

**MINUTES OF THE BENTON HARBOR CITY COMMISSION MEETING
LULA LEE COMMISSION CHAMBERS
OCTOBER 19, 2015**

The regular meeting of the Benton Harbor City Commission was called to order by Mayor Hightower at 7:00 p.m. Invocation was given by Ruthie Haralson, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call showed the following members present: Commissioners Adams, Isom, Haralson, Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson, Commissioners Henry, Jones, Muhammad and Mayor Hightower. Members Absent: Commissioner Seats (arrived at 7:31 p.m.). Also present: City Manager Watson, Acting Public Safety Director McGinnis (arrived at 7:05; left at 9:25 p.m.) and City Clerk Thompson.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Henry and supported by Commissioner Adams to suspend Items # 1 and 2 on page 7 of the Council Rules/Policies & Procedures carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Haralson and supported by Commissioner Muhammad to remove all of the items from the Consent Calendar with the exception of (ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HALLOWEEN TRICK OR TREAT HOURS) and entertaining them as separate resolutions carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – OCTOBER 5, 2015

A motion was made by Commissioner Adams and supported by Commissioner Haralson to approve the Regular Minutes of October 5, 2015 with any necessary corrections or deletions. The motion carried on the following roll call vote. Yeas: Commissioner Isom, Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson, Commissioners Adams, Henry, Haralson and Jones. Nays: None. Members Absent: Commissioner Seats. Members Abstain: Commissioner Muhammad and Mayor Hightower.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Emma Kinnard of 270 E. May Street charged the Commission with keeping a watchful eye on the funds allocated for the community garden and those that are receiving free water. She expressed concerns with running water throughout the community.

Arlene Sisson expressed a concern with a high water bill.

James F.A. Turner of 217 E. Main Street gave an update on things that are happening in the community.

James Duncan expressed a great need to address snow removal on sidewalks.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The following Consent Calendar item was presented by City Manager Watson, moved by Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson and supported by Commissioner Muhammad carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

RESOLUTION:

ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HALLOWEEN TRICK OR TREAT HOURS

SEPARATED RESOLUTIONS

A motion was made by Mayor Hightower and supported by Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson to **ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT FOR THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.** After discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Adams and supported by Commissioner Muhammad to table this item carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Haralson and supported by Commissioner Adams to **ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE UTILIZATION OF THE MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE FOR AN EXECUTIVE SEARCH FOR THE FINANCE DIRECTOR/TREASURER.** After discussion, a motion was made by Mayor Hightower and supported by Commissioner Adams to table this item carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Adams and supported by Commissioner Seats to **ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE PURCHASE OF A WATER METER FOR INTERCONNECT LOCATED AT WOODWARD AND EMPIRE.** After discussion, a motion made by Commissioner Seats and supported by Commissioner Haralson to table this item and bring it back to committee carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson and supported by Commissioner Jones to **ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SALE OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTY 11-51-0805-0035-01-7.** After discussion, a motion made by Commissioner Seats and supported by Commissioner Adams to table this item and take it to the Planning and Economic Development Committee carried on the following roll call vote. Yeas: Commissioner Jones, Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson, Commissioners Isom, Henry, Seats, Adams, Muhammad and Mayor Hightower. Nays: Commissioner Haralson. Members Abstain: None. Members Absent: None.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson and supported by Commissioner Adams to **ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE BUDGET AMENDMENTS FOR THE PUBLIC SAFETY 2015-2016 BUDGET** carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Adams and supported by Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson to **ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE AMENDMENT TO THE BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT PLAN (PRAIRIE REDEVELOPMENT ARTS DISTRICT PROJECT)**. After discussion, a motion made by Commissioner Seats and supported by Commissioner Jones to table the item and take it to the Planning and Economic Development Committee carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

A motion was made by Mayor Hightower and supported by Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson to **ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE LETTER OF COMMITMENT FOR THE WOODRIGE PLACE DRAIN #A30 TO THE BERRIEN COUNTY DRAIN COMMISSION**. After discussion, a motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson and supported by Commissioner Adams to table this item carried on the following roll call vote. Yeas: Commissioners Adams, Muhammad, Isom, Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson, Commissioners Haralson, Jones, Seats and Mayor Hightower. Nays: Commissioner Henry. Members Abstain: None. Members Absent: None.

After discussion, a motion made by Commissioner Henry and supported by Commissioner Adams for the City of Benton Harbor and Harbor Shores to abide by the lease agreement as well as the court order for Jean Klock Park carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

After discussion, a motion made by Commissioner Henry and supported by Commissioner Adams for the City Manager to give a summary of his progress and challenges over the last six (6) months carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Watson reminded all of the Square One meeting on Thursday, October 22nd and Halloween celebration on Friday, October 30th.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Adams thanked residents for attending tonight's meeting. She spoke on the Joy Jackson Food Market initiative and asked for collaboration from the Benton Harbor School Board. She said that it saddens her to hear that Mr. Leon Williams hasn't been taken care of through the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. She stated that the City needs to do whatever possible to generate income and get

the worth of assets. She suggested using some of the funds allocated for the garden towards purchasing snow blowers for sidewalks.

Commissioner Henry thanked residents for coming to the meeting and staying for the duration of it. She encouraged them to get involved and give their input on matters. She said that the members of the City Commission are doing their due diligence for residents.

Commissioner Seats encouraged everyone not to support entities that don't support them. He spoke on the Herald Palladium and the manner in which it reports. He explained that he won't vote for Bryan Joseph in the upcoming election and encouraged others to do the same. He stressed the importance of the upcoming election and urged all to get out to vote.

Commissioner Jones thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting and giving their comments. He encouraged all to vote in the upcoming election and show their support. He spoke on employees and assured them that they won't face any type of reprisal for speaking out on things.

Commissioner Muhammad thanked residents for attending tonight's meeting. He requested an update on the lawsuits. He reported on the successful Million Man March's 20th anniversary.

Commissioner Isom thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting and stated that the City Commission's first duty is to represent them. He encouraged all to get out to vote in the upcoming election. He commended the City Commission on doing its due diligence on matters. He expressed appreciation for the police patrolling in the First Ward. He spoke on an article in the Herald Palladium that reported on the City being one of the drunkest in the state and stated that the convenience stores should be inspected. He also reminded all of the seriousness of mental illness.

Commissioner Haralson thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting and expressing their concerns. She reported that the resolutions presented received consensus from the Committee to go forward; however, stated that she's unsure as to what happened tonight. She expressed a concern with the rates for the cable company and asked someone to look into it. She requested to add to the agenda a resolution of support for Judge Bruce's efforts of seeking defense attorneys. She said that she wants the City Commission to address issues of sagging in the community.

Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting. She reported that the items presented tonight were vetted through the committees and stated that it's imperative for all to participate at these meetings to get things addressed. She spoke on the importance of voting in the upcoming election. She

said that people have been promising the world; however, the City doesn't have the finances that it once had and therefore, had to make adjustments accordingly.

Mayor Hightower thanked everyone for their patience during the meeting. He expressed that he wants to see issues addressed before coming to the City Commission meetings so that things could move forward. He spoke on the Herald Palladium and an article that has yet to be printed in it. He said that Benton Harbor is on its way back and it's important that proper decisions are made based on good information. He encouraged voters in the upcoming election to make decisions based on the records of those running.

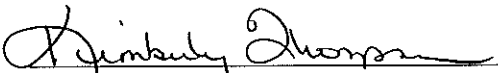
CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Henry and supported by Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson to go into Closed Session to present a personnel issue revolving around concern with the negotiations with the AFSCME Union group carried on the following roll call vote. Yeas: Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson, Commissioners Isom, Haralson, Henry and Mayor Hightower. Nays: Commissioners Seats, Jones, Adams and Muhammad. Members Abstain: None. Members Absent: None.

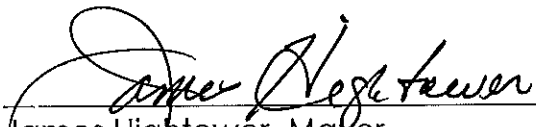
The regular meeting recessed to go into Closed Session at 9:27 p.m. and reconvened at 9:48 p.m. No official action was taken as a result of the Closed Session.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:49 p.m.



Kimberly Thompson, City Clerk



James Hightower, Mayor