

**MINUTES OF THE BENTON HARBOR CITY COMMISSION MEETING
LULA LEE COMMISSION CHAMBERS
SEPTEMBER 21, 2015**

The regular meeting of the Benton Harbor City Commission was called to order by Mayor Hightower at 7:02 p.m. Invocation was given by Sharon Henderson, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call showed the following members present: Commissioners Adams, Haralson, Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson, Commissioners Isom, Jones, Muhammad and Mayor Hightower. Members Absent: Commissioners Henry (arrived at 7:08 p.m.) and Seats (arrived at 7:05 p.m.). Also present: City Manager Watson, Detective Clark (arrived at 7:15 p.m.) and City Clerk Thompson.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson and supported by Commissioner Adams to approve the agenda as presented **carried** unanimously on the roll call vote.

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 8, 2015

A motion was made by Commissioner Adams and supported by Commissioner Muhammad to approve the Regular Minutes of September 8, 2015 with any necessary corrections or deletions. The motion **carried** unanimously on the roll call vote.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Emma Kinnard of 270 E. May Street announced that she is running for Commissioner-at-Large and asked for the support of the community. She also endorsed Commissioners Adams and Muhammad in the upcoming election.

P. Muellen advocated for the Pledge of Allegiance.

David Muellen advocated for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Essie Jefferson advocated for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Geraldine Morris advocated for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Patti Heinz inquired on the person responsible for the bylaws and guidelines of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) debate. She said that she's appalled that someone is jeopardizing the integrity of the election and called for an investigation.

James Duncan stated that too many times, citizens have asked for things, to no avail. He encouraged everyone to do the right thing from here on out.

ORDINANCE

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson and supported by Commissioner Muhammad to adopt an ordinance to regulate non-storm water to remain in compliance with Michigan and Federal laws. After discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Muhammad and supported by Commissioner Adams to table and send the item back to the Legislative Committee for further review carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The following Consent Calendar items were presented by City Manager Watson, moved by Commissioner Muhammad and supported by Commissioner Adams carried on the following roll call vote. Yeas: Commissioners Adams, Muhammad, Isom, Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson, Commissioner Haralson and Mayor Hightower. Nays: Commissioners Henry, Jones and Seats. Members Abstain: None. Members Absent: None.

RESOLUTIONS:

ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPOINTMENT TO THE BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS (LISA GULLEY)

ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPOINTMENT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION (ZAUNDRA COOPER)

ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPOINTMENT TO THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE (JERRY EDWARDS)

ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL RULES

COMMUNICATIONS

City Clerk Thompson announced the close of registration for the November 3, 2015 General Election.

City Manager Watson gave updates on projects happening throughout the City. He stated that the order of business defined in the City Ordinance includes the Pledge of Allegiance; therefore, the desire to extract it can't be done through an amendment of the Council Rules.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Adams thanked residents for attending tonight's meeting and encouraged them to continue coming out for important issues. She said that she believes in principles of what people elected her to do. She further stated that her heart goes out to those that served this country and she loves them for it. She announced her candidacy for Commissioner-at-Large and stated that she wants to continue fighting for citizens.

Commissioner Henry thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting. She said that she wants protection for the citizens when the City creates a new law that affects them. She stated that there has been an abundance of funds coming into Benton Harbor through other entities to service residents; however, it's not being done. She assured everyone that the City Commission is listening to them and encouraged all to get involved.

Commissioner Seats thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting. He explained that the flag is for more than just a pledge; it's for justice and liberty for all. He expressed concerns with the manner in which the Herald Palladium sensationalizes things happening in Benton Harbor.

Commissioner Jones thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting and encouraged them to remain vigilant. He said that he understands everyone's concerns as it relates to the Pledge of Allegiance. He publicly apologized to Commissioner Adams for over speaking on an issue. He cautioned all to be mindful of what they're saying and doing.

Commissioner Muhammad expressed a concern that no alert was sounded when there was a serial rapist terrorizing the community. He suggested establishing an alert system relative to certain crimes to ensure the public safety of residents. He spoke on the Pledge of Allegiance and stated that while he doesn't support the removal of this government tradition, he respects the ruling of the United States Supreme Court and the opinions expressed by all people. He spoke on the 2008 and 2012 Presidential campaigns designed to discredit Presidential Obama. He clarified that as the Legislative Committee Chairperson, he respects all recommendations and gives everyone an opportunity to express their vote by way of democracy.

Commissioner Isom thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting and encouraged them to get involved in this great City. He expressed support for the Pledge of Allegiance. He urged everyone to help clean the neighborhoods and keep the community beautiful.

Commissioner Haralson thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting and standing up for what they believe. She expressed support for the Pledge of Allegiance and those who served the country. She suggested for the City

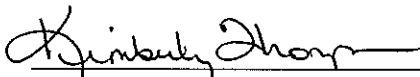
Commission to pass a resolution supporting Judge Bruce and the initiative to look for Berrien County defense attorneys.

Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting. She said that the Pledge of Allegiance shouldn't be removed from City government and it's very important to have justice for all. She stated that this City has a long way to go and it will take coming together on every aspect to see great things. She encouraged citizens to participate more in their government.

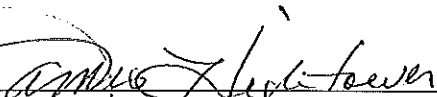
Mayor Hightower thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting and those who volunteered to serve on boards. He said that this City has issues; however, there is no other place on the planet that he would rather live than the United States of America. He said that the flag represents all of the back breaking work of ancestors that contributed to the formation of the country. He continued that it's upon the City leaders to ensure that there is justice for all. He announced that he will be hosting a Town Hall meeting at the Public Library on Tuesday, September 29, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. and encouraged everyone to attend.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.



Kimberly Thompson, City Clerk



James Hightower, Mayor