

**MINUTES OF THE BENTON HARBOR CITY COMMISSION
LULA LEE COMMISSION CHAMBERS
JANUARY 3, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Benton Harbor City Commission was called to order by Commissioner Singleton at 7:03 p.m. Invocation let by Commissioner Clark-Griffin, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Commissioner Henderson. Roll call showed the following members present: Commissioners Adams, Clark-Griffin, Edwards, Henderson, Henry, Isom, Singleton. Members Absent: Mayor Pro-Tem Seats and Mayor Muhammad. Also present: City Manager Mitchell, Public Safety Director McGinnis, Assessor Story, City Attorney Racht, and City Clerk Moore.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Henderson and supported by Commissioner Adams to approve the Regular Minutes of November 15, 2021, Regular & Closed Minutes of December 20, 2021. The motion **carried** on the following roll call vote: Yeas: Commissioners Clark-Griffin, Edwards, Henderson, Henry, Isom, Singleton, Adams. Nays: None. Members Abstain: None. Members Absent: Mayor Pro-Tem Seats and Mayor Muhammad.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

A motion made by Commissioner Henderson and supported by Commissioner Isom to approve the Accounts Payable Listing. During Discussion, Commissioner Henry stated she questioned some items on the AP listing and received a document but it wasn't what she asked for, she wants to see invoices and documentation. Commissioner Adams stated that she will not support the AP listing until a Financial Director that is governed by the Commission is in place. Motion **carried** on the following roll call vote. Yeas: Commissioners Edwards, Henderson, Isom, Singleton. Nays: Commissioners Henry, Adams, Clark-Griffin. Members Abstain: None. Members Absent: Mayor Pro-Tem Seats and Mayor Muhammad.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Annie Brown announced her candidacy for State Representative in the 38th District.

Miguel Clark congratulated his mother, Ethel Clark-Griffin.

Emma Kinnard stated that the City was in violation of their own Charter by not having a Financial Manager. There is going to have to be accountability for moneys spent in the past.

Rod Jennings stated 2022 is going to be an even more critical election midterm and voting rights is one of the most important things going on nationally.

Marvin Haywood expressed he's never been against change but if it's not fair exchange it's robbery. We have to have a vision of we want for the city. The city is in need of a Finance Director.

Commissioner Henry requests to suspend the rules and add to the agenda to implement all the changes with the viruses, stronger masks and rapid testing.

Commissioner Singleton asked if there was a Resolution presented.

Commissioner Henry stated its time to use the CARES Act money to provide the citizens with N95 masks and access to rapid testing. Stated elected officials should do the research since the staff doesn't seem to have time or energy, so the commission should do it and bring it back and implement it so citizens have the safety gear.

Commissioner Adams stated it's been 7-8 months that she's been complaining and asking for a balance on the CARES Act dollars. There's no time to wait another day to put something forth to ensure the safety of the resident in the form of masks and sanitizer. And is again requesting a balance of the dollars left in the CARES Act.

Commissioner Singleton asked Manager Mitchell if there was anything still going on to supply citizens with mask and sanitizer.

Manager Mitchell stated that the last order of the commission was to not supply anything else.

Commissioner Henderson recommended that this issue go to the legislative committee to work out a resolution to be presented to the Commission.

Commissioner Clark-Griffin asked why the money isn't been used for the residents. And asked for a balance as well.

Commissioner Adams stated a decision needed to be made tonight to get these things in the residents' hands tomorrow.

Manager Mitchell stated he will have the balance for everyone tomorrow.

Commissioner Singleton is requesting the Legislative Committee review a Resolution to be presented to the Commission.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The following Consent Calendar items were moved by Commissioner Edwards and supported by Commissioner Henderson. Motion carried on the following roll call vote: Yeas: Commissioners Henderson, Henry, Isom, Singleton, Clark-Griffin, Edwards. Nays: Commissioner Adams. Abstain: None. Absent: Mayor Pro-Tem Seats, Mayor Muhammad.

APPROVAL OF 2022 CITY COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE

COMMUNICATIONS

No Staff Comments

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Clark-Griffin thanked the resident for coming out and asked for everyone to continue to come out and support.

Commissioner Henry thanked the citizens and expressed to them the need to be involved in their government. Reported that during the Communication Committee they got to a point where there is a citizen volunteer to put together a newsletter.

Commissioner Edwards thanked colleagues, staff and citizens for coming out. And encouraged everyone to look out for the seniors and disabled.

Commissioner Henderson encouraged the citizens to wake up and join the team. To link up instead of being on the sidelines. Get involved.

Commissioner Adams expressed the need for more caring people and that something in government needs to be changed. Encouraged everyone to get involved and stay involved.

Commissioner Isom thanked everyone for coming out. He stated as chair of the Personnel and Finance Committee, he wanted everyone to know they are diligently searching for the right person for Finance Director. They will not put anyone in the position that isn't qualified.

Commissioner Singleton would like to see more citizen participation.

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Edwards and supported by Commissioner Henderson to go into Closed Session to DISCUSS PENDING LITIGATION; WMP PROPERTIES, V. CITY OF BENTON HARBOR, ET AL, BERRIEN COUNT CIRCUIT COURT FILE NO. 20-00999-AW-H. Motion carried on the following roll call vote: Yeas: Commissioners Henry, Isom, Singleton, Adams, Clark-Griffin, Edwards, Henderson. Nays: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Mayor Pro-Tem Seats, Mayor Muhammad.

The regular meeting recessed to go into Closed Session at 8:01p.m. and reconvened at 8:16 p.m. No action was taken as a result of the Closed Session.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

A motion made by Commissioner Adams and supported by Commissioner Isom to adjourn the meeting and was carried on the following roll call vote: Yeas: Commissioners Adams, Clark-Griffin, Edwards, Henderson, Henry, Isom, Singleton. Nays: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Mayor Pro-Tem Seats, Mayor Muhammad

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Tiffany Moore, City Clerk

Marcus Muhammad, Mayor