



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL  
HELD ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 09, 2023**

The monthly meeting of Council of the St. Mary Municipal Corporation was held on Thursday, February 09 2023 in the Council's Chambers, Port Maria Civic Centre, commencing at 10:10 a.m.

Present were: -

**Councillors**

Richard Creary, JP  
Levan Freeman, JP  
Mitsy Hudson Hicks  
Leroy Sewell  
Hugh Bryan  
Doreen Hutchinson, JP  
Lincoln Dixon  
Germaine Smiley, JP  
Jason James, JP  
Lenford Danvers  
Sheldon Kidd, JP

**Divisions**

Richmond, Chairperson  
Belfield  
Hampstead  
Boscobel  
Annotto Bay  
Carron Hall  
Islington  
Port Maria  
Gayle  
Castleton  
Oracabessa

**Officers**

Ethlyn Douglas, JP  
Angella Lammie  
Adrian Tate  
Lincoln Brooks  
Kenneth Roulston  
Rhona Blake Tait  
Brandon Myles  
Donald Douglas  
Dwayne Johnson  
Sharon Burke  
Angella Lammie  
Michail Burford  
Debbie Evering Pryce  
Amoy Martin

**Positions**

Chief Executive Officer, Clerk  
Senior Internal Auditor  
Acting Parish Coordinator - Disaster Preparedness  
Inspector of Poor  
Municipal Police Supervisor  
Acting Director of Administration  
Works Superintendent  
Acting Deputy Superintendent- Roads & Works  
Superintendent – Roads & Works  
Matron - St. Mary Infirmary  
Senior Internal Auditor  
Planning Technologist  
Acting Community Programmes Coordinator  
Acting Executive Secretary, Recording Clerk

**Representatives from Agencies**

Shawin Reynolds, JP  
Samantha Anderson Ashley

**Positions/Agency**

Social Development Commission  
Deputy Chief Health Inspector



Rupert Stephens  
 Sanya Maragh  
 Lenward Brown  
 Supt. Bobette Morgan-Simpson

Chief Public Health Inspector  
 Jamaica Cultural Development Commission  
 Parish Development Committee  
 Jamaica Constabulary Force

### **Members of Parliament**

Dr. Morais Guy, CD, JP  
 Mr. Robert Montaque

### **Constituency**

St. Mary Central  
 St. Mary Western

### **Special Guests & General Public**

His Excellency Sir Fermín Gabriel Quinoñes Sánchez, Ambassador of Cuba to Jamaica  
 Senorita Aimara de Armas

Rev. Anna-Kay Henry-McGregor

Bethel United Church in Jamaica  
 & the Cayman Islands

Mr. Larry Robertson

Chairman – Cuban – Jamaican Friendship  
 Association & President - Portland Chapter  
 Jamaica Agricultural Society

Mr. Fabian Rhuel

President - St. Mary Chapter  
 Jamaica Agricultural Society

Mr. Fredrick Young

President of the St. Mary Chamber of Commerce

### **NOTICE**

The Notice convening the meeting was read by Miss Ethlyn Douglas, Clerk to Council.

### **DEVOTIONAL EXERCISE**

The devotional exercise was conducted by Reverend Anna-Kay Henry-McGregor of the Belfield United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, Highgate, representing the Belfield Division.

The Chairperson thanked Reverend Henry-McGregor for conducting the devotional exercise.

### **NATIONAL ANTHEM OF JAMAICA AND CUBA**

The attendees sang the National Anthem of Jamaica.

The National Anthem of Cuba was played and recited by the His Excellency Sir Fermín Gabriel Quinoñes Sánchez and Senorita Aimara de Armas.

### **WELCOME**

The Chairperson welcomed His Excellency Sir Fermín Gabriel Quinoñes Sánchez, Ambassador of Cuba to Jamaica and Senorita Aimara de Armas and said it was a pleasure to have them at Council Meeting and mentioned that it had become a traditional that the Cuban Ambassador visited with the Corporation at General Council.



He expressed special welcome to the Member of Parliament for St. Mary Central, Dr. Morais Guy and Member of Parliament for St. Mary Western, Mr. Robert Montaque. He mentioned that Mr. Montaque once sat as Mayor to Port Maria and was somewhat responsible for him being in his capacity as Mayor and Chairperson of the Corporation as he along with his brother, Don Creary, introduced him to politics. He also welcomed the Councillors, Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Fabian Rhule, President of the St. Mary Chapter of the Jamaica Agricultural Society and Mr. Larry Robertson, Chairman of the Cuban Friendship Association and President of the St. Mary Chapter of the Jamaica Agricultural Society.

The Chairperson also welcomed the various Head of Agencies, Mr. Fredrick Young, President of the St. Mary Chamber of Commerce and all the staff of the Corporation.

### **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE/LATENESS**

Apology for absence were tendered on behalf of Dr. Tamara Henry, Medical Officer of Health and Dr. Norman Dunn, Member of Parliament, St. Mary South-Eastern who had a competing event.

Apologies for absence were also tendered on behalf of Matron Sharon Burke, Mrs. Andrea Powell Wallace - Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Bryan Rhoden - Senior Compliance Officer, Mr. Alphus Gordon - Director of Planning and Councillor Paul Fyffe, Highgate Division who was unwell.

Apologies were tendered also on behalf of Superintendent of Police, Mrs. Bobette Morgan-Simpson who would be late.

### **OPENING REMARKS**

#### **1. Slaying of Homeless Man, O'Neil Collins and Beating of Moses Mesquito**

The Chairperson informed that two days prior, there was news of the slaying of a homeless man in Port Maria, one who was a visitor of the Drop-In Centre and was being taken care of by the Corporation's staff. He added that the gentleman was known by the name of O'Neil Collins and he was found with his throat slashed.

He informed that there was a report of the beating of another homeless man, Mr. Moses Mesquito who was taken to hospital for care and was now with a family member.

He expressed his profound sadness about the incidents and stated that the Corporation never wanted something of this nature to happen, especially in Port Maria. He added that the staff of the Corporation tried to provide the best care of the homeless by providing two meals per day, clothing and facilities for showering. He said the act was heartrending and mentioned that in recent time, there was a killing of a homeless man in Kingston and said he was curious to know what was happening in the society to cause those acts.

***Superintendent Morgan-Simpson joined the meeting.***



The Chairperson welcomed Superintendent Morgan-Simpson and continued that he hoped that the police will find the perpetrators of the horrendous acts on the parish's homeless population.

He mentioned that there was another gentleman called Choppy who would normally sweep business places for money and said that he was informed that some men took away the brooms, broke them and threaten Choppy. He said it may be possible to acquire some lead from having discussions with Choppy and mentioned that all citizens should be outraged by the killing and encouraged persons to communicate any relevant information to the police.

## **2. Cleaning and Reopening of Roadway at Frontier, Port Maria**

The Chairperson mentioned that through discussions with Councillor Smiley, there was a road from Tucker Circle to Bamboo Tree that had been abandoned for years and mentioned that on the road, there were 3 - 4 loads of dirt that had accumulated over many years. He said that the road would be reopened so as to alleviate traffic congestion in the town of Port Maria and mentioned that if the Fire Brigade had to respond to a fire, it would be easier for them to traverse from base to Paggee, Quebec or Islington without going through the town.

## **3. Parochial Revenue Fund Allocation**

The Chairperson mentioned that the figure for December 2022 PRF from which allocations were made to Councillors, had still not been received. He informed that Mr Rupert Pryce of the PRF Unit at the Ministry of Local Government & Rural Development advised that the information should be provided by the end of the day or tomorrow; hence same would be communicated to the respective Councillors thereafter.

### **Council noted.**

## **4. General remarks about the relationship of Jamaica and Cuba and St. Mary and Cuba**

The Chairperson stated that the Corporation was hosting His Excellency, Sir. Fermín Gabriel Quinoñes Sánchez, despite the short notice, was due to the relationship that Cuba and Jamaica had enjoyed over the years and said that there had been mutual assistance between both countries.

He said that Cuba had assisted Jamaica mainly in the areas of Health, construction of four (4) schools namely, Garvey Maceo High School, José Martí Technical High School, Anchovy High School, and G.C Foster College of Physical Education and Sports Education. He added that many Cuban Teachers taught and were still teaching across the country and said that in the area of health, over 30,000 Jamaican had benefitted from the Jamaica - Cuba Eyecare Programme that was established in 2010.



He said that there was a number of nurses and doctors that were still working in the hospitals and health facilities. He said that many students had benefitted from scholarships to study in Cuba particularly in the field of medicine where several of them were from the parish of St. Mary.

The Chairperson mentioned that at the end of the meeting, there would be the laying of a wreath at the Tayki Monument and made mention of the 1760 the Easter Sunday Rebellion in Port Maria; hence the monument at the Claude Stuart Park in honour of Chief Tayki.

He informed that on Heroes' Day in October 2022, the road Rectory Street was renamed to Chief Tayki Street and now depicted a sign and the drawing of a bust of Chief Tayki as he used that roadway to go to Fort Haldane to carry out that revolt on Easter Sunday, which lasted several months.

The Chairperson stated that Mr. Montaque always said that had it not been for the 1655 battle at Rio Nuveo, Jamaicans would be speaking Spanish; however, the British defeated the Spanish. He said the parish wanted to continue the friendship that it had been developed with the Cuban people and mentioned that Mr. Robertson always made the connections with the Corporation as he had very close relations as well as the St. Mary Chamber of Commerce.

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS FOR ADDRESS/ PRESENTATION FROM THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR TO JAMAICA, HIS EXCELLENCY, SIR. FERMÍN GABRIEL QUINOÑES SANCHÉZ**

**On a motion moved by Councillor Levan Freeman, JP seconded by Councillor Germaine Smiley, JP, the standing orders were suspended.**

His Excellency Sir Fermín Gabriel Quinoñes Sánchez expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to visit the parish and also the Corporation after a year of his arrival into the Country. He said that there had been difficulties faced in the country as a diplomat post Covid-19 and mentioned that the previous Cuban Ambassador spent almost two years without any relation or possibility to visit Jamaica. He added that many things had happened after Covid as in Jamaica, Cuba and the world in general, there were new challenges being faced that resulted in increased creativity as it relates to relations and cooperation among friends and neighbouring countries.

He said that whenever he visited the North Shore of Jamaica, he could feel closer to his Island since Cuba was the closer neighbour to Jamaica. He made mention that in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Havana was occupied by the British; therefore, there was no telling what would be happening in Havana; however, they were unfortunately defeated by the Spanish.

He added that despite those events, a lot of Cuban patriots were hosted in Jamaica which was considered heaven for Cubans as hundreds of them fought against the Spanish colonists from Jamaica. He said one of the army leader, Antoni Maceo lived in Jamaica for some time.



He mentioned that some 130 years ago, the Cuban National Hero José Martí was in Kingston organizing Cuban Patriots to the second phase of Cuba's Independence War and said a lot of Cuban Jamaicans and Jamaicans were allowed to participate in that effort; however, unfortunately, that did not end with a victory. He continued that at least slavery was eliminated hence, there was a very large history between both nations of friendship and solidarity.

He said that during the 1959 Cuban Revolution, a lot of Caribbean people were living in Cuba, to include thousands of Jamaicans, while working in bad conditions on sugar cane plantations. However, after the revolution, those people acquired the same rights as the Cuban population and a lot of families were formed with roots from Jamaica, Haiti and many other Caribbean nations.

His Excellency said that the Corporation between Jamaica and Cuba had been longstanding as the Mayor alluded to, as many Cubans were in Jamaica supporting the Health and Educational sectors. He added that St. Mary was one of the parishes that was hosting a contingent of Cuban collaborators in Health and in Education of which he was very proud.

He said that currently, Cuba was working very hard under very difficult circumstances because the economy was not in good standing due to foreign pressures as 60 years ago, the United States government decided to initiate a blockage against his country. He added that despite that, the Cuban people continued to work and express solidarity with their friends in the Caribbean nations and others worldwide.

He stated that solidarity and corporation was what was needed to achieve development and mentioned that a few days ago was the summit with the CARICOM nations where the President expressed that despite the increase of the blockage and more than 143 measures that had been taken by the US administration against Cuba in the past five years, collaboration between Cuba and other Caribbean countries had been maintained.

His Excellency said that there were a lot of farmers in the parish of St. Mary hence the need for corporation and mentioned that he would like the opportunity to have discussions with the St. Mary Chamber of Commerce to identify how the Chamber of Commerce of Cuba could connect with them.

In closing, he thanked the Jamaican Parliament for adopting a resolution for the inclusion of Cuba every year in CARICOM. He added that the Cuban Embassy was open to any suggestion and initiative that would be beneficial in creating better relations between the countries.

The Chairperson thanked His Excellency for his presentation and invited a number of invitees to make remarks.

## **REMARKS**



MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD THURSDAY, 2023 FEBRUARY 09  
 PREPARED BY: AMOY MARTIN  
 EDITED BY: ETHLYN DOUGLAS

## **1. Dr. Morais Guy, Member of Parliament, St. Mary Central**

Member of Parliament for St. Mary Central, Dr. Morais Guy greeted all present and stated that it was indeed a pleasure to welcome Cuban Ambassador His Excellency, Sir Fermín Gabriel Quinoñes Sánchez in conjunction with His Worship the Mayor and the team to St. Mary.

He mentioned that since MP Montague started the programme of twinning Port Maria to a city in Cuba, the visits had been maintained over the years for the Cuban Ambassadors to come to General Council in St. Mary, which he said should be commended and continue.

He said he was very hearten when it was mentioned of the innumerable assistance offered to Jamaica by the Cuban government through education and medical support, which had been maintained throughout the years regardless of the administration that was in power. He referred to the Ambassadors remarks of the bond of not only friendship but also genetics that had kept both countries together over the years.

Dr. Guy said it was his hope that the Ambassador and his team would be satisfied with the visit to the parish and looked forward to many more visits from him.

## **2. Mr. Robert Montague, Member of Parliament for St. Mary Western**

Mr. Montague greeted all present and welcomed Cuban Ambassador His Excellency, Sir Fermín Gabriel Quinoñes Sánchez to the greatest parish in Jamaica. He said the relationship between Jamaica and Cuba was well documented and was also long. He said that while Jamaica had benefitted immensely, he however had doubts that same had been reciprocated to the same extent, therefore the time had come for Jamaica to offer help to Cuba.

He continued that the relationship had extended for hundreds of years even after José Martí spent time in Jamaica and mentioned that the only known photograph of Mr. Martí was owned by a Jamaican, Mr. Tom Tavares-Finson, Current President of the Senate who voluntarily gave it to the people of Cuba. He mentioned that a lot of our ancestors from St. Mary went to Cuba in the 1940s to work in the Sugar Cane Industry and said his grandmother was one of those who travelled at the time.

He indicated that based on the longstanding relationship, a lot of students were even studying in Cuba privately without scholarships, some being from St. Mary. He reflected on a time when St. Mary received 50 scholarships where Councillor Hutchinson was the President of the PTA of students in Cuba and her son also studied there. He said that Cuban teachers hosted in the Civic Centre building, Spanish and Dance classes and also mentioned that the Deputy Mayor should also remember well his visit to Cuba.

Mr. Montague said that there were places in the parish where Cuba was most visible; they were in Montreal, Carron Hall Division and Prospect Great House, Retreat. He mentioned that the residents in Montreal could only get Cuban radio stations and on a clear day, they



were actually able to see the southern tip of Cuba; it could also be seen from the Prospect Great House.

He reiterated that the Cuban National Chamber of Commerce was twinned with the St. Mary Chamber of Commerce, the only one to be so twinned and mentioned that there was even a trade visit to Cuba. He asked that St. Mary lead in offering training and assistance to the Cuban agricultural sector as there was a lot of experience in Jamaica with the production of bananas and plantains that can be shared.

He also asked that the Chairperson engage the tourist sector so that we too can offer training at the various levels in the tourism industry, so that we can assist our friends in Cuba. He mentioned that one of the first Jamaican Hotelier in Cuba was from the ISSA group which was registered at Tower Isles, St. Mary.

Mr. Montaque mentioned that he had an adopted daughter in Havana who now resided in Cayman and said a lot of our ancestors worked in Cuba. He also mentioned that his now deceased aunt was born in Cuba and never became a Jamaican Citizen, although she had been living in Jamaica for 75 years. In closing, he said it was full time Jamaica gave back to the people and country of Cuba.

### **3. Mr. Fredrick Young, President of the St. Mary Chamber of Commerce**

Mr. Young greeted all present and highlighted the relationship that the parish had with Cuba over the years. He mentioned that in 2018, the Chamber led a team of 8 persons to the country on a mission. He said he hoped to reengage that corporation and mentioned that for the 60<sup>th</sup> Expo of Viva La Cuba, the Chamber had been invited to attend.

Mr. Young said the Chamber was interested in knowledge exchange that was technology driven and mentioned that there was a lot of knowledge in Greenhouse Industry which many of our farmers were now leaning to. He added that should the agricultural sector use such technology in the parish, the farmers would be able to produce more; however, the interest was to give back.

He said that it was noted that scholarships were available nationally, however, his plea was for some to be earmarked for St. Mary. He thanked His Excellency for his visit and said that the Chamber would continue to engage him for continued partnership and to share all possible endeavours that would be evenly beneficial for both Chambers of Commerce.

### **4. Mr. Larry Robertson, President of the Portland Chapter, Jamaica Agricultural Society**

Mr. Robertson said that St. Mary had contributed a lot to the relationship with Cuba and referred to what was mentioned previously about the time being now for Jamaica to make some contribution to the development of Cuba.

He mentioned that the Cubans had a principal of internationalism where their economy prepared more doctor, nurses and teachers to help economies like Jamaica. He suggested that a team be formed, led by the Members of Parliament and the Councillors to look at how St. Mary could give back to Cuba.





He thanked His Worship the Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer for their support of fostering a good relationship with the Cuban people.

### **QUESTIONS/CONCERNS/COMMENTS/HIGHLIGHTS**

The Chairperson opened the floor for questions or comments and stated that at the end, His Excellency could respond.

1. Councillor Freeman welcomed His Excellency and stated that MP Montaque spoke about giving back and mentioned that he endorsed that sentiment; however, his passion was in agriculture of which he knew Cuba was well advanced in certain aspects. He mentioned that he read an article where Barbados was expecting drought later in the year and asked that whatever assistance could be given in water harvesting in Jamaica would be greatly appreciated.
2. Councillor Dixon extended his welcome also to His Excellency and his team and mentioned that a section of his division was prone to flooding which was significantly affected in 2022 February. He asked that whatever assistance could be given to that section as it relates to ponding to create some retention points along that coastline, same would be appreciated.
3. Councillor Hutchinson expressed her gratitude to Cuba for the many assistance that had been afforded to Jamaica, especially St. Mary and mentioned that she made several trips to Cuba to assist with the care of students from Jamaica and said that her son was one of those students. She said Cuba had assisted Jamaica to help itself; hence the desire to give back, but the question was how and suggested that there be some thought in that regard.

She also expressed gratitude to His Excellency, Sir Fermín Gabriel Quinoñes Sánchez and his team for joining the Corporation at Council.

4. Councillor James reminisced on his first time to Cuba where the first meal he ordered was Rice and Peas with Chicken and while having the meal, he realised that there were some bits of Pork in the rice which caused him to end the meal.

He said that one way Jamaica could give back was through banana and plantain production and mentioned that he had a wealth of knowledge in the field; hence he would be willing to make his contribution.

5. Councillor Smiley extended his warm welcome to His Excellency and said that by listening it would appear that both countries had a family relationship. He said like many that had called for ties to be strengthen and be able to assist each other in any way possible, he reiterated the call.

He stated that one thing he admired was Cuba's resilience as it relates to natural disasters and mentioned that the parish of St. Mary had struggled with same. He added that this was



one of the areas where there could be a partnership so as to negate future natural disasters.

He said the former President Fidel Castro was one of his new age heroes who in his opinion, had done extremely well in a time to embark on a journey to keep the country together and continue to produce Doctors, Teachers, Lawyers, Nurses and other high professionals who continued to help Jamaica.

At this juncture, the Chairperson asked His Excellency to responded to the comments, if he so desired.

His Excellency, Sir Fermín Gabriel Quinoñes Sánchez thanked everyone for their expression of solidarity and gratitude from Jamaica to the Cuban people. He said that no matter what the economic circumstances may be in Cuba, solidarity had always there and graced them with good fortune. He went on to mention that they were currently working on improving corporation with other Caribbean nations.

He said that they had been working with different Jamaica institutions to see how best to improve trade and there was only relational services where doctors, nurses, teacher/ professors come to offer service in Jamaica; hence it was something that had to be tackled together. He mentioned that some virtual meetings could be organized to discuss what possibilities were available and later, that persons could visit the Expo in Santiago, Cuba.

He said there was no telling how much both countries could cooperate in agriculture as we were producing almost the same agricultural produce. He added that in Cuba, they planted plantain, banana, cassava, sweet potatoes etc; however, in agriculture there was the opportunity to gain a lot of experience from Jamaicans farmers and benefit from the knowledge of the Cuban Scientists and Researchers in agriculture. He said that knowledge would be acquired from working very closely with Cuban Universities and learn the different variety of planting to be used in Jamaican agriculture.

He said they needed to know how to plant and produce plantains and bananas in difficult environments similar to what had been done in Jamaica. He said there was a lot of land in Cuba; however, sometime there were little to no resources as there was no access to technology or financing; hence, Jamaica entrepreneurs could consider to invest in Cuba. He added that they, had land, labour and experience.

His Excellency, Sir Sánchez said that Cuba needed the support of the Jamaican people and reiterated that they were interested in solidarity, corporation and friendship. He said he and his wife were grateful for the opportunity to visit on such a short notice and said he had received an invitation to St. Mary Agri-Expo that would be taking place in April 2023 which he would be attending.

He said he had to work with diplomats and politicians in Kingston; however, he felt at home in St. Mary.

### **Presentation of tokens to His Excellency, Sir Fermín Gabriel Quinoñes Sánchez.**



At this juncture, His Worship the Mayor presented a basket of St. Mary produce and products to His Excellency, Sir Fermín Gabriel Quinoñes Sánchez.

The Chief Executive Officer also made a presentation of a painting of rural Jamaica to His Excellency, Sir Fermín Gabriel Quinoñes Sánchez. She thanked him for his attendance and said that his words were not only appropriate for the location and for the event because we were on the trajectory as to how to rebuild and continue building St. Mary; hence with a friend in Cuba it would be possible.

She mentioned that from an Administrative standpoint, she was looking at how we could have technical transfers between the technical departments of the Corporation and the technical trainings offered in Cuba.

She said the painting reminded her of her visit to Camagüey because her sister also studied medicine in Cuba.

His Excellency, Sir Fermín Gabriel Quinoñes Sánchez said that the painting would be in their residence in Jamaica and later in Havana and expressed his gratitude for the tokens.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Chairperson thanked everyone for attending the meeting and informed that they would be moving to the Takyi Monument for laying of the wreath.

There being no other matter for discussion, the meeting was adjourned on a motion moved by Councillor Mitsy Hudson-Hicks seconded by Councillor Doreen Hutchinson, JP, at 11: 26 a.m.

**C O N F I R M E D**

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**CHAIRPERSON**  
**THE ST. MARY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**

.....  
**CLERK TO COMMITTEE**  
**THE ST. MARY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**

**DATE.....**

**DATE.....**

