

MINUTES of CAUCUS MEETING

Belize City Hall
June 18, 2019

Present:

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| 1. His Worship Bernard Wagner | Mayor |
| 2. Mr. Oscar Arnold | Deputy Mayor |
| 3. Mr. Allan Pollard Jr. | Councilor |
| 4. Mr. Javier Castellanos | Councilor |
| 5. Ms. Delthrude Hylton | Councilor |
| 6. Mr. Ryan Elijio | Councilor |
| 7. Ms. Aisha Gentle | Councilor |
| 8. Mr. Albert Vaughan | Councilor |
| 9. Mr. Michael Norales | Councilor |
| 10. Dr. Candice Pitts | Councilor |

Mrs. Stephanie Lindo-Garbutt, City Administrator

Mr. Rafael Sosa, Manager, Office of the Mayor

Apologies:

Councilor Micah Goodin

Attendance by Invitation:

Mr. Tony Gillings, Energy Management Limited

Mr. Alex Vernon, General Services Limited

The meeting was called to order at 3:16 p.m. by Deputy Mayor Arnold after which Councilor Vaughan led everyone in reciting the Belize National Prayer.

1.0 Corrections to May 21, 2019 Caucus Minutes

- 1.1 Page 2, 2.5.4 should read as follows: Councilor Castellanos recommended that, initially, the Council should issue a stern warning, *before issuing a fine*, to those residents who are caught with illegal sewer connections.
- 1.2 Page 6, 4.2.1, the last sentence should read as follows: All Councilors present, except for Councilor Elijio who abstained, voted against the motion.
- 1.3 Page 6, 4.3.2, add the following: Belize Trade Center (furniture & fixtures for first and second floors)
- 1.4 Page 11, 7.2.2, insert the following before last sentence: This is in addition to the Council covering transportation, accommodation and meals for employees.
- 1.5 Page 11, 7.4.2, the last sentence should read as follows: The Council gave its approval for the post to be re-advertised with the salary being negotiable.
- 1.6 Page 12, 7.6.1, the last sentence should read as follows: A skeletal staff, comprising Traffic Officers, Special Constables and Park Rangers will report to normal duty; however, they will still receive lunch, tokens and a day back.
- 1.7 Page 12, 7.7.1, add the following sentence: Mr. Cardona's pay entitlements remain the same and his remuneration package will now include benefits he is entitled to as a manager.
- 1.8 Councilor Norales moved for the Minutes of the May 21, 2019 to be accepted with amendments. Councilor Gentle seconded the motion.

N.B. Councilor Hylton arrived at 3:30 p.m. Mayor Wagner arrived at 3:31 p.m.

2.0 Presentation on Belize City Energized Proposal – Mr. Tony Gillings, Energy Management Limited

2.1 Mr. Tony Gillings introduced the “Belize City Energized Project Proposal” which is aimed at making Belize City a vibrant, energy efficient and sustainable city by the year 2035.

2.2 Mr. Gillings shared that a lot of commercial places in Belize, including the Government of Belize, are switching to LED lighting as LED lights last up to a period of fifteen years.

2.3 Mr. Gillings recommended to the Council that it embarks on an education campaign that would be aimed at encouraging households to become energy efficient. Mr. Gillings stated that Energy Management Limited would team up with the Council to conduct the education campaign and would retrofit residences in the City with LED lights.

2.4 Mayor Wagner welcomed Mr. Gillings recommendation and stated that it would be a good initiative for the Council and Energy Management Limited to collaborate on the education campaign.

3.0 Presentation on Cold Painting of Street Lining and Street Signs Project Proposal – Mr. Alex Vernon, General Services Limited

3.1 Mr. Alex Vernon shared that General Services Limited has identified a list of streets in Belize City that require proper painting and marking. Mr. Vernon informed the the Council that General Services Limited is proposing to transform the streets identified by using Cold Paint Marking.

3.2 Mayor Wagner asked if General Services had prepared a cost estimate for the project that it is proposing to undertake. Mr. Vernon stated that a cost estimate was not available.

3.3 Councilor Pollard Jr. recommended to Mr. Vernon that General Services Limited prepared a cost estimate for the painting/marketing of the streets that they have identified.

4.0 Budget for Urban Gardening Project – Councilor Dr. Candice Pitts

4.1 Councilor Pitts shared about two abandoned lots in the Mesopotamia Constituency that were recently bushed/cleared to make way for the Council's Urban Gardening Project.

4.1.1 Councilor Pitts informed that the plan is to erect an enclosure on the lots with concrete foundations, mesh wire and sunroofs.

4.1.2 Councilor Pitts shared that the budget for the two urban gardens would cost approximately \$19,000.00 each with the soil, seedlings and labor accounting for some \$8000.00 to \$9000.00.

4.1.3 The City Administrator stated that she did not anticipate a cost of \$19,000.00 per lot.

4.1.4 Councilor Elijio advised against the Council erecting permanent structures on the lots.

4.1.5 Mayor Wagner stated that the design of the urban gardens should be basic to reduce the construction costs. Mayor Wagner recommended to Councilor Pitts that she visits the YMCA's urban garden and talk with the Executive Director, Dr. Clara Cuellar.

N.B. Councilor Pitts requested an excuse at 4:35 p.m.

5.0 Matters Arising from Minutes

5.1 Mayor Wagner requested an update on the container drums that were donated to the Council by SOL Belize Limited.

5.1.1 The City Administrator informed that the Council had received a total of thirty drums. The City Administrator further informed that the drums were placed at the Eternal Garden Cemetery.

6.0 City Administrator's Updates

6.1 **Vendor Leases** – The City Administrator informed that the Director of Legal Affairs has submitted her drafts of the lease agreements for vendors at the BTL Park and the Michael Finnegan Market respectively.

6.2 **Champion Security System Limited** – The City Administrator informed that the Council is now at the point where it must make a down payment which is contingent on the loan acquisition from Atlantic Bank Limited.

6.3 Gabourel Lane Speedbump

6.3.1 The City Administrator informed that the Council was able to a 3-D marking on Gabourel Lane with the Thermoplastic Paint it recently acquired. The City Administrator shared that there is a need for the black Thermoplastic Paint as it would allow for better visibility.

6.3.2 Councilor Pollard Jr. shared that he visited the location where the traffic marking was done and met with the artist. Councilor Pollard Jr. stated that painting by hand results in a wastage of the paint. Councilor Pollard Jr. stated that the Council would get more value for money if it had a road marking paint applicator.

6.3.3 The City Administrator informed that the Ministry of works may have a road marking paint applicator.

6.3.4 Councilor Vaughan stated that he will speak with the Mayor of the City of Belmopan, Mr. Khalid Belisle about the possibility of the Belize City Council using his Council's road marking paint applicator.

- 6.3.5 The City Administrator informed that a total of twelve (12) buckets of Thermoplastic Paint were reported missing by Council employees who had traveled to the Northern Border to pick up the fifty (50) buckets of Thermoplastic Paint that the Council had purchased. The City Administrator shared that the estimated cost of each bucket of paint was \$2000.00.
- 6.4 **BCC Flag Design Competition** – The City Administrator informed that the winner of the Belize City Council Flag Design Competition has been selected and announced.
- 6.5 **MOU (BCC/CBA)** - The City Administrator informed that it has been confirmed that since July 2018, the Belize City Council has been making collections for building permits on behalf of the Central Building Authority. The City Administrator shared that the Memorandum of Understanding, between the two parties, would have to be changed along with the Ministry of Local Government.
- 6.6 **Addendum to Infrastructure Works Contract for Bella Vista Streets**
- 6.6.1 The City Administrator informed that the addendum to the contract is being prepared. The City Administrator further informed that the contractor, RJB Construction Company Limited will do the financing and that the residents of the Bella Vista Area will contribute financially. Councilor Vaughan indicated that RJB Construction is requesting a down payment of \$80,000.
- 6.6.2 The City Administrator shared that the residents have been asked to cover fifty percent of the costs. The residents, however, have indicated that they would not be able to do so.
- 6.6.3 Mayor Wagner stated that the residents of the Bella Vista Area would have to jumpstart the project.

7.0 Submissions Received by Building Unit – Councilor Ryan Elijio

7.1 Request by Ms. Glenda Funez to lease reserve area on Mahogany Street between Western Avenue & Mokay Street to erect an operate a tortilla shop – All Councilors present voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**

7.2 The matter of the business owned and operated on the Mahogany Street Reserve by Mr. Cecil Jenkins was raised and discussed. Mayor Wagner asked Councilor Elijio to provide the Council with a thorough chronological report on said matter. Mayor Wagner stated that the City Planner would be required to provide the report at the Council's next Caucus meeting.

7.3 Councilor Pollard Jr. raised the matter of buildings that are being constructed in the City without the owners having applied to the Traffic Department for "No Objection" Letters. Councilor Pollard Jr. cited two such buildings, namely the new 88 business on Central American Boulevard and the new Lee Chi business on Freetown Road.

8.0 City Administrator's Matters

8.1 The City Administrator presented to the Council a Quarterly Performance Review (April & May 2019) and a Summary Fourth Quarter Review (January – March 2019).

Key Observations:

- Overall collections increased over the previous financial year attributable mainly to residents waiting for the last day/month to pay their property taxes and reduction in waivers.

Expenditures April 2019 Financial Performance

- Maintenance costs have increased exponentially primarily due to Street Works & Maintenance and the clearing of overgrown/abandoned lots.
- 50% of Social Assistance that was budgeted for was expended in April alone.

May 2019 Financial Performance

Key Observations:

- There was an overall decrease in collections of \$37,429.31 attributable to adjustments made in the collection of property taxes.
- The Council did not issue Stop Orders to businesses who owed \$500.00 or less on their Trade Licenses.
- To date, the Council has hired a total of 111 employees.

April/May 2019 Financial Performance

Key Observations:

- The Council collected more but spent more; however, the difference lies in how the monies were spent.
- The Council continues to reduce wastage in controllable areas, therefore, enabling the Council to pursue an aggressive approach to infrastructure works and social programs. This is in the absence of Municipal Papers.

8.2 Proposals for Council

- 8.2.1 **Term Deposit** - The City Administrator shared about the proposal for the Council to establish a three-month term deposit with Atlantic Bank Limited.
- 8.2.2 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to transfer funds from Heritage Bank Limited to Atlantic Bank Limited to establish a three-month term deposit with the latter in the amount of \$800,000 at an interest rate of 2% and to extend the Council's overdraft facility beyond September 2019. All Councilors present voted in favor – **MOTION PASSED**
- 8.3 **20% Discount on Outstanding Property Taxes** – The City Administrator shared about the proposal for the Council to offer property owners a 20% discount on their outstanding property taxes at the Council's next Downtown Super Sale event scheduled for July 27, 2019.

- 8.3.1 The City Administrator stated that she does not recommend that the 20% discount be applied to current year outstanding property taxes. The City Administrator explained that doing so would have a significant impact on the Council's revenues in 2020.
- 8.3.2 The City Administrator informed that the 20% discount would extend to online payments.
- 8.3.3 Mayor Wagner requested that the Council's PR Department prepare an advert to inform property owners of the one-day discount offer and to commence airing of the advert on July 1, 2019.
- 8.3.4 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the Council to offer a 20% discount to property owners on their outstanding property taxes at the July 27, 2019 Downtown Super Sale Zone event. All Councilors present voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

8.4 Contract Bet/BCC and Olynn Kingston (Media Production)

- 8.4.1 The City Administrator shared that the contract with Mr. Olynn Kingston is being proposed for one year at \$5,737.50/month with the option to renew. The City Administrator shared that the contract would work out to a monthly retainer.
- 8.4.2 The City Administrator informed that the Council's video production costs would decrease from \$1200.00 to \$800.00. The City Administrator shared that Mr. Kingston would train the Council's PR Department employees in photography and Adobe Suite.
- 8.4.3 Deputy Mayor Arnold shared his concern about employees who may opt to leave the Council after receiving training.
- 8.4.4 Mayor Wagner moved a motion for the approval of a one-year contract (with option to renew) for Mr. Olynn Kingston at \$5,737.50/month. All Councilors present voted in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

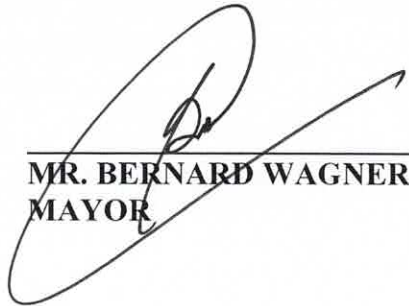
9.0 Other Business

- 9.1 Councilor Castellanos thanked Mayor Wagner for the support that the Mayor recently gave to Stella Maris School.
- 9.2 Councilor Elijo thanked Mayor Wagner for the financial assistance (payment of school fees) that the Council provided to students of St. Luke's Methodist School.
- 9.3 Mayor Wagner informed that the area in front of A & Y Cement Block Factory, located on Mahogany Street, will be concreted. Mayor Wagner further informed that the business will cover the costs of materials and the Council will provide the labor.
- 9.4 Councilor Gentle requested from the City Administrator an update on the performance of the Assistant Parks Manager.
- 9.4.1 The City Administrator shared that the Director of Administration, who is the Assistant Parks Manager's immediate supervisor, has informed that there are no issues with the Assistant Parks Manager. The City Administrator stated that she, the City Administrator, was more concerned about the performance of the Clerk of Market.
- 9.5 Councilor Norales shared that three persons approached him and asked him about the housing program that is being undertaken by the Council and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.
- 9.5.1 Mayor Wagner informed that the housing program is a process that is taking some time due to the unavailability of lands at the proposed site.
- 9.5.2 Councilor Hylton informed about a Cancer Testing that will be done as a collaboration between the Belize City Council and the Belize Cancer Society.

10.0 Adjournment

- 10.1 Councilor Pollard Jr. moved for the meeting to be adjourned. Councilor Elijo seconded the motion.





MR. BERNARD WAGNER
MAYOR



MRS. STEPHANIE LINDO-GARBUTT
CITY ADMINISTRATOR