

**MINUTES OF THE BENTON HARBOR CITY COMMISSION MEETING  
LULA LEE COMMISSION CHAMBERS  
MAY 16, 2016**

The regular meeting of the Benton Harbor City Commission was called to order by Mayor Muhammad at 7:07 p.m. Invocation was given by Duane L. Seats II, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call showed the following members present: Commissioners Adams, Haralson, Henry, Isom, Jones, Mayor Pro-Tem Seats, Commissioner Singleton and Mayor Muhammad. Members Absent: Commissioner Henderson. Also present: City Manager Watson, Acting Public Safety Director McGinnis and City Clerk Thompson.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made by Commissioner Adams and supported by Commissioner Haralson to approve the agenda as presented carried unanimously on the roll call vote. \*Please note – before consideration of the Consent Calendar, members of the City Commission removed all of the items and entertained them separately.\*

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – MAY 2, 2016**

A motion was made by Commissioner Adams and supported by Commissioner Singleton to approve the Regular Minutes of May 2, 2016 with any necessary corrections or deletions. The motion carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

**PRESENTATION – CLUB SCOUT ACT 655**

Greg Trezise, Club Master, gave background history of Club Scout Act 655, chartered by Light House Ministries of Benton Harbor, under the leadership of Pastor Lisa Gorman. He acknowledged tonight's participants and encouraged those interested to join their organization.

Mayor Muhammad acknowledged the parents of the Club Scout participants.

**PRESENTATION – ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION AWARD – AMBER THOMAS**

Mayor Muhammad presented an Academic Excellence and Achievement Recognition Award to Amber Thomas.

Amber Thomas thanked everyone for the honorable award and those for supporting her during this journey. She extended encouraging words to the youth.

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

Michael Hoyh of 379 N. Main, Watervliet, on behalf of the Benton Harbor Historical Preservation Society, gave an update on the 150<sup>th</sup> celebration with Sesquicentennial.

James Duncan expressed appreciation for the grass being cut at Yarbrough Park; however, acknowledged issues with Jean Klock Park. He stated that the Parks Conservancy isn't doing what it's supposed to do and suggested for the City Commission to demand that things are done.

Emma Kinnard of 270 E. May Street invited everyone to attend the May 28<sup>th</sup> rally for justice and Juneteenth event. She commended the City Commission and Acting Public Safety Director McGinnis for their efforts.

James F.A. Turner of 217 E. Main Street spoke on the goals of the Street Ministries and Berrien County Association of Churches. He stated that My Brother's Keeper is a very powerful program that everyone is being a part of. He also spoke on high school Rotarians and extended an invitation for everyone to attend tomorrow's special School Board meeting.

Sheriff Paul Bailey commended Acting Public Safety Director McGinnis for his efforts and stated that he has a great working relationship with the City. He encouraged members of the City Commission to call him if there are issues and welcomed them to visit the jail at any time. He thanked Mayor Pro-Tem Seats and County Commissioner Seats for conducting Fresh Start classes at the jail.

Mayor Muhammad expressed appreciation to Sheriff Bailey and his team for the work put into addressing the most recent tragic situation in the City.

## SEPARATED RESOLUTIONS

**After discussion, a motion made by Commissioner Haralson and supported by Mayor Pro-Tem Seats to ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE PURCHASE OF TWO (2) 2017 FORD POLICE INTERCEPTOR UTILITIES VEHICLES carried** on the following roll call vote. Yeas: Commissioner Singleton, Mayor Pro-Tem Seats, Commissioners Henry, Haralson, Isom and Mayor Muhammad. Nays: Commissioners Adams and Jones. Members Abstain: None. Members Absent: Commissioner Henderson.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Adams and supported by Commissioner Haralson to ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE AUTHORIZED PAYMENT TO CITY SERVICES FOR WATER MAIN REPAIRS. After discussion, a motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Seats and supported by Commissioner Adams to table the item and get requested information on it carried** unanimously on the roll call vote.

After discussion, a motion made by Mayor Pro-Tem Seats and supported by Commissioner Jones to ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE USE OF ABONMARCHE TO PERFORM SIGN INVENTORY AND CHANGE OUT carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Acting Public Safety Director McGinnis stated that the department is busy working on the upcoming Senior PGA. He expressed appreciation to approving the vehicle purchases. He said that in the future, detailed departmental reports will be provided to the committee.

City Manager Watson reminded everyone of the budget hearing and the deadline for the City Commission to provide recommendations for it. He gave an update on the Senior PGA. He informed everyone that there will be a meeting on June 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss the cleanup of the Paw Paw River. He commended the Public Safety Department and announced that Michael Clark has been promoted to Deputy Director. He spoke on the tragedy that recently occurred in the City and expressed concerns on the manner of which the news media reported on it.

## COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Haralson thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting to see their government in action.

Commissioner Henry thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting and staying for the duration of it. She encouraged residents to get involved. She said that the Paw Paw River cleanup initiative is very important and the City needs to find out how to fit in it.

Commissioner Jones thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting.

Commissioner Singleton reported that the Communications/Public Relations Committee meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month at 5:30 p.m. He extended encouraging words to the staff. He thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting.

Commissioner Isom thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting as well as Amber Thomas for her high achievements. He commended Mayor and First Lady Muhammad for the kite flying event. He expressed concerns for the young African American males in the community and encouraged everyone to take time out to mentor them. He also expressed appreciation for the unity displayed within the City Commission and said that he's glad to be a part of it.


Commissioner Adams stated that the City Commission has agreed to disagree; however, the unity that's being built is very important. She thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting to see their local officials in action. She expressed appreciation to the public safety officers; however, stated concerns with outside agencies stopping residents within the City limits. She invited Mr. Duncan to attend the Parks Conservancy meetings to voice his opinions. She expressed concerns with the remains of asbestos in some of the demolished homes as well as public welfare of the community.

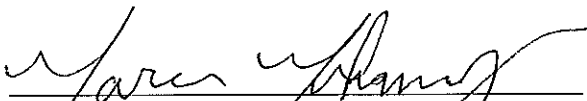
Mayor Pro-Tem Seats commended Amber Thomas and City staff for their efforts. He thanked the newly elected officials and everyone present at tonight's meeting. He said that the City Commission is working to give awards to local business owners for investing in the community. He asked that everyone continue to encourage and support each other. He said that Benton Harbor is coming back and urged all to jump on board.

Mayor Muhammad expressed appreciation to Mayor Pro-Tem Seats for taking the initiative to honor local business owners and asked for each councilmember to take up an initiative for 2016 to make the community much better. He thanked the residents for attending tonight's meeting and acknowledged Raja Woods, former Miss Benton Harbor and current student at Wayne's State. He said that they want to cultivate the talent that is coming out of Benton Harbor. He commended the Public Safety Department on the stellar job that was done addressing the recent tragedy. He expressed appreciation to the Council and stated that he hopes that a culture is left to where they agree to disagree. He reported on a successful kite flying event. He encouraged everyone to tour the Morton House to learn the history of Benton Harbor.

#### **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

  
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Kimberly Thompson, City Clerk

  
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Marcus Muhammad, Mayor