

MINUTES OF REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Caucus Room, Belize City Council

June 12th, 2024

10:00 a.m.

Present at the meeting were the following:

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

Absent with apologies:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 11. Mr. Eluide Miller | Councillor |
|-----------------------|-------------------|

Mr. Albert Vaughan	City Administrator
Ms. Carissa Casanova	Administrative Manager, Office of the Mayor



Mayor Wagner called the meeting to order at 10:16 AM.

1.0 Belize National Prayer

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

1.2 The City Administrator requested that all who were present keep him and his family in their prayers as they navigate difficult challenges.

2.0 Welcome Remarks

2.1 Mayor Wagner welcomed those present and thanked them for being in attendance. He then noted that the meeting agenda was full and advised that the meeting would promptly proceed.

3.0 Ratification of the March 19th, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes

3.1 “2.3” adjust to the usage of uppercase M for “mayor”.

3.2 “12.20” change to “when concerns are voiced, they should not be taken as a nuisance.”

3.3 “10.28” change to “and all contractors”.

3.4 “10.3” change to ITVET.

3.5 Councillor Hamilton moved for the minutes to be accepted. Seconded by Councillor Nunez.

4.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

4.1 The City Administrator advised that the Council has submitted its final draft of the CBA to the Union, and is awaiting a response. He then explained that the union had indicated their desire for a meeting to be held on June 21st to further discuss the matter.

4.2 Mayor Wagner clarified that the Union responded the day prior with about 7 points of concern. He advised that the City Administrator should sit with the Director of Administration to review the document.

4.3 The City Administrator then indicated that he has met with vendors at Digi Park who have been delinquent in their rent. He added that there were concerns from the vendors about the booths not being properly maintained, however, they were advised to carry out the necessary renovations, and the difference would be worked out.

4.4 The City Administrator then noted that a meeting was held with various market vendors concerning delinquent payments. He noted that there were some other issues at the market, which the manager has been directed to address.

5.0 Announcements by the Mayor

5.1 Mayor Wagner advised that the City Administrator would be travelling from the 19th to the 27th of June.

5.2 The Mayor then explained that construction of the E-mobility office space is well underway, and construction of the charging station has commenced. The plinth has been constructed, and BEL is awaiting the running of the trenches before the transformers can be installed.

5.3 Mayor Wagner further advised that the launch of the project is being timed in line with the European Union (EU) representative's country visit.

5.4 The Council is looking at pricing the bus fares at \$2.50 per ride, which is slightly higher than current costs, so as not to be in direct competition with bus operators. Additionally, the E-taxi service is also expected to launch at the same time, and the wrapping for the taxis is currently being finalized.

5.5 Mayor Wagner further advised that he had a meeting with the management of the Mi Driva mobile application and a counterproposal was made for the usage of the app that was more financially beneficial to the Council. Mayor Wagner indicated that he is awaiting a response which will determine how the revenues from the e-taxis will be shared with the developer. Furthermore, it would take about 6-years for the taxi driver to eventually own the vehicle, using the rent-to-own model.

5.6 Concerning the NICH Parking lot, Mayor Wagner indicated that all of the parking lot's components are in place. He expressed his excitement in completing the project, and having the parking lot return to operations. The Council is anticipating to inaugurate the upgraded parking lot in early July.

5.7 Mayor Wagner then advised that the facility letter was signed with Atlantic Bank for the increase in the Council's overdraft account, which was approved at the last caucus. Mayor Wagner indicated that after the passing of the previous City Administrator, the Director of Administration, who was holding over at the time, advised that the Council's finances were strained. In the year leading up to the municipal election, the Council worked to rehabilitate about 126 streets, which has never been done before in the city.

3

5.8 Mayor Wagner further advised that historically, a lot of money is spent in the year leading up to the election, and the first year of the administration is typically focused on ensuring that employee salaries and other priority payments are being met. Mayor Wagner continued by explaining that tough decisions are being made, but the Council has been in this position before and has always bounced back. He recalled that in 2018, there was the need to cut back in many unnecessary areas, and the Council managed to get back on track. In light of the current financial strain, the Council has essentially put a hold on social assistance payouts.

5.9 Mayor Wagner explained that the extension of the overdraft account will serve as a buffer to cover any shortfalls that the Council may encounter during the slow season. The Ministry of Finance understood the Council's position and authorized the overdraft increase.

5.10 The Mayor noted that he is still in contact with the Ministry, which has indicated its willingness to render further assistance as needed. In light of the current circumstances, the Council needs to be fiscally responsible and prudent. Several initiatives have been temporarily discontinued, including the cleaning crews, which has cost the Council substantially to date. The Council is looking at a more seasonal approach to the cleaning crew initiative, and Mayor Wagner noted that he has been in contact with area representatives to communicate the change.

5.11 Mayor Wagner also advised that he met with The Belize Waste Control, to lower weekly payments from \$65,000.00 to about \$30,000.00-\$35,000.00 until the Council is in a better financial position.

5.12 Several other cost-saving measures have been initiated.

5.13 Mayor Wagner advised that the management team is now in place with the relevant people which should surge the Council forward. He then noted that for the fiscal period April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, the Council spent close to 11 million dollars on infrastructure works, totaling 126 streets.

5.14 The Mayor then stated that he is working with Legacy Fund and Alpha Capital Ltd. to raise additional funding to fund capital projects. He emphasized that the raising of funds via the floating of bonds now falls under the purview of the Financial Services Commission (FSC) following the passage of the Municipal Securities Act of 2023, and as such there now exists stringent regulatory requirements.



5.15 Mayor Wagner then proposed that the Council seeks to reprofile its debt obligations from short-term paper (1-3 years term) to long-term bonds (5-10 years bonds), which is in line with the life span of the assets (cement/paved streets) that the proceed of the bonds were used to fund the construction. This will provide better operational cash flow management, as well as provide for the build-up of the sinking fund at the Central Bank, which serves as a back-stop for bond redemption. He indicated that the Council is looking at reprofiling the existing 26 million dollars in municipal paper and will be calling for an additional 10 million dollars in investments.

5.16 Recurrent revenues for the Council average about 25 million, and based on new legislation, the Belize City Council debt ceiling stands at about 100 million. With the funds raised from this round of investments, the intent is to pay off outstanding payables owed to various contractors, with the remaining balance paid in increments from operational funds. He also expressed that operational funds should not be used to fund capital projects.

5.17 Mayor Wagner advised that as the Council's seasonal revenues should begin to see some measure of flatlining, with the emergence of the new revenue streams. The financial consultants have indicated that the Council is in a unique position. The Mayor then shared his vision that in 10-15 years, the revenues that will be derived from e-buses, e-taxis, smart parking facilities, and parking meters will be new additional income streams, that more or less will have a straight-line character, thereby alleviating some of the seasonal challenges faced by previous councils.

6.0 General Updates from the City Administrator

6.1 The City Administrator advised that Dolphin Park St. has been rehabilitated by Medina's Construction using a new street construction solution called UNICAPA, which is cement, but far more affordable. Additionally, the ongoing work on Antelope St. Ext. was reevaluated and halted until further notice. The remaining portion to be rehabilitated is from the school to the BDF Camp.

6.2 The City Administrator also advised that he has spoken to the Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Cordel Hyde, and the Minister of Public Service, Hon. Henry Usher, regarding the moratorium on the cleaning crew initiative.

6.3 The Hurricane season is underway, and in light of this, CEMO hosted its annual initiative to mark the opening of the season.

6.4 City Administrator Vaughan, then invited the new manager and directors to the meeting and introduced them to the Councillors. These included the Revenue Manager, Sovania Requena, the Chief Internal Auditor, Alex Ysaguirre and the Director of Finance, Alex Nolberto.

6.5 Councillor Hamilton advised the new manager and directors that the Councillors are there to offer their support.

The new members of management then left the meeting.

6.6 The City Administrator then explained that the Council is looking at how the monthly Social Assistance stipend is being disbursed, and recommended that it be issued along with their regular monthly stipends.

6.7 The Councillors voiced their support for the suggestion and indicated that they would better be able to manage the social assistance requests if issued in this manner.

6.8 The City Administrator then explained that funeral waivers are being received, however, he is unsure of how to go about approving the waivers since there is no indication of what percent of the fees should be waived.

6.9 Councillor Castellanos suggested that waivers should be approved equally. Each person making a request should have the same percentage waived. There should be one set standard.

6.10 The City Administrator then explained that he was asking for recommendations from Councillors in each instance, as some people might be more in need than others.

6.11 Mr. Vaughan advised that the traffic lights at the intersection of Hyde's Lane and North Front St. have been turned on and are now in operation; the pedestrian crossings have been demarcated.

6.12 Councillor Garcia asked that the placement of the stop sign be reviewed. He was advised that the matter should be taken to the traffic management committee.

6.13 The Parking facility is also nearing completion and is almost ready to be reopened, it is estimated that the parking lot would generate about \$6,000.00 a week in revenue and will be a big revenue earner for the city.

6.14 Mayor Wagner then added that additional revenues would also be generated from the Rent to Own e-taxi model being considered. When fully charged, the taxis could run for about 220 miles. In this respect, profit margins for the Council are much greater, especially since four (4) taxis have been procured.



6.15 The Mayor explained that for every dollar generated, a portion will go to the lease, a portion to pay the driver, and to the maintenance of the vehicle. He also suggested that within a year or two the Council might be able to procure four or five more e-taxis. Customers utilizing the e-taxis will feel much safer, as they will eventually be equipped with cameras.

6.16 Councillor Cattouse stated that it is an excellent endeavor and a way for the City to align with what is happening across the world; it will also be generating employment opportunities for Belize City residents.

6.17 The City Administrator then advised that the Programs Department is working on recruiting for the new cohort of the Youth Shadow Council, and is finalizing plans for the Council's various summer programs. He also shared concerns about whether the programs should continue given the Council's current financial position.

6.18 Mayor Wagner explained that the Council's summer programs are important and residents are looking forward to having their children participate.

6.19 Mr. Vaughan then noted that a capacity-building workshop for Councillors and Senior Staff is being scheduled for sometime in July.

6.20 Regarding St. Thomas St., the City Administrator noted that the Mayor has written to the Ministry of Infrastructure to request assistance for its rehabilitation.

6.21 The City Administrator advised that individuals requesting social assistance will be directed to the respective Councillors since their social assistance allowances will now be included in their monthly stipends.

6.22 Councillor Castellanos acknowledged this and explained that he will better be able to manage how his social assistance allowance is issued.

6.23 The City Administrator then thanked the Mayor and Councillors and stated that they are a great team, with the ability to accomplish much. He further expressed his confidence in the team and stated that once their ideas are implemented, Belize City will be a model municipality.

6.24 Councillor Castellanos shared that in the past, he has asked business owners to provide training services to the Council, in exchange for an offset against their trade license fees. In this regard, he expressed his desire for programs such as the cosmetology, and handyman workshops to continue.

7.0 Notices

7.1 Councillor Hamilton noted that the proprietor of Rhaki's Salon has expressed interest in reserving two parking meter spaces in front of their business.

7.2 The Councillor was advised that Mayor Wagner and the City Administrator are working on the parking meters, and e-transit matters with plans to create a new department to manage the programs. City Administrator Vaughan recommended that the proprietor make a formal request so that the matter can be addressed.

7.3 Councillor Hamilton advised that she would make the recommendation to the business owner.

7.4 Concerning the issue of delinquent payments from tenants at the Council's various locations, the Council was advised that it is the respective manager's responsibility to ensure payments are being made promptly.

7.5 Deputy Mayor Pollard advised that Bowen & Bowen utilizes mobile cashiers and suggested that the same model could be used to collect from the various vendors at the market and the park. He further noted that there are a lot of people asking for booths and spaces, the current tenants were given a grace period, and now time to collect. The minutes of the Council meeting will show that the Council is now entering the slow season, which have always been a challenge, as such collections need to be improved, whether on a weekly or daily basis.

7.6 The City Administrator advised that the Mayor is aware of the weaknesses in this area, and explained that once a policy is established at the executive level, it will be implemented by the Administration.

7.7 The City Administrator further advised that 20-plus properties were recently advertised and will be sold via public auction in September.

8.0 Questions

8.1 Councillor Thompson asked for a timeframe for the pantry program to be up and running. Mayor Wagner advised that the program can be reviewed and perhaps implemented on a smaller scale, but not in bulk. The Mayor further advised that pantries can be accommodated on an "as needed" basis.

8.2 Councillor Nunez asked what the Council is doing regarding noise pollution created by motorcycles.

8.3 The City Administrator advised that a Statutory Instrument was passed in 2019, and a resolution was passed, but there was some delay with respect to the Ministry of Transport. He further explained that there may be a need to clarify the matter, and suggested that it could be remedied through engagement with various stakeholders including, The Police Department, the Council's Enforcement Officers, and The Department of the Environment.

8.4 Councillor Castellanos advised that a resident, by the name of Mr. Skeen, located in the vicinity of Atlantic Bank, has made a complaint regarding drainage in the area. When the street was concreted, it was placed at the same level as the drain so there is nowhere for the water to run-off.

8.5 Councillor Garcia noted that the street was rehabilitated and advised that the resident should be encouraged to maintain the drain adjacent to his property.

8.6 Councillor Castellanos then advised that another resident has requested the removal of a tree that has been growing between three or four lots, especially since we are in the Hurricane Season. The resident, Mr. Rick Castillo has indicated that he has been asking for assistance in this regard for some time.

8.7 Councillor Castellanos then explained that he has a friendly relationship with the businesses on Albert St., who have indicated that they have no issues with the parking meters, but are concerned that their customers are being ticketed. Councillor Castellanos then inquired if businesses would be able to pay a fee and issue parking decals to their customers to avoid the issuing of tickets.

8.8 Councillor Castellanos also noted that he has been receiving complaints of large trucks moving throughout the city, interfering with the powerlines. He asked if larger trucks could be restricted from moving within certain areas of the city.

8.9 Councillor Thompson inquired about the timeframe for the implementation of the grid system. Mayor Wagner advised that they are still in the planning phase, but it is not anticipated that the system will be implemented before the start of the next fiscal year. The team is currently planning for the necessary equipment, human resources, and other related components.

8.10 Deputy Pollard advised that the meeting with ESRI regarding the grid system went well; they were able to outline what could be accomplished through the usage of the system. This model has been implemented in other areas, specifically in municipalities, and the team is trying to tailor it specifically to the Council's needs.

8.11 Deputy Pollard further advised that the Sanitation and Works Departments, led by the RMMS & Sanitation Coordinators, have submitted the list of resources that would be required to implement the project.

8.12 Deputy Mayor Pollard also advised that the Council has a lot of work to do in terms of adding manpower and equipment; job descriptions will have to be adjusted, and extra attention will need to be placed on the project as there will be a significant budgetary component, though that has not been quantified as yet. A total of 27 modules were identified in the grid.

8.13 The City Administrator then advised that in a recent meeting with the Ministry of Local Government, he was informed that there is a small amount of funds set aside from the Ministry of Local Government that could be used for purchasing weed whackers and other necessary equipment. He further suggested that a list can be put together to tap into funds from the Ministry of Local Government.

8.14 The City Administrator also noted that it has been brought to his attention that members of the cutting team remove the guards on the weed whackers, which increases the likelihood of damage to residents' vehicles.

8.15 Councillor Castellanos inquired whether or not the grid system would be outsourced, and was advised that the maintenance work would be carried out in-house, the city would be divided into sections, and personnel from the Council would be assigned to each section.

9.0 Petitions

9.1 Councillor Kwan petitioned for the placement of a speed bump near the intersection of Youth for the Future Dr. and Vernon Street. Motorists coming off the Belchina Bridge often fail to slow down and have almost driven into the wall of the establishment located at the corner.

9.2 The City Administrator advised that the petition should be taken to the traffic management committee so that they may assess the request and make a recommendation to the Council.

10.0 Presentation of Reports from Councillors

10.1 Councillor Cattouse shared that she has been participating in media rounds on the various morning shows along with CEMO and the Asst. City Engineer to discuss Hurricane Preparedness. During their appearances, they have been explaining what the Council is doing to prepare, and advising residents of what they can do.

10.2 Councillor Cattouse continued by sharing that drains are being dug across the city, and debris is being carted away. She shared the team's enthusiasm about the pumping station given that Belize is at or below sea level. She noted that in light of this, flooding is inevitable, however with the work being carried out, and the pumping station in place, water will run off more quickly.

10.3 Regarding the inclusion of those with Special Needs and Diverse Abilities, Councillor Cattouse advised that a meeting has been scheduled with two representatives from the community in the coming week.

10.4 Councillor Cattouse also noted that the valedictorian of this year's graduating class at Wesley High School has a disability. The Councillor shared her desire for the Council to recognize the student's achievement and advised that she would be working on the matter in the coming week.

10.5 Councillor Cattouse then advised that Councillor Kwan would be bringing forth a motion on her behalf for remedial studies (Math and English), to be provided as part of the Council's summer programs. The facilitator is a seasoned teacher who is lending his services at a very low cost to the Council.

Councillor Cattouse left the meeting at 11:42 am.

10.6 Councillor Kwan commended the ongoing collaboration between the traffic administrative and enforcement teams. The number of traffic citations issued, increased by 210, and about \$60,000 was collected between the two departments. This includes ticket payments, the issuing of driver's licenses, vehicle registration, and other services provided to motorists.

10.7 Councillor Nunez then reported that the flyer for the Council's Summer Incubator Program was launched on June 3rd. To date, 130 children have already signed up for the program, with an additional 45 signed up for the Pee Wee Basketball Program. Additionally, the call for applications to the Youth Shadow Initiative has already gone out.

10.8 Councillor Nunez further advised that he has been assigned to the audit committee, which met on Friday to dispose of several damaged equipment, which will be submitted for final approval.

10.9 Councillor Nunez then noted that similarly to the Belmopan City Council, Belize City has the potential to access the Youth Climate Change Initiative Grant, which gives up to US \$50,000 toward climate resilience initiatives.

10.10 Councillor Thompson reported that vendors at the Michael Finnegan Market didn't have up-to-date leases and many were behind on payment, but as of last week, 90% of vendors have signed a new lease, and most now have a zero balance. The market manager is working on updating the leases of the remaining vendors.

10.11 Councillor Thompson further noted that about 10% of the tenants on the Council's roll did not exist. Councillor Thompson was advised to meet with the City Administrator to review the list so that a submission can be made to the Council, for revenues to be written off as needed.

10.12 Councillor Thompson then advised that the Market Department is working on brightening up the boundaries for the market booths and stalls as this has caused tension amongst vendors. Additionally, they are working to get extra security on market days, and upgrading the electrical system as some outlets are faulty. The cement flooring inside the garbage room is also scheduled to be resurfaced.

The City Administrator stepped out of the meeting and advised that the Finance Director would be sitting in until his return.

10.13 Deputy Mayor Pollard advised that the Council has had significant discussions with the International Municipal Investment Fund. The organization has been following up to see how funds can be accessed to establish an additional produce and fish market.

10.14 Deputy Pollard explained that the follow-up had occurred just before the election, and committed to include Councillor Thompson in future discussions. He further noted that personnel from the International Municipal Investment Fund were excited to engage Belize in this type of project.

10.15 Concerning the Lord Ridge Cemetery, Councillor Usher advised that there was a setback in the completion of the Urn Wall, but assured that works should be completed by the end of July, however pricing would have to be established.

10.16 Councillor Usher also advised that the filling of the Eternal Garden Cemetery has been completed.

10.17 Concerning the Public Health Department, Councillor Usher advised that they have run out of tags to identify derelict vehicles scheduled for removal. Additionally, grease trap inspections are scheduled for the coming week and will continue through the remainder of the month.

10.18 Mayor Wagner inquired whether or not the Lord Ridge Cemetery is being adequately maintained. Councillor Usher advised that the department requires three (3) additional weed whackers and five (5) personnel. The Councillor was advised that the Cemetery Department could seek the assistance of the Sanitation Department.

10.19 In his report, Councillor Garcia shared the calendar of events scheduled to take place at various parks across the city. He also updated the Council on the status of various Digi Park vendors.

10.20 During the discussion Councillor Garcia advised that the proprietor of the Chicken Dread food truck has refused to return the key for the booth issued to him, although he has never utilized the booth.

10.21 Additionally, Councillor Garcia shared that there is a matter that needs to be sorted out with the proprietor of the Candy World booth. There is no lease agreement in place with the current tenant, who was the business partner of the previous leaseholder. They have since dissolved their partnership, and the account is in arrears. Councillor Garcia advised that this is a matter that they are working to address.

10.22 Councillor Garcia also advised that an agreement has been reached with the proprietor of KC's Fast Food, for offsetting the cost of renovations.

10.23 Councillor Garcia then reported that the city's parks are being well maintained for the most part. The electrical meter at Collet Park has been disconnected, and the works at Ring Road Park are moving along rather quickly. He concluded by commending the team for their hard work.

10.24 Councillor Hamilton reported that the Belize Diaspora Summit has been scheduled from June 19th to the 23rd, and noted that the LED Manager has been selected to represent the Council at the summit. Flyers, describing the work of CEMO, the Valuation, LED, and Programs Departments, will be prepared and distributed.

10.25 Councillor Hamilton further explained that the Diaspora Desk meets with Belizeans abroad to showcase the work of the Council and garner assistance for its various initiatives. She then continued by noting her participation in a diaspora activity that recently took place in London, with over 200 people in attendance.

10.26 Councillor Hamilton also shared that they were able to assist someone in locating the burial space of their mother. The individual plans to visit the grave on their next trip to Belize.

10.27 Councillor Hamilton then advised that the CEMO foreign assistance sub-committee met recently; points of discussion included receiving Customs waivers for relief supplies, and partnering with the Belize Chamber of Commerce so that information can be disseminated to their members as it becomes available from CEMO.

10.28 Councillor Castellanos began his report by seeking God's guidance for the City Administrator and his family during this time of uncertainty.

10.29 Councillor Castellanos then advised that the CEMO Unit is very active. He comended the other Councillors for being involved in their various sub-committees. He further shared that a FEMA incident command training was held from May 20th to 24th.

10.30 Councillor Castellanos reported that a communications training was held on May 29th, to better prepare them for the Hurricane Season. He further emphasized the importance of communication, especially since the Council works with other entities, such as the military, during times of disaster.

10.31 Deputy Pollard expressed his desire to echo the opening remarks made by Councillor Castellanos. He further advised that they should remain cognizant of the hardships others might be experiencing. He also congratulated Mayor Wagner and Councillor Miller on the new addition to their family.

10.32 Deputy Mayor Pollard noted that the Works Department is reliant on the availability of funds since work depends on the ability of the Council to provide the necessary resources. He further emphasized that the performance of the Works Department is directly a result of the revenues that are brought in. Despite the current situation, the Council should ensure that managers and supervisors are fully engaged, that they remain on task, and that they are properly scheduling and making use of their human resources.

10.33 Deputy Mayor Pollard then reported that to meet the fast-approaching deadline, the department's priority for the last few weeks has been the parking facility. The team has been instructed to clean up the area and move on as quickly as possible. He also advised that the National Celebrations Committee (NCC) has launched the September celebrations, and getting the city prepared for the various festivities takes up a lot of the Council's resources.

10.34 Deputy Pollard acknowledged that dust has been a major complaint from residents, and expressed his gratitude for the recent rains. He also noted that there has been an increase in the number of illnesses, including a resurgence of Pink Eye cases. He noted the importance of ensuring that the water truck is working full-time and that the streets are wet twice daily, rather than once.

10.35 Deputy Mayor Pollard also noted that street patching continues, with the team recently working to address potholes on Mercy Ln., Coney Dr., and South Creek. Because of the limited resources the team has cut back and material is being used strategically. He noted a recent meeting with the Works Manager and Assistant City Engineer, where they agreed to address priority areas for the time being and reassign the patching crew to street sweeping duties. Areas to be addressed include Magazine Rd., Dolphin St., and Racoon St.

10.36 Following the completion of the parking facility, the replacement of manhole covers will be reprioritized. The team plans to complete New Rd. and is looking at addressing Cemetery Rd., Victoria St., Central American Blvd., Regent St., and Faber's Rd. Some of these locations will take more time and resources than others.

10.37 Concerning the rehabilitation of St. Thomas St., Deputy Mayor Pollard advised that a meeting was held between the Ministry of Finance, Belize Water Services Limited (BWS), Belize Medical Associates (BMA), and Digi to discuss a potential partnership to get the work done. At this point, the team is just waiting for work to begin. Both sections of the street will be addressed since St. Thomas is one of the City's largest and most important thoroughfares. The work will be done using Hotmix.

10.38 Deputy Mayor Pollard then thanked the Councillors and residents for being patient as it takes a lot of planning to embark on a project of this nature. He further commended the chairman of BWS and their Board for taking on their portion of the project.

10.39 Deputy Pollard further noted that a lot of work has been carried out in this area with the installation of traffic lights, and the completion of the sidewalk.

10.40 Deputy Mayor Pollard reported that works were being completed on Dolphin Park St. He, along with Councillor Thompson conducted a site visit over the weekend, and the contractor was making use of a new machine that would help alleviate the cost of constructing new streets. This method is an alternative to cementing and costs about 60% less. Engineers were brought in from El Salvador to ensure that the work was done correctly.

10.41 Deputy Pollard noted that the process was very interesting, and added that they were able to enjoy a smooth drive on the road shortly after its completion. The street should hold up for about 5 years without maintenance, though the contractor explained that a layer of asphalt and quarry dust will be placed on top to improve the aesthetics since there is a rough finish. In light of this, the material method could be considered for use on secondary streets.

10.42 Councillor Castellanos observed that other areas of the city still need to be addressed. He was advised that by and large, the main arteries have been addressed.

10.43 Councillor Castellanos recommended a plan to address the remaining areas in the future so that upon their demission of office, the plan will continue to be implemented. He further suggested that a team be assigned to identify streets in the entire city that need to be rehabilitated and that the Council make a petition for funds to address them.

10.44 The Finance Director noted that the cost of watering streets alone is \$100.00 per hour. He was advised that the Council owns a water truck, but rentals are sometimes required when the Council's truck is down for repair.

10.45 Deputy Pollard further advised that he had suggested the conversion of one of the trucks not being used, to a water truck. He then explained that he was notified that manhole covers were being stolen. He advised that the Council should be looking into regulations for the destruction of Council property as this could be an additional cost-saving measure.

10.46 Mayor Wagner advised that legislation is already in place, but there is a need for enforcement.

10.47 Mayor Wagner further advised that if the Council desires more autonomy, they will need to assess how the city is being managed. Residents are pleased with the way their property taxes have been used to support infrastructure within the City.

10.48 The Mayor further noted that political pundits from the opposing party have even acknowledged that more streets have been rehabilitated under the current administration than by the former Council, this Council has done another amount, and future councils will do more. At some point, all of the City's streets will be done, but it will take some time.

10.49 Mayor Wagner then observed that they were being critical of themselves, which is good since that's how they can improve, but stated that by and large, Belize City has very good streets.

10.50 Other matters brought to Deputy Mayor Pollard's attention include a manhole on North Front St. which has steel protruding from the side, a manhole on King St. which seems to be too big for the allocated space., two missing manholes on Neal's Penn Rd. and a BWS manhole located just off the Ebony St. bridge, where residents had to place a barrier. It seems that there was a build-up of pressure which caused the manhole cover to pop open.

10.51 Councillor Garcia reported that he has been in contact with a donor in Orlando, Florida, from whom he has requested a water truck. He expressed his desire for the request to prove fruitful.

10.52 Mayor Wagner then commended Councillor Garcia and the Belize Tourism Board for the work that they have done in lining the highway with plants.

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 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the signature of Ms. Sharlene Rudon, Director of Administration, on outstanding Resolutions passed during the tenure of the previous City Administrator. Seconded by Councillor Kwan. MOTION PASSED.

12.2 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the appointment of Ms. Sovania Requena to the position of Revenue Manager. Seconded by Councillor Hamilton. MOTION PASSED.

12.3 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the appointment of Mr. Alex Nolberto to the post of Director of Finance. Seconded by Councillor Kwan. MOTION PASSED.

12.4 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the appointment of Mr. Alex Ysaguirre to the position of Chief Internal Auditor. Seconded by Councillor Kwan. MOTION PASSED.

12.5 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the appointment of Mrs. Michelle Smith to the position of Communications Manager retroactive to June 1st, 2024. Seconded by Councillor Thompson. MOTION PASSED.

12.6 Deputy Pollard expressed his desire to congratulate Mrs. Smith on her proposed appointment. He noted that Mrs. Smith is undoubtedly a hard worker who has prioritized the Council's image. She is always the first person to arrive and the last to leave at all of the Council's events. He continued by stating that the promotion is well deserved and added that Mrs. Smith is a true professional.

12.7 Deputy Pollard noted that Mayor Wagner has made an important point to show that any perceived political affiliations do not matter, so long as the employee continues to work for the betterment of the Council. He reiterated that the appointment was well deserved, offered his congratulations, and wished her the best in her new role.

12.8 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the appointment of Mrs. Erin Garnett-Miller to the position of Director of Communications & Marketing/ Mayor's Aide for a period of three years. Seconded by Garcia. MOTION PASSED.

12.9 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to ratify round robin approval granted to Mayor Wagner to negotiate a temporary overdraft facility of \$1 Million Belize Dollars with Atlantic Bank Ltd. for the period June 1st, 2024 – February 28th, 2025. Seconded by Councillor Garcia. MOTION PASSED.

12.10 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the renewal of engagement with Legacy Fund Ltd., and Alpha Capital LLP, with amendments to Section 3 (Fees & Expenses) of the Letter of Engagement. Seconded by Councillor Hamilton. MOTION PASSED.

12.11 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the redistribution of Tranches 1, 3, and 4 of the Series VI Municipal Papers. Seconded by Councillor Kwan. MOTION PASSED.

12.12 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the installation of two vertical traffic control light systems at the intersection of Dame Minita Gordon Dr. and King St. Seconded by Councillor Kwan.

12.13 Deputy Mayor Pollard advised that the traffic light project dates back to 2018. The initial proposal was to implement lights at Hyde's Ln, St. Thomas St, and Faber's Rd. It took the Council two terms to complete the installations, but each of the proposed lights was completed. He noted that upon taking office, there were only two (2) traffic lights in the entire City. This development, speaks to the effort the Council has put in over the years. The lights were not installed all at once, but incrementally.

12.14 MOTION PASSED.

12.15 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve the Chip & Seal of a portion of the Mahogany St. reserve, by Clean & Go Ltd., to be used for the vendor market. Seconded by Councillor Nunez. MOTION PASSED.

Councillor Hamilton left the meeting at 1:12 pm

12.16 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to approve a renewal of the security services contract between the Belize City Council and Ranger Security & Surveillance Ltd. for a period of 5 years. Seconded by Deputy Pollard. MOTION PASSED.

12.17 Councillor Garcia moved a motion for the Council to approve the adoption of Digi Park & Jane Usher Park by Belize Telemedia Ltd., and G.A. Roe & Sons Ltd., respectively. Seconded by Councillor Nunez. MOTION PASSED.

12.18 On behalf of Councillor Cattouse, Councillor Kwan moved a motion for the Council to approve back-to-school remedial courses in Math and English to be provided by Dennis Thompson at the Student Hub. Seconded by Councillor Garcia. MOTION PASSED.

12.19 Councillor Nunez moved a motion for the Council to approve the naming of the recreation space in Belama Phase 2 as Belama Community Park in honor of the late David Alamilla and late George Domingo. Seconded by Councillor Usher. MOTION APPROVED.

12.20 Mr. Vaughan noted that honoring the two men in this way has been planned for some time as they were two sports giants in the community. He commended Councillor Nunez for tabling the motion.

12.21 Councillor Garcia expressed his desire to honor Mr. Alamilla, who was a part of his team. He further noted that Mr. Alamilla was a good role model, and commended the Councillor for presenting the motion.

13.0 New Business

No matters were tabled.

14.0 Submissions from the Building Unit

14.1 A request by Pastor Salvador Parguago on behalf of Iglesia Cristo Vive for the provision of a letter of no objection, for the donation and construction of a proposed bus

shed on Malva Allen Street, Belampa Phase 4, at the Fiesta Park. MOTION APPROVED

14.2 A request by Arnaldo Hernandez on behalf of BIL Imports for the provision of a no-objection letter for the construction of an 8-storey hotel at mile 4 on the Phillip Goldson Highway. MOTION APPROVED.

14.3 A request by Emeri Cayetano on behalf of Renira Villanueva for the provision of a no-objection letter for the construction of a 2-bedroom apartment on Lantana St. MOTION APPROVED.

14.4 A request by Vishnal Sabnani for the provision of a no-objection letter for the construction of a 5-storey commercial structure located at Parcel No. 627, Albert St. MOTION APPROVED.

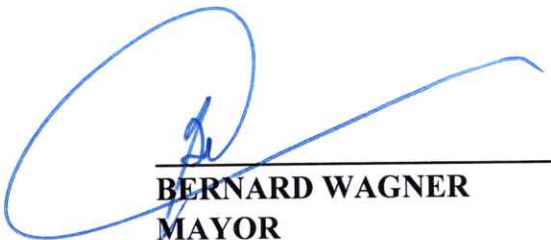
15.0 Other Business

No matters were tabled

16.0 Adjournment

16.1 Mayor Wagner moved for the meeting to be adjourned. Seconded by Councillor Nunez.

The meeting concluded at 1:45 pm.


BERNARD WAGNER
MAYOR


ALBERT VAUGHAN
CITY ADMINISTRATOR



