

**MINUTES OF THE BENTON HARBOR CITY COMMISSION MEETING
LULA LEE COMMISSION CHAMBERS
DECEMBER 7, 2015**

The regular meeting of the Benton Harbor City Commission was called to order by Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson at 7:05 p.m. Invocation was given by Edward Isom, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call showed the following members present: Commissioners Adams, Haralson, Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson, Commissioners Henry, Isom and Muhammad. Members Absent: Commissioners Jones, Seats (arrived at 7:10 p.m.) and Mayor Hightower. Also present: City Manager Watson and City Clerk Thompson.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Muhammad 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 Henry and supported by Commissioner Adams to remove Consent Calendar Items (ADOPT RESOLUTIONS APPROVING THE AMENDMENT TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT & ETHICS AND REINSTATEMENT OF THREE (3) HOLIDAYS AND A ONE-PERCENT (1%) SALARY INCREASE FOR NON-UNION EMPLOYEES) from the Consent Calendar and entertaining them as separate resolutions carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – NOVEMBER 16, 2015

A motion was made by Commissioner Adams and supported by Commissioner Haralson to approve the Regular Minutes of November 16, 2015 with any necessary corrections or deletions. The motion carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Elizabeth McCree, on behalf of Felicia Lunzy, expressed great concerns with Ms. Lunzy being without water due to frozen water lines. She spoke on the policy for frozen water lines and said that residents must be made aware of it.

Felicia Lunzy of 174 Hastings expressed concerns with being without water as a result of frozen water lines and the manner in which City staff spoke to her about it.

Pati Heinz, on behalf of Kimberly Barry, asked for the City Commission's assistance with getting her husband, Roy Barry, back home from Ghana, Africa after being involved in a scam. She expressed safety concerns with various locations throughout the City that are without street lights.

Captain James F.A. Turner of 217 Main Street informed everyone that Bishop Wells from the Church of God and Christ held his 30th anniversary celebration at the Benton Harbor High School and encouraged others to utilize the facility as well. He invited all to attend the Christmas party for the Benton Harbor Street Ministry.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The following Consent Calendar items were presented by City Manager Watson, moved by Commissioner Muhammad and supported by Commissioner Seats carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

RESOLUTIONS:

ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT FOR THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE 2016 MEETING SCHEDULE

SEPARATED RESOLUTIONS

A motion was made by Commissioner Adams and supported by Commissioner Haralson to ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE AMENDMENT TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT & ETHICS. After discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Muhammad and supported by Commissioner Adams to table the item and take it back to the Legislative Committee for review carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Seats and supported by Commissioner Adams to ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE REINSTATEMENT OF THREE (3) HOLIDAYS AND A ONE-PERCENT (1%) SALARY INCREASE FOR NON-UNION EMPLOYEES. After discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Muhammad and supported by Commissioner Seats to table this item and take it to the Personnel & Finance Committee for review carried on the following roll call vote. Yeas: Commissioners Isom, Haralson, Henry, Muhammad, Adams and Seats. Nays: Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson. Members Abstain: None. Members Absent: Commissioner Jones and Mayor Hightower.

After discussion, a motion made by Commissioner Muhammad and supported by Commissioner Seats to approve the following resolution carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

WHEREAS, the City of Benton Harbor applauds the great accomplishments of the 2015 Benton Harbor Tigers Football Team;

WHEREAS, the Benton Harbor Football Team afforded the community at large and the greater southwest Michigan with great excitement this 2015 season;

WHEREAS, the City of Benton Harbor City Commission is proud of the stellar representation and character that was exemplified on the football field this 2015 season;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Benton Harbor City Commission grants a Key to the City of Benton Harbor to Coach Elliot Uzelac and the 2015 Benton Harbor Tigers at the first City Commission meeting in January of 2016.

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Watson informed everyone that Reliable Disposal will do its last city-wide yard waste pick-up on December 9th. He announced an Audit presentation scheduled for Monday, December 14, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. He said that street lights are owned by American Electric Power (AEP) and encouraged residents to contact them to address lights that are out.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Haralson thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting expressing their concerns and watching the local government in action.

Commissioner Henry urged residents to contact members of the City Commission to get their issues addressed. She also encouraged citizens to participate on standing committees.

Commissioner Adams thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting to see their local officials in action. She said that the City has an old infrastructure and wants to see something done to address it. She encouraged residents to speak on their concerns. She invited all to attend a Planning Session on December 20th at 5:00 p.m. at the Citadel. She urged all to get involved in what's going on in the community.

Commissioner Seats thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting. He spoke on issues he faced with frozen water lines and said that the City needs to take more responsibility for them. He expressed concerns with street lights that are out. He suggested implementing a leak policy and the City owning a power company for residents. He said that in moving forward, the City will improve its condition and address the mistreatment of water customers. He said that staff must realize that taxpayers and residents are their bosses.

Commissioner Isom thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting. He expressed concerns with street lights that are out. He said that it's very important to have good customer service. He thanked Coach Uzelac for his efforts. He encouraged all to help keep the City clean.

Commissioner Muhammad thanked residents for attending tonight's meeting and assured them that better services will be provided moving forward. He stated that City Manager Watson plans to issue out a comprehensive water freezing policy and thanked staff for addressing a resident's sewage problem. He said that the City will go after grants to address various things. He invited all to attend the swearing-in reception scheduled for December 21, 2015, at the Citadel immediately following the City Commission meeting.

Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson thanked residents for attending tonight's meeting and said that they are one of the most valuable resources in the community. She stated that the City has great workers and they should be acknowledged; however, those that aren't treating residents with respect must be addressed. She encouraged residents to contact members of the City Commission if there is no redress to their issues. She urged all to get involved on committees.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.


Kimberly Thompson, City Clerk


James Hightower, Mayor