

THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2009, AT THE OFFICES OF THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL, 388 MAIN SOUTH ROAD, GREYMOOUTH, COMMENCING AT 11.26 A.M.

PRESENT:

R. Scarlett (Chairman), P. Ewen, A. Robb, T. Archer, D. Davidson, B. Chinn, A. Birchfield

IN ATTENDANCE:

C. Ingle (Chief Executive Officer), C. Dall (Consents and Compliance Manager), S. Moran (Planning and Environmental Manager), T. Jellyman (Minutes Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES:

There were no apologies.

2. PUBLIC FORUM

There was no presentation.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Moved (Archer / Birchfield) *that the minutes of the Council Meeting 11 August 2009, be confirmed as correct.*

Carried

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

REPORTS:

4.1 PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGER'S REPORT ON ENGINEERING OPERATIONS

S. Moran spoke to his report advising that the stopbank upgrade at Inchbonnie is nearing completion and has gone very well.

S. Moran advised that the design tender for the upgrade design for the Greymouth Rating District has been let to Good Earth Matters Ltd, their tender is for \$174,580.

S. Moran reported that the rating district meeting at Whataroa would be confirmed once the results of the survey sent to ratepayers in this area are to hand.

Moved (Chinn / Birchfield) *that the report be received.*

Carried

5.1 CORPORATE SERVICE MANAGER'S REPORT

C. Ingle spoke to this report in R. Mallinson's absence. He advised that this is a short report in view of the time spent on finalising the Annual Report. It was noted that there has been an encouraging rally in our portfolio with gains of \$283,902 and the return of 2.85% for the year to date. Total gains since March 2009 are approximately \$677,000. C. Ingle stated it great to see the investment portfolio heading in the right direction again.

Moved (Archer / Birchfield) *that this report be received.*

Carried

5.1.1 ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR TO 30 JUNE 2009

C. Ingle spoke to this report advising that it is a draft version of the Annual Report. C. Ingle advised that the Auditors will be on site again next week, some minor adjustments are yet to be finalised but there are no fundamental or material concerns from Audit New Zealand regarding the Annual Report.

Moved (Davidson / Ewen)

That the un-audited Annual Report be received.

Carried

5.1.2 ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUEST FROM ANIMAL HEALTH BOARD FOR TB CONTROL

C. Ingle spoke to this report stating there has been a communication breakdown between the AHB and Council. C. Ingle reported that AHB made submissions to the LTCCP requesting further funding but their submission was unclear on the consequences of not getting the funding. AHB have now written to Council outlining their concern at not getting the additional funding. Cr Scarlett stated that Council's view during the LTCCP process was that not only was the funding request not greatly explained but when AHB were asked by Councillors for justification for the additional funding there was no clear answer and Council were not prepared to grant the funding without justification.

C. Ingle advised that should Council be inclined to grant the money, there are three options, but he recommends that the money is carried in deficit throughout the year. To have a full blown LTCCP change and go through the LTCCP submissions process again would cost money and he is not recommending this option. The third option is to use a clause out of the Rating Act Section 23 that allows Council to fund an extra amount when Council feels that it has been unforeseen. C. Ingle stated that it is not a huge amount of money to carry and will not impact on cashflow. Cr Scarlett asked councillors for their opinions.

Cr Chinn stated he is not in favour of any of the recommendations, as he does not have a lot of faith in the AHB and that by upping the rate they are not solving the problem. He feels that if 10% was taken back on the area of rateable land and they don't increase it by 10%; then there would be no need to increase the amount by \$85,000. Cr Chinn said that AHB are treating land that has not had a possum caught on it for 15 years. He would like AHB to move from areas where there are no possums and to treat the hotspots. Cr Chinn said that Mr McCook from the AHB stated in his letter to Council that for every dollar regional councils put in we get \$9 back, therefore if we put in \$100,000 in we would get \$900,000 back. Mr McCook stated this would be a great cash injection for the West Coast, Cr Chinn agrees with this but he feels that landowners should not pay more rates, as there is not that many possums left. Cr Chinn feels that rural landowners should not be expected to fund this increase.

Cr Ewen stated that funding request is an oversight on the part of the AHB and not this Council. He understands Cr Chinn's view but he appreciates that for \$85,000 we get \$850,000 back. This is good for employment for contractors on the West Coast. Cr Ewen stated that it would be pointless doing any Tb control if we don't support the programme as in six months all the work will be undone. Cr Ewen feels that it is a necessity that we do continue, but he is mindful that we are helping out the AHB for their error, not ours.

Cr Robb stated that he is disappointed with AHB for not explaining themselves well during the LTCCP process and that because of this they were turned down in the first place. Cr Robb feels that the Tb strategy and the work that AHB is doing is working and it is important that Council keeps it working for the benefit of the West Coast. Cr Robb feels that this request for further funding comes from an administration level and he supports the recommendation to grant additional funding.

Cr Davidson feels that if the additional funding is not granted then there will be a gap in the programme. Cr Davidson is in favour of the eradication of Tb and on the positive side there will be over \$800,00 injected into the West Coast.

Cr Scarlett stated that continuity of the programme is important and there is a risk that should there be a six month hiatus and then there are no jobs for the contractors, they could leave the district to seek employment elsewhere and it would be difficult to get them back again. Cr Robb stated there is concern that if the funding isn't granted then expertise of those contractors on the ground will be lost and new contractors would need to be brought in and trained.

Cr Archer stated he is disappointed with the letter from AHB. Cr Archer said that the point is if the money isn't available then we are going to lose a significant degree of coverage and control of the Tb programme. Cr Archer asked that if we don't contribute the \$85,000 is this going to have a significant impact on the strategy or Tb control within our district.

Cr Scarlett responded that it would have a negative impact; there will be a six month gap in the programme. He stated that we are the beneficiaries of the funding that is well over and above of what we contribute by a huge amount to the tune of \$10 – 12M. Cr Scarlett stated that this sends a very bad signal to the rest of the funders if we are not prepared to fund \$85,000 as the West Coast is the worst Tb infected area in New Zealand. Cr Scarlett advised that if there were any type of export bans relating to Tb then we would be at the top of the list and this would affect our economy seriously. Cr Scarlett feels that even though this funding request has been handled poorly, for the sake of \$85,000 it is important that we do it. Cr Archer is in favour of supporting the funding request but remains disappointed with Mr McCook, CEO of the AHB with the handling of this matter.

Cr Scarlett advised that he was only recently advised by Mr McCook that \$33,000 of the \$85,000 was to go into the national programme. Cr Scarlett advised that following a stern conversation with Mr McCook the West Coast would now receive the entire \$85,000 of funding.

Cr Birchfield stated that he feels the reservoir for Tb is in DoC land and this where the possums are coming from. 87% of the land area is DoC's and they should be funding more of the Tb programme. He is against hitting ratepayers for any more money.

Cr Chinn asked if Development West Coast might be interested in funding the shortfall. Cr Scarlett responded that Development West Coast would say that this is the AHB's and Council's area and that it is AHB's and Council's responsibility. Cr Scarlett advised that if there was a business involved or a new business starting up that would be different.

Moved (Davidson / Ewen)

1. *That Council agrees to fund an additional \$85,000 toward the AHB regional share for the 09/10 year, noting that we will also carry a \$30,000 deficit from last year's overspend, on the understanding that all of this be spent in-region.*
2. *That Council agrees to carry this additional expenditure in deficit for the 09/10 year, with the intention of increasing the TB special rate next year to recover the shortfall.*

*Against
Cr Chinn
Cr Birchfield
Carried*

6.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT

C. Ingle spoke to his report advising that he attended the Regional Chief Executive's meeting in Wellington on 20th of August. He also met with EECA staff on the same day to discuss an energy strategy for the West Coast and is currently talking with Development West Coast to see if they are prepared to move forward with this project under their banner.

C. Ingle reported that he and Cr Scarlett attended the Regional Affairs Committee meeting in Wellington on 20th and 21st of August. C. Ingle reported that the Mayors and Chairs Forum was held yesterday.

C. Ingle spoke of the Climate Change Position Statement, which was tabled at the recent Regional Affairs Committee meeting. The Local Government New Zealand National Council Climate Change Sub Committee has approved this. Cr Scarlett stated that they want all regional councils to put their signatures to the statement. Cr Birchfield stated he would be voting against this.

Moved (Davidson / Robb) *that the Chief Executive's Report be received.*

Carried

7.0 CHAIRMANS REPORT (VERBAL)

The Chairman reported that he attended the Regional Affairs Committee meeting in Wellington on 20 August where it was decided to have a strategy day for two days in October. Cr Scarlett reported

that this is because regional councils are coming under pressure from various groups and some are suggesting regional councils be replaced with a national EPA (Environmental Protection Agency). It was felt that the general public don't know what regional councils do and how important the role of regional councils is in terms of the environment.

Cr Scarlett reported that a further presentation was made by the AHB at the Regional Affairs Committee meeting. He stated that this presentation was on the basis that some regional councils are reluctant to buy into a funding programme, as the AHB wants a commitment of five years. Cr Scarlett advised that the Chairman and CEO of the AHB were given a very clear message that regional councils are unhappy. Cr Scarlett now feels that with this clear message being given he is hopeful of moving on in a more positive and inclusive way with the AHB. Cr Scarlett reported the Hon Nick Smith spoke of the changes to the RMA. Cr Scarlett stated that the changes are not as wide ranging as he was hoping for but phase 2 is coming up and he is hopeful of further progress. Cr Scarlett stated that Hon Rodney Hide was also present at the RAC meeting and spoke about the expected changes with the Auckland Super City merge.

Cr Scarlett reported that yesterday's Mayors and Chairs Forum revealed that there are no games scheduled for the West Coast for the Rugby World Cup in 2011. A report has been requested from Tourism West Coast to see what they are planning in terms of trying to attract overseas visitors to the West Coast during the Rugby World Cup event.

Cr Scarlett stated that members of the Mayors and Chairs Forum are to write to Land Transport New Zealand regarding the amount of rubbish on the sides of the road and to ask what is being done about this matter.

Cr Scarlett advised that next year marks the 150 year commemoration of the purchase of the West Coast from Maori. Cr Scarlett advised that district councils are planning various celebrations for Buller, Greymouth and Westland.

Cr Robb asked Cr Scarlett if other regional councils are considering pulling out of regional share funding for the AHB Tb Free strategy. Cr Scarlett replied that Taranaki have their own programme which they believe is better than the AHB's. Southland is now funding at a lower level and have only committed to one year, Waikato fund the AHB but they also have their own large programme.

Cr Scarlett confirmed that regional councils fund 10% of the programme; other funders included the government, dairy industry and the deer industry.

Cr Archer spoke of the rubbish on roadsides becoming problematic again, he is unsure of what the strategy now is. He stated that in the past children have been used to get the message through to adults to ensure that they are not littering. Cr Archer feels that there nothing in place to discourage people from littering. Cr Scarlett agreed to speak with LTNZ to see if an awareness campaign can be implemented.

Cr Scarlett raised that matter of Climate Change Position Statement that the Regional Affairs Committee has asked Council to endorse. Cr Birchfield confirmed again that he is against this.

C. Ingle advised that he heard at the RAC meeting from the promoters the purpose is to make it clear that Local Government's role is not to do with climate change mitigation, that is the government's role, our role is to do with adaptation to climate change. For example if storm water pipes needed to be 10% bigger because rainfall is going to increase then that is local government's job. C. Ingle stated there is no new direction but more of a clarification of roles. Cr Archer stated he supports this as the document is worded in a way that leaves the discretion up to individual councils to implement. Cr Archer feels that climate change is an issue that we have to deal with and we need to show a leadership role. He feels this document is a stepping stone. Cr Scarlett stated that test of the document is how does it stack up in terms of this regional council and in terms of what we might do. Cr Chinn does not endorse the document, as it is not specific. Cr Birchfield stated that he does not support it as he feels that they don't know what the world is going to do. He feels that once support is shown for this document then you are buying into the carbon tax and emission trading issue, Cr Birchfield stated that this would break the country if it goes ahead. Cr Davidson is against it as he feels we would be supporting carbon tax and emission trading issues as well. Cr Robb stated he has serious reservations with some areas around climate change and he is not comfortable with the document. Cr Ewen stated he is super cautious about putting his okay to a document such as this. Cr Scarlett confirmed that this council would not be endorsing the Climate Change Position Statement. C. Ingle stated that it is a LGNZ initiative not a government initiative and was developed within our own group of regional councils.

Moved (Robb / Archer) *that this report be received.*

Carried

GENERAL BUSINESS

There was no general business.

The meeting closed at 12.12 p.m.

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Chairman

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Date