

Belize City Council Meeting

Minutes of Closed Council Meeting -28th June, 2012 1:00 pm

Conference Room, City Hall

Members Present:

Mayor Darrell Bradley

Councilor Roger Espejo

Councilor Kevin Singh (arrived 3:20pm)

Councilor Bernard Pitts Jr (arrived 2:05pm)

Councilor Michael Theus

Councilor Alain Gonzalez

Councilor Dean Samuels

Councilor Phillip Willoughby

Councilor Eric Chang

Councilor Alifa Hyde

Deputy Mayor Dion Leslie

Members absent:

Others Present:

Mrs. Candice Burke, City Administrator

Mr. Cordel Gonzalez, Administrative Officer

The Mayor chaired the meeting and called it to order at 1:45 PM. Councilor Hyde said the opening prayer.

Adoption of Minutes

The adoption of the Closed Council Meeting Minutes of 28th May, 2012 was done by Mayor Bradley and seconded by Councilor Espejo. There were no objections to the adoption.

1. Mayor Darrell Bradley

i. **Bond Update**

The Mayor updated the Council on the new proposal for the Bond. Legacy Fund proposes

<u>Tranche</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Time Duration</u>	<u>Interest Rate</u>	<u>Released Date</u>
1 st	\$3 Million	2 years	3%	July, 2012
2 nd	\$7 Million	5 years	5%	October, 2012
3 rd	\$10 Million	8 years	6%	February, 2013

Once the bond is issued the Council must produce \$373,000.00 monthly to service the bond. Repayment starts in December, 2012 but according to the Mayor this should not be a problem because the Council has various alternatives to generate the required monthly amount. Firstly, Council intends to implement a residential garbage fee which is estimated to generate \$1.8 mil annually. Also to generate addition funds, a parking meter system is in the pipelines for the near future. Likewise, the re- assessment of the property tax roll, revising of BML contract and head tax collections should all assist the Council in generating the needed funds. The Central Bank will act as trustee and paying agent for the Belize City Council through a sinking fund which will be created by the Central Bank. A bond sinking fund is a restricted asset of the Council that was required to set aside money for redeeming or buying back some of its bonds payable. The bond sinking fund begins when the Council deposits money with an independent trustee. The trustee then invests the money in order for the balance in the sinking fund to increase. The balance in the sinking fund will also grow from additional required deposits made by the Council. The bond sinking fund decreases when the trustee purchases or redeems the Council's bonds. Not all corporations with bonds payable are required to have a bond sinking fund. However, bonds with sinking funds are likely to be viewed as less risky.

There are concerns by a number of councilors about the repayment of the monthly amount to service the Bond. Councilor Hyde concerns were debt financing risks, economic recession and the operating expenses of the Council and asked what assurance they have that the Bond will work? The Mayor response was that it is a risk and there is no reassurance but we have to make it work as a unified body. The Mayor asked that The Council vote on approving the issuing of the \$20 million Bond to retire the overdraft facility and the rest on infrastructure for street upgrade. All those in favor that the Council issue the Municipal Bond: Mayor, KS, EC, DS, PW, RE, DL, AH, MT, BP, AH

ii. Street Work Update

There were four (4) streets to be upgraded. These streets are Orange Street, South Street between Albert & Regent streets, Calle Al Mar and Ferrell Lane. These streets have been cemented and completed. There are six (6) streets that are currently in the process of being upgraded. These streets are Holy Emmanuel, Thomas Vincent Ramos, Daly, Church, Belize Bank Street. Also the Mayor has compiled a list of street for future upgrade and these streets are Queen, North Front, Wilson, Sixth, Freetown and New Road. The Council intends to get quotations from different contractors. Contractors with the best and most cost effective quotations will be selected.

iii. Parking Meters and Parking Study

The Mayor said that he has gotten a quote of \$30,000.00 from Mr. Shaun Finnetty for the parking study but admits it sounds too high. The Mayor suggested reducing the price of the present quotation to secure a better price estimate.

iv. Legislative Change

The Mayor mentioned that there will be certain legislative changes that will have to be passed. There has to be a Bond Act in place which allows the Council to set up a Sinking Fund, also to provide for payment for the sinking fund, to immunize the proceeds of the Bond. Other changes include passing regulation for use of parking meters and regulation to implement the residential garbage fee.

2. Councilor Roger Espejo

i. Internet Assistance

Councilor Espejo asked if the Council would consider given allowance to councilors for internet usage on their mobile phone on a monthly basis. The value per month would be one hundred dollars (\$100). The Mayor responded saying that he will look at the proposal further.

3. Councilor Bernard Pitts Jr.

i. BCC Summer Camp & Contribution

Councilor Pitts welcome all his fellow councilors and started by saying that he intends to start his summer camp program on July 2nd, 2012 and intend to run for 2 months for a total seventy-five Belize City kids. Mr. Pitts proposed budget for the summer program is \$138,000.00 and so far has secure \$25,000.00 from BTL. Also he has gotten donations from Bowen & Bowen in terms of water and juices. His hope is that other business establishments will catch on and donate as well to the summer camp. In this light Councilor

Pitts is requesting that the Council assist with \$15,000.00 contribution. The Council responded by asking Councilor Pitts to try secure as much donation as possible from business establishments.

ii. BCC Ecommerce

Councilor Pitts reiterated that there is a proposal by Atlantic Bank to have a link on their website for the renewal of driving license. The package involves Atlantic Bank IT Personnel doing all necessary configurations and technical servicing with server and applications. There will be no start up cost, no monthly fee and only a 4% commission will charge. A proposed fee will also be charged for the service that will generate some sort of revenue for the Council.

Mr. Pitts reminded the Council of the importance of using the Belize City Council Emails.

4. Councilor Alain Gonzalez

i. Humane Society/ Dog Eradication Update

Councilor Gonzalez commented that on June 26th, 2012 his department conducted the eradication of stray dogs. There were 250 stray dogs euthanized. This procedure has caused a lot of controversy with the Humane Society and parts of the general public. Criticism has been passed that this way of killing the dogs is inhumane. Suggestions were presented to the Council of start a Dog Pound like what the city had before. Another suggestion was to have the present stray dog population sprayed or neutered.

ii. Summer Camp Update

Councilor Gonzalez mentioned that the summer camp will start July 16th to August 10th, 2012 at the Skills Training Center on Magazine Road. The camp will target marginalize areas primary school kids at the Standard IV and V level. The camp will offer different classes such as tutoring classes, computer classes, arts & craft classes and sports. It will run from Monday to Friday 8:00am to 4:00pm. The budget for the camp is \$27,800.00 and is also appealing to the Council for monetary assistance. The Council replied by saying that the cash flow is just not there at this time so like Mr. Pitts, Councilor Gonzalez was asked to try secure as much donation as possible from business establishments.

Other Important Matters

- The Diocese of Belize is asking the Council to make a donation towards the Andrew Faber scholarship fund. The scholarship is for a standard six student from Queen Square Anglican to go to Anglican Cathedral College. The Council

voted in favor of the scholarship: MAYOR, AG, BP, MT, KS, RE, DS, PW, DL, EC, AH

- Ms. Samantha Soberanis, clerk from the Municipal Court will be doing her internship from September to December, 2012. She wrote Council to ask if she can still receive her salary during the time of her internship. Council will approve only half payment. The Council voted in favor of the ½ payment of salary: MAYOR, AG, BP, MT, KS, RE, DS, PW, DL, EC, AH
- Mr. Daniel Avila had requested permission from the Council to do some land filling on the reserve in front of his property at #9155 Mahogany Street Extension (Holy Emmanuel). The Council voted in favor of the land filling: MAYOR, AG, BP, MT, KS, RE, DS, PW, DL, EC, AH
- Mr. Majdi N.K. Agha has applied for the public Street Reserve on Marine Parade Boulevard for the purpose of a small restaurant to serve the tourists and locals. His Restaurant will create about twelve employments and will enhance the beautification of the area. The Council was NOT in favor of the restaurant.

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:00p.m. It was moved by Deputy Mayor Leslie seconded by Councilor Chang.

All were in favor that the Closed Council Meeting be adjourned.