Ms. Kayla Arnold, for the provision of massage and waxing services. Seconded by Councillor Miller. MOTION APPROVED.

12.14 Councillor Garcia moved a motion for the Council to approve the rental of two kiosks at Digi Park by Mr. Densfield Christian. MOTION APPROVED.

12.15 Councillor Garcia moved a motion for the Council to approve the installation of a temporary electrical connection (TC) at Digi Park by Mr. Glenn Tench to discontinue the use of a generator. Seconded by Councillor Kwan.

12.16 Councillor Hamilton inquired whether an electrician had inspected the area to determine if it was an appropriate place for the TC to be installed.



12.17 Deputy Mayor Pollard stated that he had spoken to Mr. Tench about the matter and further explained that installing a TC is a healthier way to conduct business at the park rather than using fuel to run a generator. Mr. Tench is incurring the cost of the installation, so there is no cost to the Council. Deputy Mayor Pollard acknowledged, however, that the placement of the TC should be addressed by the electrician or City Engineer. MOTION APPROVED.

12.18 Councillor Garcia moved a motion for the Council to approve a request by Ms. Carla Flowers to occupy a space within the Blue Economy Park to showcase her business. If approved, Ms. Flowers would assemble a 10'x10' tent to showcase her display. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Pollard.

12.19 The City Administrator advised that as part of their adoption of the park, the Ministry of Blue Economy had applied to build some permanent booths. If approved, then persons would be allowed to operate at the park. The City Administrator further noted that the park is on the smaller side and there are already three vendors present; approving additional vendors might make the park more crowded.

12.20 Councillor Garcia indicated that on a visit to the park with the Director of Administration, there was an incident involving a gentleman who was selling souvenirs. Although the individual was in possession of a peddler's license, Councillor Garcia confirmed that the process for vending or operating a business at the park, requires an application process. MOTION APPROVED.

12.21 Councillor Garcia moved a motion for the Belize City Council to approve the adoption of the Flag Monument Roundabout by the Belize Insurance Centre. Seconded by Councillor Hamilton.

12.22 Councillor Miller requested clarity on whether the roundabout had been adopted already. The Councillors were advised that the previous adoption agreement for the roundabout was expired.

12.23 Deputy Mayor Pollard noted that the Belize Insurance Centre, and CG United, which previously adopted the roundabout, were a part of the same group of companies.

12.24 Councillor Castellanos asked if the adoption agreements were limited to a specific timeframe. He was advised that the adoption period is incorporated into the agreement and may vary. MOTION APPROVED.

12.25 Councillor Castellanos moved a motion for a monetary contribution toward the 12 Days of Christmas Countdown Initiative. Councillor Castellanos explained that the

initiative seeks to enhance the lives of 12 people during the Christmas season, through the provision of self-care packages totalling \$300.00 each. Seconded by Councillor Usher.

12.26 Mayor Wagner asked what the packages would entail. Councillor Castellanos explained that the packages would include services such as manicures, pedicures, and makeovers, and a personalized gift bag.

12.27 Councillor Nunez asked for clarity on the program. Councillor Castellanos further explained that the initiative is in its fourth year and is an opportunity for the Council to give back. He further clarified that each Councillor would be able to nominate an individual for the program. MOTION APPROVED.

12.28 Councillor Miller moved a motion, on behalf of Councillor Cattouse, for the Council to approve the Mayor for a Day Youth Writing Competition in honour of Children's Day. Seconded by Councillor Nunez.

12.29 Councillor Nunez inquired whether secondary institutions were being targeted. Councillor Miller confirmed that the initiative is aimed at targeting high school students and further advised that tertiary level students are targeted for the Youth Shadow Council program. MOTION APPROVED.

12.30 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve an Employment Contract between the Council and Allan Horne. Seconded by Councillor Miller.

12.31 Councillor Miller expressed his support for the motion as the employee is known to be a hard worker. MOTION APPROVED.

12.32 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve an employment contract between the Belize City Council and Ms. Cecilia Middleton for a period of one year. Seconded by Councillor Garcia.

12.33 Councillor Miller expressed his support for the motion and explained that Ms. Middleton is very respectful and is not known to be a problematic employee.

12.34 The City Administrator recommended a six (6) month contract due to concerns of her attendance record. He advised that if her attendance improves the contract may be extended.

12.35 Councillor Miller acknowledged the City Administrator's concerns and suggested, a 1-year contract with conditions.

12.36 Mayor Wagner agreed and further suggested that the contract should include milestones to be achieved, for example, the employee cannot have more than 10 days of absences within the six (6) months of the agreement. Attendance will be taken into consideration when the contract is up for renewal.

12.37 Deputy Mayor Pollard shared his support for Councillor Miller's suggestion regarding the conditional 1-year agreement. He further cautioned the Council about requests for employment contracts for those who have passed the age of retirement.

12.38 Deputy Mayor Pollard noted that following through with the Council's retirement policy was a significant achievement. Support from both the Council and the Union was sought to ensure staff retire upon reaching the designated age. While acknowledging that many older employees were exceptional, he pointed out that others were less efficient, which hindered the Council's productivity. Making contracts a standard practice would shift staff focus from preparing for retirement to securing contracts.

12.39 Deputy Mayor Pollard then suggested that a sub-committee be created, which would prioritize the awarding of employment contracts to those with technical skills. He stated that if a policy is made, then it should be adhered to.

12.40 Councillor Castellanos expressed his support for Deputy Mayor Pollard's sentiments.

12.41 Councillor Castellanos suggested that the employment contract be approved for a 1-year period with the understanding that it will not be renewed.

12.42 Councillor Kwan agreed with Deputy and Castellanos' sentiments. He explained that we've already passed that hurdle, and we don't want to revisit it. He further advised that the stipulations of the contract should be within the Law. MOTION APPROVED.

12.43 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve an employment contract between the Belize City Council and Mrs. Sherlette Barrow. Seconded by Councillor Garcia.

12.44 Councillor Miller offered his support for the motion. MOTION APPROVED.

12.45 Councillor Thompson moved a motion for the Council to approve the implementation of a Garbage Fee for the vendors at the Michael Finnegan Market. Seconded by Councillor Garcia.

12.46 Councillor Castellanos shared concerns about implementing an additional fee. He stated that although \$5.00 may seem like a small amount, it may be a lot to some vendors.

12.47 Councillor Thompson clarified that the fee was being charged to the vendors who participate on wholesale and market days.

12.48 Councillor Kwan observed that upon implementation of the new trade license regime, these vendors will now be paying a trade license as a commercial traveller. They will then be paying a daily garbage fee of \$5 in addition to the trade license fee coming into effect in 2025.

12.49 Councillor Miller asked if the vendors were consulted on the matter. Councillor Thompson confirmed that consultations were carried out. MOTION APPROVED.

12.50 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the renewal of a Media Contract between the Belize City Council and R.S.V Ltd. Seconded by Councillor Hamilton. MOTION APPROVED.

12.51 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the renewal of a marketing/ public relations video production contract between the Belize City Council and Dreamlight Studio. Seconded by Councillor Garcia.

12.52 Deputy Mayor Pollard noted an increase in the cost of the contract as compared to the last agreement and asked for a justification for the increase.

12.53 Mayor Wagner explained that there were many additional requests from the Council that fell outside the scope of the contract. This new agreement covers all additional services and there should be no need to bill outside the contract.

12.54 Councillor Castellanos asked if a report could be prepared regarding the viewership/analytics of the posts that were shared on the Council's platforms.

12.55 Deputy Mayor Pollard advised that the company produces the content that is shared, but the analytics would be seen on the Council's end since the videos are posted by the Council.

12.56 Councillor Thompson observed that if there are no events, the company will still be paid.

12.57 Councillor Miller offered his support and noted that the company has been a good partner to the Council. MOTION APPROVED.

12.58 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the Dredging/Cleaning of Canals in Belama Phases I, II, and III. Seconded by Councillor Miller.

12.59 Deputy Mayor Pollard asked how the Council is involved in the project.

12.60 Mayor Wagner advised that the project is being facilitated and funded through the Ministry of Local Government. MOTION APPROVED.

12.61 Mayor Wagner presented a motion for the Council to approve the acquisition of (5) 2024 Dayun Electric Pickup Trucks, (7) 2024 GWM Wingle, (1) Foton AuMark Utility truck (2.8 L Cummins Diesel), (1) Foton Truckmate Utility Truck (2.2 L Diesel), (1) Foton Compactor Truck from Caribbean Motors at total purchase cost of \$1,142,000.00 exclusive of import duty, excise duty, and GST. Seconded by Councillor Castellanos.

12.62 Mayor Wagner advised that the Council is seeking to cut its operational and maintenance costs with the purchase of the electric trucks.

12.63 Councillor Miller shared his support for the proposal and advised that the initiative goes hand in hand with the Council's e-mobility efforts and demonstrates fiscal responsibility as savings will be realized through the initiative. He noted that the Council's current Wingles will be traded-in, so the Council is getting something back for the old trucks.

12.64 Councillor Castellanos also offered his support for the initiative.

12.65 Councillor Miller observed that the utility vehicles being purchased are similar to the ones used by Bowen & Bowen. He further stated that adding these to the fleet adds to the work that can be done.

12.66 Councillor Hamilton offered her support and recommended that the maintenance schedule for these vehicles is adhered to. MOTION APPROVED.

12.67 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing (MIDH) and the Belize City Council wherein MIDH will be relinquishing, and the Council will be assuming responsibility/jurisdiction of Central American Blvd. as well as portions of the George Price Highway and the Philip Goldson Highway as follows: the George Price Highway from the Faber's Rd. roundabout to its intersection with Central American Blvd., Central American Blvd. from its intersection with the GPH to the intersection of Princess Margaret Drive (flag roundabout), Freetown Road and the PGH, and PGH from the flag roundabout to the roundabout intersection with Chetumal St.

12.68 Mayor Wagner advised that MIDH will be rehabilitating the PGH from the roundabout to its intersection with Chetumal Blvd. before it is handed over to the Council. Seconded by Councillor Usher.

12.69 Councillor Miller requested clarity on the rationale behind the decision. Mayor Wagner explained that there has always been a sort of grey area, in terms of who is responsible for the maintenance of these areas. This removes the ambiguity and gives the Council better control and responsibility of the medians.

12.70 Deputy Mayor Pollard noted that it is similar to the ambiguity that existed regarding Cemetery Rd. In this instance, the entire boulevard (Central American) will be the responsibility of the Council. MOTION APPROVED.

12.71 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of the Belize City Council's membership to ICLEI- Local Governments for Sustainability. ICLEI is a global network of more than 1750 cities globally committed to building a sustainable future. It seeks to create leadership in linking local governments, global policy processes and multilateral environmental agreements. It supports municipalities in the use of innovative systems in sustainability, biodiversity, with which more than 50,000 members of local governments have benefitted in more than 1,000 training events. ICLEI supports sustainable cities facing the reality of urbanization, adapting to economic demographic trends, as well as preparing for the impacts of climate change and other challenges. Dr. Luis Jesus Pena, technical secretary for Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean is supporting Belize City Council's membership at USD 450.00 annually. Seconded by Councillor Miller.

12.72 Mayor Wagner explained that the membership essentially allows the Council to connect with international bodies, through attending conferences and making linkages with these organizations. It's a regional body in Central America and Mexico. MOTION APPROVED.

12.73 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the appointment of the 2025 Trade License Board as follows: Mayor Wagner (Chairman), Councillor Eluide Miller (Council member/ex-officio), Mr. Troy Gabb (registered business organization representative), Dr. Clara Cuellar (Civil Society representative), Mr. Andre Pitts (member of registered realtors or valuers association). Seconded by Councillor Garcia. MOTION APPROVED.

12.74 Councillor Miller thanked Mayor Wagner for the opportunity to serve and recognized Councillor Kwan service on the board for the last three years.

13.0 New Business

No matters were tabled.

14.0 Submissions from the Building Unit

14.1 A request by Mr. Robert Young for the provision of a no-objection letter for the placement of a timber booth to vend at specific locations in Belize City. The planning department indicated their objection to Mr. Young's request because the selected locations were determined to be unsuitable. MOTION DENIED.

14.2 A request by Mr. Carlos Barella for the provision of a letter of no-objection to sell clothes in an unnamed alley way connecting Orange Street and Glyn Street, adjacent to the Raymond Parks Nigh Shelter. The planning department indicated their objection to Mr. Barella's request since his display table will obstruct the walkway.

14.3 Councillor Castellanos noted that the street is very narrow and cannot be accessed by vehicles. The City Administrator advised that the alley serves pedestrians in the neighborhood. MOTION DENIED.

14.4 A request by Mr. Rene Garbutt for the provision of a no-objection letter for the use of a portion of the reserve in front of Parcel No. 36 Princess Margaret Drive. The Planning Department noted their objection to the proposal since Mr. Garbutt intends to construct a wooden structure to vend fast food in front of his property. The planning department recommends that the public reserve remain as a green space for beautification. The department further recommended that Mr. Garbutt develop his business on his private property. MOTION DENIED.

14.5 A request by Mr. Michael Searle for the provision of a no-objection letter for the use of a portion of the reserve adjacent to Parcel 1756 Coney Drive. The Planning Department noted their objection to the request as Mr. Searle intends to extend a small, covered deck unto the reserve, adjacent to the existing kiosk. There is sufficient space for the development to occur on the private property. MOTION DENIED.

14.6 A request by Pentecostal City Mission Church for a letter of no-objection to vend across from the bus terminal on West Collet Canal. The Planning Department noted their objection to the request since the space is already occupied during the requested hours. The department further recommended that the church vend at the foot of the bridge corner King St. and East Collet Canal on the raised approach slab where vending will not block traffic visibility. MOTION DENIED; however, the department may proceed with its alternative recommendations.

14.7 A request by Ms. Lydia Bailey for a letter of no-objection for the construction of a concrete two-storey commercial-use structure located at 910 Baymen Ave, to be used as an apartment building. The planning department noted that there was no objection to the structure, but there were objections to the proposed parking provisions and to reducing the eight-foot distance between the new and existing structure. The department recommends that the building be redesigned to accommodate adequate parking spaces. MOTION DENIED

14.8 A request by Sarita Belize for a letter of no-objection for the placement of a sign over the walkway for Recino's Imports (Sarita's) in front of Parcel #304 Newtown Barracks. The Planning Department noted their objection to the proposed location of the sign as it will interfere with BEL's high-tension wires and other safety concerns. The Department recommends that the signage be placed on the property. MOTION DENIED.

14.9 A request by Crime Stoppers Belize to approve the redesign of the roundabout being adopted by Crime Stoppers and the Rotary Club of Belize. The Planning Department has no objections to the design as it helps to achieve the Council's goals for improving traffic flow, enhancing safety, and promoting urban development. MOTION APPROVED.

14.10 A request by Mrs. Lauren Reardon Smith of Duty & Tax-Free Ltd for the adoption of the roundabout located at the intersection of North End Estate Road and the Philip Goldson Highway. The Planning Department noted that there were no objections to the request or design submitted.

14.11 Council Castellanos explained that he was not partial to the design and suggested that a different one be used. MOTION APPROVED.

14.12 A request by NexGen for a letter of no-objection for the placement of four (4) signs along the median on Blue Marlin Blvd. from Barracuda Street to Durgeon Drive. The Planning and Parks Departments have no objection to the request and the adoption of the median by NexGen as it will beautify the median. MOTION APPROVED.

14.13 Councillor Thompson suggested that only two signs are needed on the median rather than four.

14.14 A request by the Belize Tourism Board for a letter of no-objection to the proposed Code of Conduct and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Fort George Tourism Zone. The planning department has no objection to the clauses outlined in the code of conduct or the SOPs. MOTION APPROVED.

14.15 A request by the Belize Tourism Board for a letter of no-objection for the placement of two timber booths on North Front St. and Dr. Dame Minita Gordon Drive. The Planning Department noted that they have no objections to the request as the structures will not hinder the flow of traffic. MOTION APPROVED.

14.16 A request submitted through the Traffic Management Committee for the placement of a bus shed near Save-U Supermarket. There are no objections from the Planning Department as the request seeks to enhance the safety of pedestrians and bus passengers. MOTION APPROVED.

14.17 A request by Ms. Holanda Chan for the provision of a letter of no-objection for the construction of a two- storey commercial and residential use building at Parcel 1724 Vernon St. The Planning Department has no objection to the request, and after a preliminary review, the Trade License board has also approved the project. MOTION APPROVED.

14.18 A request by Ms. Ingrid Perez for the construction of a retaining wall, located at Parcel #3108, to prevent soil erosion. The Planning Department indicated that they have no objections to this request. The City Administrator advised that the drain be taken into consideration since it allows water to run-off. MOTION APPROVED.

14.19 A request by the Insurance Cooperation of Belize for the provision of a no-objection letter for the expansion of a commercial structure at Lot #16 Daly St. The insurance company is planning to add two additional floors to the existing structure. The Planning Department has no objection to this request. MOTION APPROVED.

14.20 Deputy Mayor Pollard advised that the structural integrity of the building be verified.

14.21 A request by Ms. Mary Chavez for the provision of a no-objection letter for the construction of a three-storey commercial use structure to be used as apartments at Parcel #34 Zacaranda St. The Planning Department noted that they have no objection to the project which has also been approved by the Trade Licensing Board. MOTION APPROVED.

14.22 A request by Yuri Carillo on behalf of the Girl's Guide Association of Belize for the provision of a letter of no-objection for the construction of a two-storey institutional structure at Parcel #1240 Dame Minita Gordon Drive. The Planning Department has no objections to the proposed project. MOTION APPROVED.



14.23 A request by Alma Melendez on behalf of Publics Supermarket for the relocation and construction of a new bus shed near Public's Supermarket at mile 2 ½ on the Philip Goldson Highway. The Planning Department indicated that they have no objections to this request as the current location of the shed hinders the flow of traffic into the supermarket's parking lot. MOTION APPROVED.

Councillor Kwan left the meeting at 2:39 pm

14.24 A request by Djigom Roberts for the use of the reserve on Mahogany St. as part of the Mahogany St. Marketplace project. The Planning Department expressed no objection to the use of the reserve and accompanying booth; however, they opposed the sale of alcohol. Additionally, the Liquor Board stated that they will no longer approve liquor licenses in the area. MOTION APPROVED for the sale of non-alcoholic beverages only.

15.0 Other Business

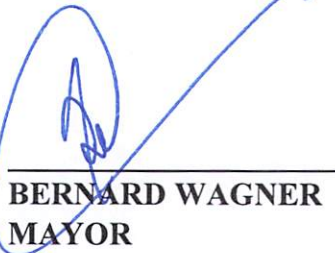
15.1 Councillor Thompson asked for an update on the progress being made at the parking facility.

15.2 Mayor Wagner advised that they are in the testing phase which has helped to identify some challenges that still need to be addressed, and the opening should be in the next two weeks.

16.0 Adjournment

16.1 Councillor Miller moved for the meeting to be adjourned. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Pollard.

The meeting concluded at 2:45 pm.


BERNARD WAGNER
MAYOR


ALBERT VAUGHAN
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

