

**MINUTES OF THE BENTON HARBOR CITY COMMISSION MEETING
LULA LEE COMMISSION CHAMBERS
JULY 18, 2016**

The regular meeting of the Benton Harbor City Commission was called to order by Mayor Muhammad at 7:03 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, Henderson, Henry, Isom, Singleton and Mayor Muhammad. Members Absent: Commissioner Jones and Mayor Pro-Tem Seats (arrived at 7:15 a.m.). Also present: City Manager Watson, Deputy Public Safety Director Clark and City Clerk Thompson.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – JULY 5, 2016

A motion was made by Commissioner Haralson and supported by Commissioner Adams to approve the Regular Minutes of July 5, 2016 with any necessary corrections or deletions. The motion **carried** unanimously on the roll call vote.

UPDATE – COUNTY COMMISSIONER YARBROUGH

County Commissioner Yarbrough provided directories for Berrien County and information on voting. She announced a Berrien County Treasurer's Land Auction scheduled for tomorrow at the Dank at 9:30 a.m. She further stated that all properties left over from the auction will be for sale on September 20th starting at \$50.00. She asked for support on the County millage proposals that are on the ballot for the August 2, 2016 Primary Election.

PRESENTATION – BENTON HARBOR REBELS

Carleton Brooks, Coach of the 12u Rebels, along with assistant coach Aaron Green, acknowledged the Rebels baseball team as well as the parents. He said that the 11 and 12 years old young men have worked extremely hard and developed quite well within the last year.

Danny Jennings, Director of the Rebels, announced that the team is the Berrien Springs champion. He thanked Coach Brooks for his hard work and dedication to the program.

PRESENTATION – MICHIGAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Captain Brown, State Police / Bridgeman Post, stated that it's a privilege to have the Michigan Youth Leadership Academy in the Benton Harbor community. He said that it's their duty to help make the participants successful.

Trooper Maurice Burton gave the background history of the Leadership Academy and introduced this year's participants.

Quincy Sulton, spokesperson for the Academy, stated that this was a great experience and gave a brief overview of it. He encouraged the youth under the age of 16 to participate in the future.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Grandmaster Smith requested for the City to correct a deed to property that he purchased in 2013.

Carrie Nelson of 420 W. Market expressed concerns with her taxes.

Emma Kinnard of 270 E. May reported on a successful community garden. She requested the usage of the street sweeper throughout the City once a week. She expressed concerns with alleys and debris left after lots are being cut. She commended Trooper Burton for his efforts with the youth.

Rod Jennings honored the people affected by the recent tragedy at the courthouse. He encouraged everyone to have a balanced approach to address things happening in the world.

James Duncan expressed concerns with things happening in the world and the manner in which police officers look down at men in the community. He encouraged the City Commission to do things for the betterment of residents.

CONSENT CALENDAR

A motion was made by Commissioner Adams and supported by Commissioner Haralson to table ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE FAÇADE AND REPAIR WORK AT CITY HALL carried unanimously on the roll call vote.

There were concerns expressed that questions from the committee meetings in regards to the agenda items are not being answered. It was a suggestion to submit the questions in writing to get responses from staff in a timely manner. Mayor Muhammad also reminded the City Commission to pull items from the consent

calendar during the approval of the agenda, to further discuss them. Consensus was given to forward the tabled item to the next Planning and Economic Development Committee for further review.

COMMUNICATIONS

Deputy Public Safety Director Clark spoke on the three (3) year accreditation program for police and fire.

City Clerk Thompson announced the filing deadline for Benton Harbor Area School Board candidates. She informed everyone that sample ballots for the August 2, 2016 Primary Election is available for review in the City Clerk's office.

City Manager Watson gave an update on the water meter replacement project. He informed everyone that the new Utility Services Superintendent started today. He said that the draft copies of the Consolidated and Annual plans will be available for review this Friday. He spoke on the time spent at committee meetings and the questions that arise from them. He encouraged the City Commission to seek answers to questions prior to the meeting.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Haralson thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting as well as Commissioner Yarbrough, Emma Kinnard and Dr. Tynes for their efforts. She extended condolences to the families affected by the tragic shooting at the courthouse. She said that there is a lot that everyone could do to help make the City better.

Commissioner Henry thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting and encouraged them to participate at committee meetings. She expressed concerns with not getting responses to questions asked at committee meetings. She said that transparency is needed on what's happening in this community.

Commissioner Henderson thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting. She said that it was a pleasure to see youth participating in positive activities. She encouraged residents to get involved with their community.

Commissioner Singleton thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting to express their concerns. He suggested coming up with innovative ways to address some of the issues. He briefly spoke on how African American males are perceived in this country and said that there should be healthy discussions on how to dispel this image.

Commissioner Isom thanked citizens for attending tonight's meeting to give input and updates. He commended the youth for their efforts and extended encouraging words to them. He expressed concerns with speeding in the residential areas. He encouraged everyone to work together to make the City great.

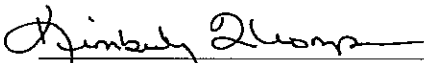
Commissioner Adams thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting, Ms. Kinnard for her efforts as well as County Commissioner Yarbrough. She spoke on the importance of the upcoming election and the opportunities for everyone to vote. She expressed concerns with things happening in America and suggested for all to find a common ground to work and live together. She spoke on respect for each other and responding to questions.

Mayor Pro-Tem Seats suggested utilizing the County inmates to help clean the City's alleys. He expressed a concern with speeding down Columbus Street. He said that he hopes that the situation with READY Taekwondo is rectified before the next meeting. He commended Mr. Virgil Hatcher for uplifting young men and suggested utilizing the Dwight Pete Mitchell City Center to teach chess to the youth. He spoke on the tragic incident that happened at the courthouse and the manner in which the Herald Palladium depicted the shooter as a great man.

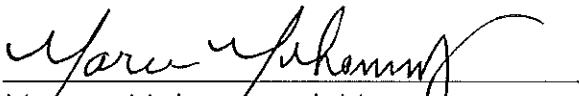
Mayor Muhammad thanked residents for attending tonight's meeting. He provided assurance that the READY Taekwondo property will be addressed soon. He commended Ms. Kinnard on the Fresh Start garden and said that hopefully, the City of Benton Harbor could be an urban gardening mecca for other cities around the country. He gave an update on the victims of the courthouse shooting and reported on the great Homegoing services for the slain bailiffs. He gave an overview of the repairs that will be done to City Hall. He said that on all levels, there needs to be more understanding of one another and problems need to be solved without violence.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.



Kimberly Thompson, City Clerk



Marcus Muhammad, Mayor