

MINUTES of CAUCUS MEETING

Caucus Room
Belize City Hall
May 20, 2021

Present:

1. **His Worship Bernard Wagner** Mayor
2. **Mr. Allan Pollard Jr.** Deputy Mayor
3. **Mr. Javier Castellanos** Councilor
4. **Mr. Micah Goodin** Councilor
5. **Ms. Kaya Cattouse** Councilor
6. **Mrs. Stephanie Hamilton** Councilor
7. **Mr. Edmund Kwan** Councilor
8. **Mr. Michael Novelo** Councilor
9. **Ms. Natasha Pipersburgh** Councilor
10. **Ms. Deannie Requeña** Councilor

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

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

Absent with reason:

Mr. Albert Vaughan Councilor

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Mayor Wagner.

- 1.0 Mayor Wagner led all in attendance in reciting the Belize National Prayer.
- 1.1 Mayor Wagner welcomed all to the meeting and encouraged all Council members to be the change they wish to see in society as we continue to face challenging times.

2.0 Ratification of April 22, 2021 Minutes

2.1 Councilor Requena moved for the ratification of the April 22, 2021 minutes of the meeting. Seconded by Councilor Novelo.

3.0 Matters arising from Minutes

3.1 The City Administrator requested that the Legal Counsel and the Works Manager provide an update on the procurement of equipment from Mr. Sampson.

3.2 Legal Counsel, Mr. Chris Banner stated that he reviewed the existing agreement. Based on his revision, Mr. Banner expressed that he drafted two options for the Council to explore in addressing the matter.

3.3 Mr. Banner shared the first option which is to amend Clause 4 and Clause 7 of the existing agreement in order to better serve the Council's interests.

3.4 Mr. Banner shared the second option which is to seek legal proceedings if Mr. Sampson is not in agreement with the proposed amendments to the existing agreement.

3.5 Mayor Wagner agreed with the proposed amendments to Clause 7 of the existing agreement.

3.6 Deputy Mayor Pollard inquired about the extent of the warranty in the existing agreement.

3.7 Mr. Banner shared that the warranty is rather vague and does not specify the extent.

3.8 Works Manager, Mr. Ramon Menjivar shared that the Council has received only (2) pieces of equipment, a green compactor truck and a dump truck. Mr. Menjivar shared that the compactor truck has been working fairly well and is up and running but the dump truck has had sequential occurrences of malfunction starting from the day it was delivered.

3.9 Councilor Novelo inquired about the remaining trucks.

- 3.10 The City Administrator stated that the Council is reluctant to cover the remainder of the cost and accept the other two dump trucks given the complications with the pieces of equipment which have been delivered.
- 3.11 Deputy Mayor Pollard asked what will be the next steps if Mr. Sampon agrees to the new amendments to the existing agreement.
- 3.12 The City Administrator advised that the balance should not be paid until the Council is in possession of the remaining equipment.
- 3.13 On a separate matter, Legal Counsel declared a proposal has been drafted in relation to the complete ban of the use of jake brakes and muffler enhancements within Belize City. Legal Counsel informed the Council that this draft has been sent to Mr. King, Director of Local Government and that they will be liaising with the Traffic Department and the Chief Transport Officer to prepare a Cabinet Paper.

4.0 Announcements / Presentation by Mayor

- 4.1 Mayor Wagner stated that he will be making a presentation on the fiscal position of the Council in order to have all members of the Council aware of the need to focus on their mandate amid such financially challenging times.
- 4.2 Mayor Wagner proceeded to introduce his presentation entitled “Financial Comparative Analysis of CITCO for the period ending March 31st 2019, 2020 and 2021.
- 4.3 Mayor Wagner highlighted the Council’s key revenue sources which include property tax, trade license, traffic related revenues, liquor licenses, other revenues and donations.
- 4.4 Mayor Wagner shared a breakdown of how each of these revenue sources contributed to actual revenues over the past (3) years:
- Property Tax - 41%
 - Traffic Related Revenues - 27%
 - Trade License - 23%

- Other Revenues - 7%
 - Liquor License - 3%
- 4.5 Mayor Wagner highlighted the makeup of the Council's expenditure which include personal emoluments, material and supplies, operating costs, maintenance costs, extra-ordinary payments, pensions, insurance, social assistance, contracts and other expenses.
- 4.6 Mayor Wagner shared a breakdown of how each of these expenditures contributed to actual expenditure over the past (3) years:
- Personal Emoluments - 40%
 - Materials and supplies - 9%
 - Operating cost - 6%
 - Maintenance cost - 6%
 - Extra-ordinary payments - 2%
 - Pension - 2%
 - Insurance - 2%
 - Social Assistance - 3%
 - Contracts & Consultancy - 24%
 - Other expenses - 6%
- 4.7 Mayor Wagner stated that the deficit in our income and expenditure is funded by the Council's Non-operating income and operating surplus of 2019 since the subvention from the Government of Belize as well as the Tourism head tax is assigned to the Central Bank of Belize for our municipal bond obligations.
- 4.8 Mayor Wagner highlighted the Youth Leadership Initiative and the publishing of Managers on the Belize City Council's website and expounded on the benefits of the initiative:
- promote good governance and transparency,
 - enable residents to put a face to names of leaders within the Council,
 - highlight the Council's new corporate direction.
- 4.9 Mayor Wagner provided an update on the Council's Municipal Bond and highlighted efforts being made to create the Retail Market with Heritage Bank and Atlantic Bank Limited.

- 4.10 Mayor Wagner highlighted the walkthrough of Holy Emmanuel Street with the Prime Minister and shared that the Ministry of Infrastructure Development will be making an assessment of the works to be undertaken which also includes the lining of the canals.
- 4.11 Mayor Wagner shared an update on the City Lottery citing that a Consultant has been secured for the feasibility studies.
- 4.12 Councilor Hamilton questioned if a committee will be formed for the City Lottery.
- 4.13 Mayor Wagner notified all Council members that the City Administrator will be forming a committee for the City Lottery.
- 4.14 Mayor Wagner highlighted that the Council met its deadline for the submission of a counterproposal to the Christian Workers Union and shared that the Union has submitted a framework for future negotiations which is hindering progress.
- 4.15 Mayor Wagner stated that the Council has sought legal advice on the matter and it was declared that there is no utility to now enter into a separate agreement with the Christian Workers Union, which is, incidentally, heavily in their favor to dictate the terms of how the negotiation process would be conducted.
- 4.16 The City Administrator shared that a draft response has been prepared and that this will be shared with the CBA Review Committee.
- 4.17 Mayor Wagner shared a letter from the Inter-American Development Bank informing the Council that the Bank has initiated the process of contracting the consultant to support the Belize City Council in the following activities:
- formulation of an updated urban development agenda,
 - identification and prioritization of urban solutions,
 - and the preparation of terms of reference and other technical documents for the design and implementation of selected interventions.
- 4.18 Mayor Wagner highlighted a proposed method by which the Council can reduce its enormous wage bill amid financial constraints brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. All Councilors provided support and approval for the proposed method.

Councilor Kwan arrived at the meeting late at 11:30 a.m.

5.0 City Administrator's Report

5.1 The City Administrator made a presentation to update the Council on works completed through March - May 2021.

5.2 Community Based Initiatives Completed:

- Swearing-in Ceremony
- Citywide Drainage & Bushing Project (February-April)
- Distribution of Easter Bags & Buns to residents
- Removal of Derelict Vehicles (Pilot)
- Renovation of Traffic Department
- Eternal Garden Cemetery Expansion

5.3 The City Administrator highlighted efforts made to foster internal strengthening through the building of departmental capacities.

Training sessions held include:

- Orientation for Elected Councilors
- Public Relations & the Media (Councilors)
- Ticket Writing & Court Procedures (Traffic Enforcement & Special Constable)
- Evacuation Plan & Fire Drill (City Hall)
- Municipal Financing (World Bank Course)
- Basic Psychological Support (UNICEF/CEMO)
- Public Relations for Enforcement Personnel
- Basic First Aid and Training

Enhancing & Strengthening Core Functions:

- Legal & Municipal Court - Addition of a Legal Counsel, Court Coordinator and Prosecutors (2)
- Finance - Finance Director & Finance Team
- Parks & Playgrounds - Assistant Parks Manager
- Cemetery & Public Health - Ag. Manager/Coordinator
- Internal Audit - Chief Internal Auditor, Senior Auditor
- Programs - Youth & Community Support Officer

- 5.4 The City Administrator highlighted activities to be undertaken in the near future.
- Formal introduction of improved services centers (Traffic Department)
 - Collaborating with Central Government for capital projects across Belize City
 - Hosting community events amidst Covid-19 restrictions:
 - Virtual Town Hall Meetings
 - Market Day
- 6.0 **Presentation: The Sustainable City Pilot Project - Ms. Keisha Rodriguez & Ms. Stacey Cayetano**
- 6.1 Ms. Rodriguez highlighted the benefits of Geographic Information System and stated that it is a framework for gathering, storing and manipulating geographical information.
- 6.2 Ms. Rodriguez shared that the Collet Division Pilot Project focused on a small area within the Collet Division and revealed that the methodology used was drone mapping to create high resolution images.
- 6.3 Ms. Rodriguez stated that these images allowed them to take parcel based information from the Ministry of Natural Resources and map them across each property in the area to reflect relevant information.
- 6.4 Ms. Rodriguez highlighted that ground truthing and surveys were used to gather additional information in order to apply a parcel land use layer which shows what each parcel is being utilized for. Ms. Rodriguez revealed other areas which will be mapped out similarly in the near future.
- 6.5 Mayor Wagner and all Council members thanked Ms. Rodriguez for her very insightful presentation.

7.0 Notices

7.1 No notices were tabled.

8.0 Petitions

8.1 No petitions were tabled.

9.0 Questions

9.1 No questions were asked.

10.0 Presentation of Reports from Councilors

- 10.1 Deputy Mayor Pollard highlighted a walkthrough of Holy Emmanuel Street to access the area and explore how the Council can address the issues residents are facing in reference to the condition of the street. Deputy Mayor Pollard shared that he met with the Hon. Julius Espat who shares similar goals for the City and who offered his commitment to contributing to the development of Belize City.
- 10.2 Deputy Mayor Pollard shared that he met with the Minister of Tourism, Hon. Anthony Mahler and highlighted several projects the Minister is interested in carrying out in order to uplift downtown Belize City.
- 10.3 Councilor Castellanos revealed that he met with the vendors at the Michael Finnegan Market in an effort to address their concerns. Councilor Castellanos highlighted plans to form a committee with a view to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the market.
- 10.4 Councilor Goodin shared that the Sanitation Department is in the process of starting a no littering campaign and establishing a task force which will include members from the Sanitation Department, Valuation Department, Special Constable and Belize Waste Control all with a view to promote a cleaner environment for all residents.
- 10.5 Councilor Cattouse highlighted training sessions being carried out across various departments and underscored efforts being undertaken by the MIS Department to promote e-business.

- 10.6 Councilor Hamilton disclosed that the terms of reference and the code of ethics for the Diaspora Relations Officer has been completed and that there are several interested individuals from Chicago and New York.
- 10.7 Councilor Novelo indicated that the expansion of the Eternal Garden Cemetery has been completed and noted that preventive maintenance works being carried out at the Cemetery are almost 85% completed.
- 10.8 Mayor Wagner commended Councilor Novelo on the recent improvements at the Cemetery Department.
- 10.9 Councilor Novelo shared that Ms. Marcia Joseph has been doing a great job at the Cemetery as the Acting Manager.
- 10.10 Councilor Pipersburgh highlighted the Virtual Public Meeting held in an effort to educate the public about hurricane preparedness ahead of the hurricane season. Councilor Pipersburgh shared that efforts are being made to pinpoint shelters with adequate facilities to host disabled persons in the event of a natural disaster.
- 10.11 Councilor Requena highlighted several initiatives being carried out by the Public Relations Department to highlight youth employees and those who are accomplishing 20+ years of service to the Belize City Council. Councilor Requena shared that two (2) businesses have committed to fund after school programs.
- 10.11 Councilor Novelo stated that the derelict vehicles initiative has been extremely effective.
- 11.0 Motions by Councilors**
- 11.1 Councilor Castellanos moved a motion for the establishment of a committee at the Michael Finnegan Market that will consist of the Market Manager, the Councilor responsible for the market and any Councilor wishing to serve on the committee, all with a view to address the concerns of vendors in a prompt and effective manner. **MOTION PASSED.**

- 11.2 Councilor Castellanos moved a motion to approve for the Council to send a letter to the Ministry of Local Government requesting consideration for property tax write-offs for several senior citizens who are incapable of paying their taxes due to being handicapped, bed ridden, ill or having underlying disease. **MOTION PASSED.**
- 11.3 Councilor Castellanos moved a motion to offset the trade license for three (3) businesses in order to contribute a maximum of \$2,500.00 each month for three (3) months to the Pickstock Food Nutrition Programme which aims to promote proper nutrition among residents in the Pickstock Constituency. **MOTION PASSED.** The Council approves a maximum contribution of \$2,500.00 to the Food Nutrition Programme by contributing trade license payments made in cash by three (3) businesses. These names of these businesses are to be submitted by Councilor Castellanos. The Caucus is referring this matter to the Trade License Board for its approval on this matter.
- 11.4 Councilor Castellanos moved a motion for the Council to contribute \$2,500.00 each month for three (3) months to the Pickstock Food Nutrition Program which aims to promote proper nutrition among residents in the Pickstock Constituency. **MOTION PASSED.**
- 11.5 Councilor Novelo moved a motion to approve a lease for Ms. Therese Leiva for booth #12 at Digi Park for the purpose of vending food. **MOTION PASSED.**

12.0 New Business

- 12.1 Mayor Wagner moved a motion to appoint Mr. Travis Lennan as the Internal Auditor. Seconded by Councilor Requena. **All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.**
- 12.2 In creating the market for the sales of Belize City Council Securities, Mayor Wagner moved a motion to approve:
1. the closure of the Series I Municipal Paper;
 2. the issuance of the Series II Municipal Paper up to an aggregate principal sum of BZ\$50,000,000 (Fifty Million Belize Dollars) under the terms below:

Series Number	Est. Principal Amount \$('000)	Anticipated Interest Rate (%)	Term (Days)
02N-91	3,000	3.50	91
02E-182	5,000	3.75	182
02T-365	42,000	4.00	365
Total/Weighted Average	50,000	3.95	330

3. the procedural process for the better management of the rollover of Series II Municipal Papers when they mature and become payable beyond the various terms listed below:
- i. Unless significant changes are made to the structure and arrangement of the Series II Municipal Paper; and these changes documented in a supplemental to the issued *Belize Citco 2020 Series I Municipal Paper Prospectus*, new rollover of municipal paper will continue to be designated as Series II up to a total issuance of \$50.0 million, and only the year of issue will change to reflect the current year of issue; and
 - ii. Unless a municipal paper holder gives formal notice in writing not less than forty-five (45) days prior to the maturity date of the municipal paper of his intention to surrender his municipal papers, the municipal paper will automatically rollover for further terms equal in duration to the terms for which they were originally issued.
 - iii. Nevertheless, with the written consent of the municipal paper holder, the Council may alter the new interest rate in line with the 91-day Government of Belize Treasury Bill yield, plus the estimated risk premium of two percent (2.0%). The Council must share this interest rate adjustment with the Fiscal Agent no longer than five (5) business days after the rollover date.

All voted in favor. MOTION PASSED.

13.0 Submissions from Building Unit - Ms. Carla Patnett, City Planner

- 13.1 Request from Mr. Henry Young for approval to erect a monument in honor of Mr. Compton Fairweather at the intersection of Albert Street and Albert Street West. **MOTION DENIED.** The Council commends the concept but recommends that Mr. Henry Young identifies another location as there is an existing historical landmark at the proposed location.
- 13.2 Request from Ms. Stephanie Mendoza for approval to construct a fence around her home located on the same property as Ring Road Park. **MOTION DEFERRED.**
- 13.3 Request from Mr. Jeremy Spooner for approval to erect palapa roof over the outdoor deck at Spoonaz Cafe & Bar for the purpose of providing shade from the sun and shelter from the rain. **MOTION PASSED.** The Council requires that Mr. Spooner submit full plan details.
- 13.4 Request from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at for approval to install five (5) signs depicting quotes from the Holy Qur'an at the roundabout they have adopted which is located at the junction of George Price Highway and Fabers Road. **MOTION PASSED** as the Council approved for the installation of four (4) signs.
- 13.5 Request from Mr. Estevan Perera of Belize Arcades Ltd. for approval to uplift and redesign the Freetown Taxi Stand area. **MOTION PASSED.** Agreement to be negotiated between the Council and Mr. Estevan Perera.
- 13.6 Request from Ms. Laurel Willoughby for approval to construct a wooden structure measuring 8' x 10' at the corner of Causarina Street and Mahogany Street for the purpose of vending juices and frozen drinks. **MOTION PASSED** without bathroom facility.
- 13.7 Request from Grace Kennedy Belize for approval to install a bus stop on the reserve next to Divine Mercy Church on the Philip Goldson Highway in order to accommodate their employees. **MOTION PASSED.** Divine Mercy Church must be consulted and notified of the installation of the bus stop.

14.0 Adjournment

- 14.1 Councilor Castellanos moved for the meeting to be adjourned. Seconded by Councilor Cattouse. The meeting was adjourned at 3:28 p.m.



BERNARD WAGNER
MAYOR



STEPHANIE LINDO-GARBUTT
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

