

Belize City Council Meeting

Minutes of Closed Council Meeting -2nd August, 2012 9:30 am

Conference Room, City Hall

Members Present:

Mayor Darrell Bradley

Councilor Roger Espejo (arrived 10:00am)

Councilor Kevin Singh

Councilor Bernard Pitts Jr

Councilor Michael Theus

Councilor Dean Samuels (arrived 9:50am)

Councilor Phillip Willoughby (arrived 10:15am)

Councilor Eric Chang

Councilor Alifa Hyde

Members absent:

Deputy Mayor Dion Leslie

Councilor Alain Gonzalez

Others Present:

Mrs. Candice Burke, City Administrator

Mr. Cordel Gonzalez, Administrative Officer

The Mayor chaired the meeting and called it to order at 9:50 PM. Councilor Hyde said the opening prayer.

Adoption of Minutes

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

1. Mayor Darrell Bradley

i. Bond Update

The Mayor stressed the importance for the need of the audited financials by the independent auditor. There are many issues that need to be addressed by the City Council when it comes to the Bond. These issues include the proposed fee for the Residential Garbage Fee; it was discussed and voted on that the fee should be \$11.00(\$10.00 for BCC and \$1.00 for BWSL), likewise how the Council will go about collecting the residential garbage fee because the Council have recently learn that BWSL client based is only approximately 15,000 city resident with metered water which is 7,000 household less than previously expected. The Council is now faced with making up the difference. In that light, Councilor Pitts commented that to assist with the Bond the Council need to step up enforcement when it comes to Trade License and Property Tax and make people take us to court instead of vice versa. The Council needs to find other ways of generating money to make up for the short fall in revenue. Councilor Elrington-Hyde insist that the Belize City Council need to do a city wide campaign about the street infrastructure the Council has done so far and intends to do and most importantly explain in depth about the Bond it's selling and repayment scheme. Once the bond is issued the Bond Act then stipulates what and how the Bond will be used.

ii. Street Work Update

The Mayor wanted the Council to know how the contractors for the street upgrades are being selected. He claimed that the person does not have to be a UDP or PUP; just has the credibility, knowledge and the expertise for the job. There were eight (8) streets to be upgraded. These streets are Treasury Lane, Puma, Holy Emmanuel, Thomas Vincent Ramos, Daly, Queen, Glyn, Belize Bank Street. These streets have been cemented and completed. There are five (5) streets that are currently in the process of being upgraded. These streets are Lizarraga Avenue, Hyde's Lane, Craig Street, the 2nd part of Treasury Lane and the intersection of Caesar Ridge and Central American Blvd. Also the Mayor has compiled a list of street for future upgrade and these streets are Freetown, Barracks 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. Financials

The Mayor said that the monthly financials does not reflect where we are saving and where we are doing excessive spending. It was suggested by Mrs. Burke that even though there are times when we save on purchasing or eliminating an expense. It will not show because the saving is just absorbed in operation cost. The Mayor insisted that there must be a way of reflecting the monthly saving.

iv. Sanitation Issue

The Mayor mentioned that there was a meeting held with the sanitation department and it was decided that the city would be divided into 7 zones and there will be one sanitation inspector assign to each zone. The inspector will be in charge of a variety of things such as garbage, block drains, derelict vehicles, over-grown lots etc. These inspectors will be given a bicycle and possibly radio communication devices or cell phones to be more effective. The Council will monitor the progress of venture and relay a follow-up report.

2. Councilor Roger Espejo

i. ICB

Insurance Corporation of Belize wants to sponsor a daily traffic report on radio. Ms. Lawrence is the contact person and intends to do the report in conjunction with the Belize City Council Traffic Department.

ii. Signs

Mr. Bret Feinstein asked if the Council can remove the sign which reads “**Area prone to flooding**” which is situated by his apartment building complex. He is claiming that it is bad for his rental business. Likewise, Mr. Espejo suggested that the sign at Budwani Promenade should be remove also cause Mr. Budwani is not keeping up to his part of the contract. The Council agreed to remove the signs. Councilor Chan volunteered to do the removal himself.

iii. FGTV

Radisson Hotel is claiming that Tropicana Lounge has violated their business establishment with the constant noise pollution. Radisson insisted that Tropicana close down or make the necessary changes to be soundproof. Another issue that has been raised is taxi operators using white plate vehicles to conduct business with tourists in and out of the Tourist Village area. The Council needs to put a stop to it.

iv. 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 consider at the proposal further.

v. Beltraide

Councilor Espejo mentioned that Beltraide is interested in renting a space at the Commercial Center on the second floor. Beltraide intends to open an office.

3. Councilor Bernard Pitts Jr.

i. Email & Website Update

Councilor Pitts reminded the Council that the city council emails are now fully functional and in the near future Mr. Norman Benjamin will compile a listing of all persons with their new council email. On that note, the Council is in the process of opening a bank account with Atlantic Bank to start the process of the Online Renewal of Drivers License.

ii. BCC Summer Camp

Councilor Pitts stated that at this point the summer camp has already started for 3 weeks and will go for 3 additional weeks. The Annual Rose Classic Tournament will commence on Monday 6th August, 2012 for the under 15 years and the under 20 years will start this coming Monday 13th, 2012.

iii. Park Fest

Mr. Pitts said that he wants to showcase the Belize City Council at this year's upcoming park fest in New York. The date for the Park Fest is September 1st, 2012. Both Ms. Rudon and Councilor Pitts are requesting per diem for 5 days. The City Administrator will allow Councilor Pitts the per diem for the 5 days.

4. Councilor Mike Theus

i. Parking Proposal

Councilor Theus mentioned that parking meters are a good source of revenue for the city of Belize and the City Council. The city will look much better and more organized with parking meters on the main city streets. Mayor Bradley pointed out that there are many ways to address this initiative so he proposed that a committee be form to discuss the cost, efficiency, and the profit for the Council. The committee is comprised of Roger Espejo, Eric Chang, Mike Theus, and Alifa Hyde.

5. Councilor Phillip Willoughby

i. Councilors CEMO Responsibility

Councilor Willoughby claimed that his fellow Councilors are not taking their part in the CEMO committee. He wants them to be present at the meetings or send someone on their behalf preferably technical personnel in case of an emergency who could properly advice their respective councilor.

6. Councilor Kevin Singh

i. Markets & Parks

Councilor Singh asked that the Council create a sub account for parks so whatever monies receive from rental of a park can be recorded and reinvested into the beautification of parks within the city of Belize.

7. Councilor Alifa Hyde

i. Traffic Regulation

Councilor Elrington-Hyde mentioned that her fellow councilors are not abiding to the traffic regulations. She claimed that her traffic officers are sort of afraid to ticket certain councilors. She wanted the Mayor to point out clearly if the councilors are exempted from receiving tickets. The Mayor response was that everyone is liable their violation even councilors.

ii. Insurance

Also Mrs. Elrington-Hyde wanted to raise the issue of insurance dependents. Accordingly the councilor's health insurance package does not include provision for having dependent on their individual policies. Councilor Elrington-Hyde will engage the insurance agent Mr. Harry Pilgrim about a proposal to allow dependents on the individual polices.

iii. Lennox Young

Councilor Elrington-Hyde updated the Council about the matter of Lennox Young (DJ Tambrand) is before the court and during this time the Council cannot do anything to him. The City Admin wanted to find out what he owes the council so we could action against him

8. Councilor Dean Samuels

i. Hiring

Councilor Samuels stated that many times in the past he was not made aware of new hire and wanted the Council to work on a hiring policy whereby the process is more informative by telling councilors of new hiring or intended hiring for whichever department. The City Admin has mentioned that councilors are informed of new hires and are even asked to sit in interviews when it comes to their respective portfolio.

Other Important Matters

- Mr. Sanjay Hotchandani had requested permission from the Council to do some development on the land reserve in front of his property at #109 Newton Barracks. His intent is to develop 1859 sq. feet of this reserve for reserved parking and reconstruction of sidewalk to have better access to his property. The Council decided to do a lease of the parking space of \$3,500.00 for the use of the parking spaces. The Council voted in favor of the development: MAYOR, BP, MT, KS, RE, DS, PW, DL, EC, AH

The Meeting was adjourned at 1:50p.m. It was moved by Mayor Bradley seconded by Councilor Theus.

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