

Belize City Council Meeting

Minutes of Closed Council Meeting –March 14th, 2014 11:00 am

Conference Room, City Hall

Members Present:

Mayor Darrell Bradley

Deputy Mayor Bernard Pitts Jr

Councilor Alain Gonzalez

Councilor Alifa Hyde

Councilor Dion Leslie

Councilor Eric Chang

Councilor Kevin Singh

Councilor Michael Theus

Councilor Dean Samuels

Councilor Phillip Willoughby

Councilor Roger Espejo

Members absent:

Others Present:

Mrs. Candice Burke, City Administrator

Mr. Jermaine Hyde, Administrative Officer

The Mayor chaired the meeting and called it to order at 11:35 AM. Councilor Alifah Hyde said the opening prayer.

Adoption of Minutes

There was no adoption of Closed Council Minutes.

1. Mayor Darrell Bradley

i. Monthly Financials

Mayor stated that the monthly financials are showing sizable expenditures in Social assistance, construction material. In reviewing the financials he highlighted that even though there is a large expenditure on festivities, there have been many donations received. Councilor Hyde requested further explanation into the cost and upkeep of social programs funded by the council. Mayor requested the presence of Finance manager Ms. Rose Perez. He also stated his great dissatisfaction with the auditing process done by Castillo Sanchez and Burrell. They have been unable to complete the Council's audit and it has been a very long period they have not given an updated financial report.

Ms. Perez came in the meeting and explained that the detail report gives an in depth look into the expenditures and explanatory notes. She stated that the detail report they have in the department also features reports on donations and a breakdown of the utilities and other over head costs

ii. Street Work Update

Mayor stated that street works are ongoing; there are plans to cement a list of over forty streets in Belize City that will connect major areas of the city. He stated that PM Barrow has committed to the financing of the street upgrades totaling to \$10 Million. Mayor disclosed that the rates of street works have increased, and linked it directly to the fact that when contractors are guaranteed a contract prior to price negotiations, they are hesitant to decrease the rates. He pointed out that rates were once at \$65, but it has increased to high 70's. He also stated that since central government is financing the street works, they are choosing the contractors for the streets; however council gets to choose the streets. Councilor Leslie shared that if contractors are given contracts for streets that are in close vicinity that can help lower cost because they can use one foreman to oversee the projects at different intervals.

iii. Heritage bank facility

The mayor said that discussions between the council and the bank had engaged and a loan facility of \$2- \$3.5 million was being looked at. He said that \$1.5 Million would be invested in infrastructure concentrated in Lake Independence, Collet and Port Layola. This would be used to bring earthen streets to pave status. Heritage bank offer remains on the table if need.

iv. Commercial Center

Mayor Bradley said that IE has done a new design for the commercial center that features the closing in of the open areas providing more room for office spaces. It is the plan that all the offices of the council can be housed at that location.

2. Councilor Alifa Elrington

- i.** Councilor Hyde requested that necessary equipments be purchased for the traffic officers.
- ii.** Councilor Hyde tabled the issue of staff members not complying with traffic regulations. She pointed out occasions where staff on motorcycles is seen riding without helmets or carrying passengers without helmets.

Mayor said that any staff member who does not conform to traffic laws should be written up and dealt with accordingly.

- iii.** Councilor Hyde also addressed the issue of the poor quality of licenses being made at Traffic dept. She attributed it to the machine that was purchased, since there are complaints that the licenses keep falling apart.

3. Councilor Alain Gonzalez

- i.** Councilor Gonzalez made mention of his plans to undertake another summer camp. Mayor suggested that Councilor Gonzalez prepare a budget and submit it for consideration.
- ii.** Councilor Gonzalez submitted a letter from the CEO of KMHM requesting assistance in funding upgrades to the ER department of the hospital. Mayor said that currently the council isn't in a position to commit but when finances are more upcoming the council can revisit the proposal.

Other Important Matters:

Mayor mentioned the project undertaken by Councilor Willoughby in the Conch shell Bay area and his discussions with the Ministry of Natural Resources to acquire a plot of land for Council, that would be subdivided for employees. Mayor requested and applause and acknowledgement to Councilor Willoughby for his work and commitment to this project. Mayor said it is his hope that by May, the council can have a ceremony to distribute land certificates to eligible members of staff.

Mayor spoke of the Reef week activities and his participation in the ceremony held on Sunday march 9th 2014 at the BTL Park. Mr. Hyde also updated and invited the councilors to partake in the boat parade hosted by KREM and Oceana to culminate Reef week activities. Mayor thanked Councilor Espejo for securing a catamaran through EuroCaribe for the council to use in the parade.

Councilor Espejo spoke of deteriorating conditions of the area on Marine Parade where fishermen clean and sell fish. He said a decision needs to be made as to whether the fishermen will be moved and placed under the shed previously provided for them to operate from. Deputy Mayor said that if they are moved some accommodations need to be made for them to properly function from that location.

Councilor Espejo also spoke of a donation of lights he received to be placed on Sand Lighters promenade. He said that the lights would have to be mounted on high polls to avoid damage from mischief makers who might throw stones and break the light. He submitted a quotation from an electrician to mount and install the light at the location needed.

The Meeting was adjourned at 1:23 p.m. It was moved by Councilor Hyde seconded by Councilor Leslie.

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