

THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
KONGAHU RATING DISTRICT
HELD AT THE LITTLE WANGANUI HOTEL
ON 16 OCTOBER 2009, COMMENCING AT 11.05 AM

RATEPAYERS PRESENT

B. Jones, R. Hedgman, B. Meek, L. Kees, G. Volckman, F& B. Bjerring (arrived 11.28)

NON-RATEPAYERS PRESENT

M. Watt, G. Johnstone

IN ATTENDANCE

West Coast Regional Council

T. Archer (Councillor)

C. Ingle, (CEO) (arrived 11.15am)

W. Moen (Staff)

T. Jellyman (Staff)

G. Smart (NIWA) (arrived 11.15am)

APOLOGIES

Cr Scarlett, C. Hellier, K. Gavigan

G. Volckman / B. Jones - Carried

BUSINESS

T. Archer opened the meeting and welcomed those present. He advised that Cr Scarlett is in Wellington today on Council business

He introduced himself and the Council staff. T. Archer advised the meeting that this is a public meeting; anyone can attend but not necessarily speak or comment. T. Archer asked for confirmation that all present are actual ratepayers to the Kongahu Rating District. G. Johnstone and M. Watt confirmed that they are residents of Granite Creek but not ratepayers into the Kongahu Rating District but they are affected by Granite Creek. M. Watt stated that Granite Creek itself is not covered by any particular rating district but he would like to see Granite Creek included in the Karamea Rating District. T. Archer advised that G. Johnstone and M. Watt can speak in either the public forum or general business, they cannot move or second motions.

PUBLIC FORUM

G. Johnstone stated that he is concerned with the way the mouth of Granite Creek is raising, it is causing flooding all the way up the creek including his farm. He feels this problem was started by willows growing across the creek and in the creek which has allowed the gravel to drop and has now built up and is blocking the mouth. He advised that willows have been taken out of the front of creek. W. Moen displayed a map of the area which shows the drainage channels, Blackwater Creek and the Contour Channel which drains into Granite Creek. W. Moen advised that Blackwater Creek drains directly out into the Otumahana Lagoon and a resource consent allows digging into the estuary to drain the Blackwater. Contour Channel drains into Granite Creek. He stated in hindsight it has been realised that the original scheme consents should have included the ability to clean out the outlets. There is now a consent in place for Blackwater Creek and digging a channel out into the estuary, but there is not a consent in place to clear the mouth of Granite Creek.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Moved: *"That the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on 17 October 2008, be adopted as a true and correct record of that meeting."*

G. Volckman / W. Moen - Carried

MATTERS ARISING

T. Archer advised that grazing of stock on stopbanks and fencing will be discussed during general business. G. Volckman stated he would like the levels taken by M. Watt in Granite Creek, drainage plans that were sent out, C. Ingle's report on Torpedo Gel and consent matters to be discussed in general business so that non members of the rating district can be included in these discussions.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2008 / 2009

W. Moen presented the financial statements for the financial period ending 30 June 2009. He reported that on the 1st of July 2008 there was an opening balance of \$51,282.54 and the closing balance on the 30th of June 2009 was a closing balance of approximately \$49,481.01.

Moved: *"That the financial report for the 2008 / 2009 year be adopted".*

G. Volckman / L. Kees - Carried

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

WORKS REPORT

W. Moen presented the detailed works report, which covered the 12-month period; 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 and projected works July 2009 – June 2010. W. Moen reported that after discussion with the Chairperson no additional works have been identified. He advised that letters were sent to all ratepayers seeking drain clearing requirements. W. Moen recommended that \$8,500 be allowed for maintenance of existing works which includes spraying.

G. Volckman advised that the spraying went well.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That the Works Report covering the 2008 / 2009 financial year be adopted.*
- 2. That the 2009 / 2010 works proposals be approved.*

G. Volckman / B. Meek – Carried

2010 / 2011 RATE STRIKE

W. Moen advised that with the rate of \$7,600 previously struck and balance in the rating district account at the beginning of the 2009 / 2010 financial year would be approximately \$51,000.

W. Moen recommends that the status quo remains therefore the rate strike would be \$7,600 for 2010 / 2011 period. B. Jones stated that unless anything drastic or unplanned occurs then this figure is acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

"That the rate strike for the 2010 / 2011 financial Year is \$7,600.00 (GST Excl)."

B. Jones / R. Hedgman – Carried

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE AND SPOKESPERSON

T. Archer noted that all ratepayers in the rating district are members of the rating district committee. G. Volckman feels that should there need to be a meeting to discuss what needs to be done in the rating district then all ratepayers need to be present. He stated that everyone should be included in any decision making.

L. Kees stated that there are names on the list of members of the rating district that may not necessarily be a part of the Kongahu scheme. W. Moen offered to have the list checked and revised. G. Volckman asked if everyone that pays rates in the Kongahu area actually pays to maintain the drainage system. W. Moen advised that WCRC does not have any control over whose name appears on the list, the information is supplied by Quotable Value NZ and the Buller District Council.

Moved: ***"That G. Volckman be re-elected as the spokesperson and that the committee comprise of all ratepayers for the 2009 / 2010 financial year."***

B. Meek / R. Hedgman - Carried

GENERAL BUSINESS

T. Archer invited the meeting to discuss the following items of general business.

Stock grazing on stopbanks:

L. Kees stated that he originally understood that the stopbanks were put in place to protect the overflow of water from going out over land. He advised that over time some of the stopbanks have been levelled out, some have been grazed off. L. Kees stated he has no problem with grazing on stopbanks as long as drains aren't interfered with.

T. Archer advised that the matters raised last year regarding stopbanks were the keeping of stock off the stopbanks, overstocking of stopbanks, whether or not stock on stopbanks are being kept out of waterways, the effect of erosion on stopbanks and fencing of drains

B. Bjerring advised that they had fenced areas off the stopbanks and removed their stock from this area but then neighbours cattle from other areas were coming onto the Bjerring's property. B. Bjerring stated that she wonders what the ruling is on this matter as she had received phone calls from Gavigan's advising that their cattle was on neighbours property but it turned out that these cattle did not belong to the Bjerring's. It was noted that the Gavigan section is not fenced. T. Archer asked if this issue still causing a problem. B. Bjerring stated she does not mind grazing on stopbanks to keep the grass down but feels that hard grazing should not be allowed. B. Bjerring advised that they do not allow their own cattle into these areas. G. Volckman asked if a letter should be written to ratepayers outlining the purpose of the stopbank. B. Bjerring stated she feels it should be monitored to ensure it is not overstocked. B. Jones stated that years ago a document was sent to all farmers in the scheme outlining best practice guidelines. He stated that this document would date back to the 80's. B. Jones stated a code of practice should be drawn up if the old version cannot be tracked down. T. Archer suggested that this be progressed to ensure the correct procedures are followed to protect the stopbanks. R. Hedgman stated that at one stage stock were actually being stood off on the stopbanks, this was causing problems but she feels that this is no longer happening. R. Hedgman stated that in the event of a flood the stopbanks are a safe area for stock and landowners should not be penalised in these circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION

"That the rating district revises the guidelines for the grazing of stock on stopbanks."

B. Jones / B. Bjerring – Carried

Survey Levels in Granite Creek

W. Moen advised that the survey levels have been completed. The survey has revealed that there is a large blockage in the outlet of Granite Creek. W. Moen advised he has met with DoC on site to discuss the option of putting a channel out into the Otumahana Lagoon to drain and clean out Granite Creek up as far as where the Contour Channel meets it. DoC were happy with this but they wanted to check with their ecology people in Hokitika. DoC staff in Hokitika has indicated that a full ecological report would need to be done in order to substantiate a resource consent application. W. Moen has not yet pursued the resource consent, as there may be considerable costs involved that the rating district will need to be aware of. W. Moen advised that Buller District Council has indicated to him that they may consider financial assistance due to their concerns with the road flooding in this area. C. Ingle confirmed that there is a resource consent in place for Blackwater Creek which DoC agreed to, he asked why is DoC not in agreement for a consent for Granite Creek. (Note that, after the meeting staff followed up with DoC, who now indicate they would approve a consent application). T. Archer suggested applying for an extension to the original consent. W. Moen advised that the Blackwater Creek consent expires in 2014.

B. Jones stated cockle beds and whitebait reserves have been ruined in this area. G. Johnstone stating that the blocking at the bridge is affecting everyone up the creek from that point. He advised that the mouth of the Otumahana has moved north. R. Hedgman spoke of the recent flood in Granite Creek, she stated this is the first time in 42 years that it has flooded like this, it is due to the high level of silt in the creek. R. Hedgman stated that the bed under the bridge is very high as she used to be able to walk under the bridge. W. Moen advised that the three affected parties are the Kongahu Rating District, Buller District Council and Transit. He advised that a resource consent would be required to do work in this area. B. Jones queried whether it should be administered by the Karamea Rating District. T. Archer suggested that this proposal would need to be put to all members of both rating districts and then for the regional council to support this. W. Moen asked if the cleaning out of Granite Creek up to the Contour Channel was primarily the Kongahu Rating District's concern. B. Jones agreed with this. G. Volckman asked how much fall is there in Granite Creek, W. Moen advised that there is fall in Granite Creek. L. Kees stated that this is going to be an ongoing problem, as soon as there is another flood there will be build up again. G. Volckman stated this is capital works and he feels the Karamea scheme will not help to fund this. He feels that DoC should be assisting and they need to assist as the build up in Granite Creek will end up in the lagoon and this will certainly affect the ecology in the Otumahana Lagoon. G. Volckman stated that common sense is required with this problem. C. Ingle offered to meet with Mike Slater from DoC to discuss how the consent could be worked, as this is the biggest barrier. C. Ingle advised that DoC have people who could do the ecological assessment for free and this could be their contribution.

C. Ingle asked if there was a use for the gravel once it comes out of the creek. It was agreed that farmers in the area would use this gravel. C. Ingle feels that DoC would not assist with the actual clearing. G. Volckman feels getting the consent would be a good start. T. Archer advised that C. Ingle's suggestion is a positive first step to starting this process. G. Volckman stated that this matter needs to be progressed urgently and not left until next year's meeting. He suggested C. Ingle could provide feedback to the rating district on how this is progressing.

RECOMMENDATION

"That the Chief Executive of WCRC consults with DoC staff as soon as possible to progress the clean out of Granite Creek by having an ecological assessment carried out."

G. Volckman / B. Bjerring – Carried

G. Volckman stated that if C. Ingle's talks with DoC are positive then a resource consent should be applied for so that this is progressed.

RECOMMENDATION

"That if the positive feedback from the Chief Executive's talks with DoC then the rating district proceeds forthwith to apply for a Resource Consent to clean out Granite Creek."

G. Volckman / B. Bjerring – Carried

W. Moen asked the meeting how far up the creek they would like cleaned out. B. Jones confirmed as far as the Contour Channel.

M. Watt advised that he carried out the original survey, he stated he would like to do another survey at an appropriate time. The survey was done on the 30th of March and on the 27th of April there was a huge flood. M. Watt stated he would have liked to have done a further survey following this event to ascertain the effect on the estuary. M. Watt tabled the survey, he stated there is nothing to compare the results of the survey on. M. Watt advised that the bed level at the Granite Creek Bridge is 2.62 metres. There is a profile going downstream and one going upstream. The creek bed level at Blackwater Contour drain is 3.6 metres so there is exactly one metre fall. The level down to the contours of Blackwater Creek are 1.41 metres. M. Watt stated that he feels another survey should be done. W. Moen advised that there is two metres of fall from the outlet of the Contour Drain to the estuary area which it meets Blackwater Creek. It was agreed that a further survey would be done.

RECOMMENDATION

"That a further survey of Granite Creek would be carried out"

L. Kees / B. Meek – Carried

Drainage Map Plans

W. Moen reported that maps were sent out to each ratepayer asking them to indicate what work or cleaning of drains on their property is required and instructing each landowner to pass them on to G. Volckman. L. Kees stated that this worked very well. G. Volckman advised that the main feedback was that the creek is the main problem. Gavigan's wanted the creek cleaned out along their boundary. F. Bjerring had indicated an area which he didn't want sprayed, it was sprayed and as a result he lost quite a lot of grass. M. Watt expressed his concern with the flooding of Granite Creek, he feels that water is now running backwards in this area. G. Volckman read out a letter from the Gavigan's regarding what they want cleaned out in their area. The Gavigan's do not want digger work done on their western boundary, they also do not want spraying done.

B. Jones feels that by not doing this work it may affect other property owners. T. Archer clarified that if the drain isn't mechanically cleaned out it could compromise the whole scheme. It was agreed that the Gavigan's wish not to have the drain on their property sprayed can be accommodated but mechanically clearing the drain is necessary. G. Volckman will address this matter directly with the Gavigan's. L. Kees has a section of drain (drain 10) that he would like to be cleared out. G. Volckman feels that this area is draining well enough. L. Kees stated the area has slumped a little. G. Volckman feels it doesn't need doing at the moment but it would take 2 – 3 days on a digger to do this work. It was agreed that B. Jones and G. Volckman would inspect this area together and if it needs to be cleared out then it will be.

B. Jones feels that the kowhai's near R. Hedgman's property need to be cleared a little bit. G. Volckman stated this area used to be cleared out annually and hasn't been for a while. B. Jones will tidy this area with a digger after the whitebaiting season.

Torpedo Gel

C. Ingle advised that he was asked to look into the possibility of using Torpedo Gel in the drains. He advised that Torpedo Gel is an aquatic herbicide but it is only effective in clear water as it loses its effectiveness when exposed to sediment. C. Ingle suggested the rating district try Torpedo Gel in a couple of places. He advised that a resource consent isn't required as it can be used under the permitted activity rule, provided the operator has GROWSAFE qualifications.

Aerial Spraying

G. Volckman stated that the aerial spraying went well this year. He stated that March is a good time of year to do this. G. Volckman requested that W. Moen arrange this again for March.

Granite Creek Clean out

G. Volckman stated that he agrees with L. Kees regarding the clean out of Granite Creek. He stated he is prepared to give it one shot at cleaning out the creek but he believes that in 2-3 weeks it will have filled up again. B. Jones stated that there needs to be some kind of structure placed in Granite Creek to stop the shingle coming down. L. Kees is feels that the rating district might not have the right to do this.

G. Smart addressed the meeting, he asked if the gravel is moving everyday or only in a flood. G. Volckman stated that it is like sugar and moving all the time. B. Meek stated it is a maintenance issue and is a quick job if it is cleared regularly.

C. Ingle advised that the costs of a clean out every six months need to be considered by the rating district. Discussion ensued on what to do with the gravel when the creek is cleaned out. W. Moen advised that for the Blackwater Creek a narrow two metre wide channel is made, the gravel is scooped into small piles and the next couple of tides flatten it. W. Moen advised that if the gravel were carted away it would prove very costly therefore he recommends that it is thrown up onto both sides of the creek.

C. Ingle advised that he will work on the consent process with DoC and W. Moen will work on the pricing of what it will cost to clear out the creek. C. Ingle stated this will give the rating district a good idea of what it will cost each year to maintain. W. Moen is to give M. Watt a design channel so that he can work out the quantities involved.

T. Archer thanked the meeting for their attendance.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.40 p.m.

Action Points for follow up

Contact	Task	Completed
W. Moen	Give M. Watt a design channel for Granite Creek so that he can calculate quantities.	
T. Jellyman	Check names of those included in Kongahu Scheme	
W. Moen	Check if best practice guideline document for management of grazing on stopbanks and drain banks is on file.	
C. Ingle	Liaise with DoC in Hokitika to progress resource consent process and to seek an ecological report on the effect of Granite Creek on the Otumahana Lagoon.	
W. Moen	Liaise with Anderson Helicopters for aerial spraying for March again next year.	