

## **Belize City Council Meeting**

**Minutes of Closed Council Meeting –22nd October, 2012 10:00 am**

**Conference Room, City Hall**

### **Members Present:**

Mayor Darrell Bradley

Councilor Roger Espejo

Councilor Alain Gonzalez

Councilor Kevin Singh

Councilor Michael Theus

Councilor Dean Samuels

Councilor Phillip Willoughby

Councilor Eric Chang

Councilor Alifa Hyde

### **Members absent:**

Deputy Mayor Dion Leslie

Councilor Bernard Pitts Jr

### **Others Present:**

Mrs. Candice Burke, City Administrator

Mr. Cordel Gonzalez, Administrative Officer

The Mayor chaired the meeting and called it to order at 11:20 PM. Councilor Gonzalez said the opening prayer.

### **Adoption of Minutes**

The adoption of the Closed Council Meeting Minutes of 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2012 was not done.

## **Mayor Darrell Bradley**

### **i. Bond Update**

The Mayor expressed his sentiments about Social Security Board (SSB) and the Bond. He believes that SSB would be friendlier to the Council in comparison to Belize Bank. A presentation on the financials and Bond The problem is that SSB is not a financial institution only a statutory body with investment portfolio and will not be able to provide the bridge financing of \$750,000.00. The beauty with Belize Bank is that they can provide the bridge financing but does not have the authority to underwrite the bond. Belize Bank can issue funds into 2 weeks and Belize Social Security can issue funds till 6 weeks. The Council needs to move quickly and finalize the approach it will take because there are many business and individuals interested in the Municipal Bond. In the same way, the Mayor intends to release the prospectus as quick as possible hopefully by Friday 26<sup>th</sup> Oct. Mr. Patrick Tillett projections to pay back the Bond fell from Legacy's amount of \$275,000 to \$250,000 per month. A copy of the prospectus will be email to councilors and Council will vote on the prospectus or draft and whether we will go with Belize Bank or Belize Social Security.

### **ii. Street Work Update**

The Mayor wanted the Council to know that he wants to upgrade North Front and Mapp Street by December 15, 2012. Street works in progress is Freetown Road, Electric Ave and Southern Foreshore is to start today as well. Pine Street will be subjected to availability of funds. Bohemian Street in Belama Phase 2 is being upgraded by our very own city council.

### **iii. Financials**

The Mayor stated that for the next council meeting he will be inviting the external auditors to make a presentation of the audited financials. Mr. Bradley said that the monthly financials have a couple discrepancies. Check the figures of Garbage fee with its variance. He wants to ask Mrs. Ordonez about revenues such as Miscellaneous, Other Income, Landfills and Rental of Parks & Playground. Mayor asked Mrs. Burke to email the financial statement and the final draft audit report to councilors immediately.

The Mayor mentioned that there was a meeting of the Trade License Board whereby the board re-categorize and re-value the current trade license roll. There will be increases and decreases in an effort to try to regularize the rolls so that not only the Council benefit but also the business community. Mayor asked that the rolls be circulated to Councilors by emails and likewise Mrs. Ordonez and Troy Smith will be asked to attend the next council meeting.

## **2. Councilor Mike Theus**

### **i. Revenue Sources for the Council**

Councilor Theus suggested that the Council implement a Taxi Operator Fee of \$175.00 per year. He claimed that there are about 1,190 taxis in the city which will generate a lot of much needed funds for the Council. Mayor asked Councilor Theus to work along with Councilor Hyde to make a proposal to see if it will be worthwhile for the Council.

### **ii. Municipal Enforcement Unit**

Mr. Theus has recommended that special constable, traffic, planning, valuation officers all form a new unit called Municipal Enforcement Unit. They will be trained and required to know the laws governing the Belize City Council Act so that any one of them can carry out duties for the Council.

### **iii. Sanitation Issues**

Councilor Theus commented that the Council needs to restructure or possibly terminate both sanitation contracts. The issue of the so called hot spots and the scope of work are not being fulfilled. Both companies need to be given instructions of what the Council wants them to do and not the other way around.

### **iv. Proposed Skywalk for Holy Redeemer**

Mr. Theus recommended a skywalk for Holy Redeemer Primary School. The Sky walk will run from the school veranda facing the vacant lot at the corner of North Font Street and Hyde's Lane to assist the students for use at break time. Mayor mentioned that the construction of the skywalk is an issue for the school to embark on not the Council.

## **3. Councilor Phillip Willoughby**

### **i. BML Contract**

Councilor Willoughby claimed that Belize City residents need to take responsibility for their garbage in front of their property. The BML Contract is excessive and they are not fulfilling their end of the contract.

### **ii. Disability Survey**

Mr. Willoughby and his department will be assisting in a survey conducted by the St. John's Junior College. The Disability Pilot Survey is schedule for 26 November, 2012 for the areas of Belama Phase 1 to 4. Everyone is on board and the forms are out there.

### **iii. Short-term Financing**

Councilor Willoughby commented that the Council needs to find other ways of getting funds. He suggested a vehicle testing fee, garbage fee and possibly do a zoning program to assist with acquiring more funds as well in terms of collections.

#### **4. Councilor Kevin Singh**

##### **i. Markets Issues**

Councilor Singh noted that enforcement is lacking when it comes to the market. The market manager have compiled a list of task to do to improve the market and up to this day nothing has been done or completed for example garbage collection is not been done on Saturday. Mr. Singh stated that he will provide an update of what has been done at the next Council Meeting.

#### **5. Councilor Alifa Hyde**

##### **i. Discussion of Council Business**

Councilor Elrington-Hyde mentioned that there is no discretion with council matters. No controversial issues should be discussed outside of the Council. Not to staff, media or the general public. Mayor clearly stated that Council business is council business and should be kept strictly confidential.

#### **6. Councilor Dean Samuels**

##### **i. Hiring**

Councilor Samuels was very concerned with how employees are being deal with when it came to firing of staff. Mr. Samuels feels as though the employees are not given the correct protocol when it comes to firing them. Likewise, councilors are not being informed of which employee is being fired and for what reason. Councilor Hyde protested by saying that any manager and/or councilor is given a notice of the employees being taken to disciplinary committee and the charges brought against them. It is up to the manager or councilor to be present at the hearing.

##### **i. Tax owed to the Council**

Councilor Samuels commented that the general public is upset about the way the Council has discontinued other services if an individual owes tax to the council. Mr. Samuels ask how the individual will pay the tax if he simply doesn't have the money available. Depending on the person condition and ability to pay Mrs. Burke will allow the person to pay 50% of the total within rationale of the amount and allow the balance to be place on a payment plan for a specific time span.

### **Other Important Matters**

- The Belize City Council will make a trip to Chetumal to be a part of Belizean Culture Night at the upcoming EXPOSUR fair on October 27, 2012.
- Mr. Marvin Moguel of Champion Security is requesting the Council's approval to place a 4' X 8' high business sign on the reserve in the vicinity of Golding Avenue and Phillip Goldson Highway. The Council voted in favor of the sign: MAYOR, AG, MT, KS, RE, DS, PW, EC, AH
- Mrs. Olivia Villanueva of Total marketing & Distribution is requesting the Council's approval to place a 3' X 3' high business sign on the reserve in the vicinity of Edwards Avenue and Pride Avenue in Coral Grove Area. The Council voted in favor of the sign: MAYOR, AG, MT, KS, RE, DS, PW, EC, AH
- Mrs. Devern Hernandez had applied for the use of the street reserve next to the Edward P. Yorke High School to place a food stand to serve students meals. The Council voted against the food stand.
- Mr. Peter Codd of Joseph & Taylor is requesting the Council's approval to place an 8' X 12' high business sign on the reserve in the vicinity of second roundabout of the Phillip Goldson Highway near the junction with NAPA Auto Parts. The Council asked for more information about the reason why the planning department didn't recommend it.

The Meeting was adjourned at 2:55p.m. It was moved by Councilor Theus seconded by Councilor Hyde.

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