

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

The regular meeting of the Benton Harbor City Commission was called to order by Mayor Hightower at 7:01 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, Isom, Haralson, Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson, Commissioners Jones, Muhammad and Mayor Hightower. Members Absent: Commissioners Henry (arrived at 7:04 p.m.) and Seats (arrived at 7:03 p.m.). Also present: City Manager Watson and City Clerk Thompson.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Adams and supported by Commissioner Isom to approve the agenda as presented carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 7, 2015

A motion was made by Commissioner Muhammad and supported by Commissioner Haralson to approve the Regular Minutes of December 7, 2015 with the noted corrections to the 2016 City Commission meeting schedule. The motion carried on the following roll call vote. Yeas: Commissioners Adams, Henry, Muhammad, Isom, Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson, Haralson, Jones and Seats. Nays: None. Members Abstain: Mayor Hightower. Members Absent: None.

UPDATE – COUNTY COMMISSIONER YARBROUGH

County Commissioner Yarbrough thanked Mayor Hightower and City Commissioners for allowing her to give updates and offered to continue in this effort. She encouraged residents to fill vacancies on various boards. She acknowledged various County Commissioners and residents in the audience and wished happy holidays to all.

PRESENTATION – HEART OF BENTON HARBOR (BENJAMIN AGAY)

Mayor Hightower presented the Heart of Benton Harbor to Benjamin Agay for receiving the State historical designation for Morton Hill Cemetery.

Benjamin Agay thanked everyone for this honor.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Emma Kinnard announced a Rally for Justice scheduled for tomorrow that will take place every month to address the flawed system.

Ricky Hill stated that residents want to see everyone come together in the City. He urged the current City Commission to use the expertise of former Commission members.

James Duncan wished Mayor Hightower well and said that he prays for everyone to come together.

Lisa Gorman cordially invited everyone to the 15th annual Kwanza celebration.

CONSENT CALENDAR

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

RESOLUTIONS:

ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE TRAFFIC SIGNAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AT PIPESTONE AND BRITAIN

ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE RESIGNATION OF MARCUS MUHAMMAD AS COMMISSIONER-AT-LARGE

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Watson reported on the recent audit and stated that the City is doing well financially. He wished everyone a happy holiday.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Adams thanked residents for attending tonight's meeting and encouraged all to get involved. She also thanked Mayor Hightower for his efforts and wished him well. She said that she's worked endlessly for the City which isn't an easy task when there is opposition fighting against you. She stated that she's looking forward to the new year.

Commissioner Seats encouraged everyone to save their money for Christmas and celebrate it on another opportunity. He said that it's been a privilege and honor to serve with Commissioner Isom. He wished Mayor Hightower well and thanked him for his service. He briefly spoke on the City of Flint and its declared state of emergency. He said that he's looking forward to a new year that will be beneficial to residents.

Commissioner Henry thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting. She encouraged all to get involved and help make the City a better generational quality of life. She expressed appreciation for the efforts of Commissioner Isom and urged him to stay involved. She said that this is a new year and the City Commission will work with the resources available for the best interest of residents.

Commissioner Jones thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting. He expressed appreciation to Commissioner Isom and Mayor Hightower. He challenged former governmental officials to step up and let it be known that they are willing to help. He congratulated Mayor-elect Muhammad. He said that his race in the political arena was dedicated to former Commissioner Donald. He acknowledged various individuals and expressed appreciation for their efforts. He encouraged all to work towards a better community as a whole.

Commissioner Isom thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting. He also thanked God for this opportunity and those for helping him along the way. He said that it's all about the people and bettering the lives of everyone. He expressed appreciation to former Commissioner Donald. He thanked Mayor Hightower for his efforts. He assured everyone that he'll continue to be involved and wished all happy holidays.

Commissioner Muhammad thanked God for being alive and briefly spoke on former Commissioner Donald. He expressed appreciation for residents and acknowledged various individuals in the audience. He said that the City of Benton Harbor must have a strong relationship with the County government to be successful. He thanked Mayor Hightower and Commissioner Isom for their services and wished them well. He invited all to the Citadel immediately following the swearing in ceremony.

Commissioner Haralson thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting. She acknowledged three mayors in attendance and said that it was a privilege to work with them over the years. She also expressed appreciation to County Commissioner Yarbrough for her updates. She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

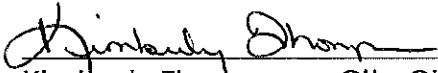
Mayor Pro-Tem Henderson thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting. She expressed appreciation to Mayor Hightower and Commissioner Isom for their services and encouraged them to remain involved with what's happening. She said that Benton Harbor is a great place to live and raise a family. She further stated that she looks forward to the next season and congratulated Mayor-elect Muhammad.

Mayor Hightower thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting. He extended condolences to the Bethea family on the recent loss of Mother Mary Befhea. He stated that he's a strong believer in the word of God and spoke on the

providence of Him. He wished Mayor-elect Muhammad and his family well. He briefly spoke on his tenure on the City Commission and said that he feels that he's done his best for the City. He thanked staff and the City Commission for their efforts as well as citizens for allowing him to serve. He said that he loves Benton Harbor and there is more work that needs to be done. He wished everyone a prosperous holiday season.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.



Kimberly Thompson, City Clerk



James Hightower, Mayor