

THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
KONGAHU RATING DISTRICT
HELD AT THE LITTLE WANGANUI HOTEL
ON 16 APRIL 2012, COMMENCING AT 1 .10 PM

PRESENT

J. Hyndman, B. Jones, L. Kees, K. Kees, F. Bjerring, R. Anderson, G. Volckman, B. Meek, R. Hedgman, F. Volckman

IN ATTENDANCE

West Coast Regional Council
T. Archer (Councillor)
C. Ingle, (CEO), W. Moen (Staff)

APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

BUSINESS

Cr Archer opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

He introduced himself and the Council staff. T. Archer advised the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the issue of Little Wanganui River floodwaters entering the Kongahu drainage scheme.

Cr Archer read out the action points following the annual meeting held in October, which are the following:

- W. Moen to provide level information to the committee on the proposed raising of the road at Little Wanganui.

- W. Moen to check consent conditions on the Otumahana Estuary consent and report back to B. Jones.

- C. Ingle to engage Mr G. Smart to assess options for preventing the Little Wanganui floodwaters spilling into the scheme.

Cr Archer advised that the action points have been completed. He reported that the levels have been done on the road at Little Wanganui along with the motion that \$5,000 be spent on engaging a consultant to investigate options for keeping the Little Wanganui River floodwaters out of the scheme. Cr Archer stated that the intention is to reduce the floodwaters in this area and not to stop it completely.

It was agreed that the minutes of the annual meeting would be adopted at this year's annual meeting in October, and not at today's meeting.

MATTERS ARISING

Cr Archer invited the meeting to discuss matters that are relevant to today's meeting. G. Volckman stated that the main thing to discuss is the resource consent matter that W. Moen was investigating on behalf of B. Jones for the cleanout of the Otumahana Estuary backwater. B. Jones stated that the current resource consent is only for 1 km and to gain any extra drainage the clearance would need to go as far up as to where the Granite Creek channel is meeting up with

the Blackwater channel. B. Jones would like the rating district to get a variation to the consent conditions to allow this to go ahead as this would then make a big difference in the lower reaches of the scheme. He felt that doing this may achieve 30 cm extra fall. W. Moen advised that the consent in place covers the 1 km downstream from the road bridge, this expires in December 2016 but with the area required is now about 1.6 kms and this is why a variation to the consent conditions is being considered. C. Ingle suggested that the time period of the consent could also be extended when the variation is applied for to take it up to 35 years. B. Jones feels that the clearance would not need to be done any more often than it has been done in the past, as the main problem area is where the two creeks meet.

Moved: *“That the rating district requests that the West Coast Regional Council request a variation to the existing consent extending it to the confluence of Blackwater Creek and Granite Creek and to extend the duration of the consent.”*

B. Jones / R. Anderson – Carried

R. Anderson spoke about survey works M. Watt carried out on the Wangapeka Road; He feels that this did not achieve what was intended to be doing which was a comparison between the back road and Blue Duck Road. B. Jones is unsure of whether or not there is a difference in height between these two roads. B. Jones stated there seems to be a difference in the water levels on both sides and he is unsure if one road is slightly higher than the other or if there is something else causing this. It was noted that M. Watt is prepared to redo some of these levels free of charge. It was agreed that W. Moen would follow up on this and obtain the further survey information.

Graeme Smart Report on Little Wanganui River – Kongahu Flooding

Cr Archer encouraged the meeting when making a decision on this matter that consideration needs to be given to effects on the Kongahu rating district as a whole. G. Volckman stated that he considers any works that are recommended in this report be capital works and not maintenance works and should be funded by those who are proposing the works. Cr Archer stated that his personal view is that it doesn't make any difference whether or not it is capital or maintenance works as the community (in terms of the rating district) will decide what should be done. Cr Archer advised the meeting that constitutions have no longer have any substance but the asset management plan does. C. Ingle advised that the current asset management plan, which is on the council website, does not mention anything to do with capital versus maintenance for the Kongahu scheme but it does in the Karamea scheme. G. Volckman is concerned that he would have to pay for the road raising and pay to challenge the process if he doesn't agree with it and this is unfair. C. Ingle advised that the Local Government Act tells councils that they have to protect and maintain their assets, which are council assets even though they are paid for by ratepayers, council has to manage these properly. C. Ingle advised that in the past some councils have been guilty of not managing assets well, and this is why the 2002 Local Government Act was brought in. He advised that asset management plans have now superseded the former constitutions. G. Volckman stated that at the moment the rating district is looking at improving the assets and he feels that this is not the same as simply maintaining them.

R. Anderson stated that today's meeting is about coming up with a solution to a problem and until a solution is agreed upon, then nobody can say what the affects on others are going to be. R. Hedgman stated that in the past there has been no damage to anyone's property with floods through the swamp but thousands of dollars have been spent on re-roading and re-sowing of the reaches of the Kongahu swamp because of flooding but this is at the farmers cost and not the rating districts; that is, the maintenance costs relating to the flood effects are falling to individuals, not the council.

Cr Archer opened up meeting for discussion and suggestions relating to Graeme Smart's report. G. Volckman stated he feels that Mr Smart has not done his homework as Mr Smart did not contact him and he would have thought that Mr Smart would have consulted farmers when he was in the area. G. Volckman read from the report and he disputes Fig 6 on page 5 of the Smart report. W. Moen stated that G. Smart says in his report that he spoke with Messrs Volckman, Anderson, Jones and K. Kees. G. Volckman responded that Mr Smart phoned him to say that he would send him the report and that G. Volckman was to ring him if he had any concerns. G. Volckman advised that he did not get the report from Mr Smart. R. Anderson agrees that the report is inadequate as he asked Mr Smart how much water was around the area of Mrs Kees's driveway and Mr Smart was unable to put a figure on this. L. Kees stated that he has heard that Buller District Council are considering lifting the Blue Duck Road, L. Kees stated that if this were to be done it would push more water over this side and this would cause more problems. G. Volckman stated that he is not aware of this. J. Hyndman asked that we make a decision on this. R. Anderson feels that the best solution would be to put up a wall up on the highest spot of the swamp and this will keep the water out of the swamp. R. Anderson feels that building up the road is the wrong thing to do. K. Kees stated that the highest point would be near his cattle yards. B. Jones stated there still needs to be overflow in this area and he is not in favour of the flood waters ever being completely blocked off. G. Volckman is concerned that if a wall is put across, then the water will be dammed and there will then be a similar issue as what B. Jones has now, on his property. B. Meek stated that if a wall is put in, it would need to be piped so that the water can be released in a controlled manner.

Cr Archer asked the meeting if they wanted to go add the suggestion from R. Anderson's to raise the apex of the swamp as a possible option. Cr Archer advised the meeting that a resource consent would be applied for, but this a resource consent is only approval in principle and at the end of the day, the landowner has the final and the ultimate say, and there is nothing that anyone can do to enforce a resource consent on someone else's land. C. Ingle advised that at the moment there is no map showing where this stopbank would be and it would be helpful to know exactly where the work would be done but it fits in with option 5 (e) from Mr Smart's report. Extensive discussion took place on the best location to raise the swamp. Option (e) is *"to construct a low stopbank across the upper end of the Kongahu drainage area to create two catchments, one draining to the north and one draining to the south. The southern part could act as a detention area for Little Wanganui floods. The detention pond could potentially drain into the Little Wanganui River via culverts under the main highway near the Little Wanganui Township"*. Cr Archer asked the meeting if everyone understands what option (e) means. Discussion took place on water levels during floods and the functions of the floodgates in this area.

G. Volckman stated that if the road is raised as per (c) of the Smart report then Colin and Michelle's house would be flooded, and his cowshed.

L. Kees spoke of his initial proposal of raising his first hump and putting in a culvert, which is showed on the map, he explained how this would work, but he pulled out of this due to the costs involved. L. Kees stated that he was going to pay for this work but then he found it to onerous as he had to apply for resource consent and he was advised that he would need to employ engineers as well. L. Kees still feels that he still feels this is a good idea and is one of the best locations to regulate the floodwaters. Cr Archer asked the meeting if the general consensus is that item (e) on page 11 of Mr Smart's report is the way forward at the location L. Kees has identified. R. Anderson stated that it is the position of the works that is important. G. Volckman stated that this is the best way forward that he has heard today. C. Ingle advised that if L. Kees is happy for this work to be done on his land, and the work is going to benefit everyone then the rating district could take on the consenting and payment of this work. C. Ingle advised that now that the rating district has Mr Smart's report then the work may not be as expensive because the report clearly sets out the work required and also because the rating district is in agreement that the work goes ahead then this is a good thing. Discussion took place on how the works would affect Mrs Kees's property. B. Jones stated that M. Watt advised that Mrs Kees house is only 300 mm higher than the road and this house used to flood prior to it being raised a few years ago. G. Volckman advised that the scrub in this area holds a lot of water and prevents water going through in this area.

Cr Archer asked the meeting to discuss and tick off the remedial measures, 5 (a – e), on page 11 of Mr Smart's report.

5 (a): *Removal of logs jammed under the Little Wanganui Bridge. Remove willow debris from Little Wanganui River channel.* W. Moen advised that this has been done and it was the responsibility of the Buller District Council. L. Kees stated willows are still a problem in some areas.

5 (b): *Excavate the bed of the Little Wanganui River bed in the vicinity of Captains and Blue Duck Creek confluences to remove gravel deposits that have built up.* B. Jones stated he does not see this as the responsibility of this committee. It is well outside the boundary of the scheme. It was agreed that this matter would be bypassed.

5 (c): *Raise the Wangapeka Road, over a distance of about 260 m on the north side of the Little Wanganui River bridge to return floods up to a specified level back to the Little Wanganui River above the bridge.* It was agreed that the meeting has now moved away from this idea.

5 (d): *Clear willows where they constrict the river. Replace the existing tall, spreading tree willow species with shrub willow varieties that are more suited to riverbank protection.* C. Ingle advised that this is standard river engineering practice and the first step would be to come back to the next meeting with a costing and then the rating district can decide if they want to go ahead.

It was agreed that the matter of clearing of willows where they constrict the river would be raised at the Karamea rating district annual meeting. It was noted that everyone present is also a ratepayer in the Karamea rating district. G. Volckman stated that it would be good if there were a representative from Little Wanganui on the Karamea rating district committee. It was agreed that this is a very good idea and this matter is referred back to the Karamea rating district. G. Volckman asked if it would be prudent if members of the Karamea rating district committee inspected this area prior to the annual meeting. C. Ingle advised that the clearing of willows could be included in W. Moen's works report at the annual meeting of the Karamea rating district. C. Ingle advised that it is important that members of this rating district attend the Karamea meeting so that matters can be progressed well and people can vote on what they would like done in the area.

Cr Archer asked the meeting if it was agreed that item 5 (e) of the remedial measures should be actioned. It was noted that the area being discussed is at the top end of the rating district on L. Kees's land. Cr Archer asked for a show of hands, all present were in favour of proceeding with option 5 (e), except for G. Volckman who abstained. Cr Archer drew the meeting's attention to C. Ingle's report on "A Proposed Way Forward for the Little Wanganui issue", and the possible motions that will help to progress work. It was agreed that the third motion from C. Ingle's report is the nearest option that would work the best. B. Jones suggested that the wording is slightly changed by taking the word "immediately" out of the motion.

Moved: *"That the Kongahu Rating District requests that the West Coast Regional Council Operations Unit to further investigate the design of a new low floodbank west of the Wangapeka Road."*

*B. Jones / B. Meek – Carried
G. Volckman abstained*

W. Moen spoke of problems at the lower end of the scheme. He advised that B. Jones has come up with a possible scenario of diverting the water from the Contour Drain, with a new channel carrying contour drain waters into Blackwater Creek through B. Jones's property at the lower end. W. Moen stated that Granite Creek is backing up into the Contour Channel and flooding people out because of the height of the Granite Creek bed. G. Volckman stated if the culvert isn't capable of diverting the water now, there will still be a problem. B. Jones stated there are two options of

dealing with this; one is to restrict the flow from the Contour Channel over and through his property by using pipes, but to do this a floodgate would be necessary on the outlet to Granite Creek. B. Jones stated that any floods that come down the side streams from the Blackwater source are very short lived floods so he feels that it may be easily coped with. B. Jones stated that the digging bill won't be that expensive because half of what is required is already in place. B. Jones feels that if Granite Creek is blocked off at the Contour Channel, then this will save the road from being washed out. C. Ingle reminded that meeting that it was agreed at the annual meeting that work on the bottom end of the scheme would not go ahead until a decision has been made on what to do at the top end. He advised that once the water is regulated better at the top end the bottom end will be easier to fix and this is way progress has been delayed.

Moved: *"That the West Coast Regional Council comes up with a plan and costings for the Contour Channel proposal and present this to the Annual Meeting in October 2012."*

B. Jones / B. Meek – Carried

Cr Archer passed a letter around from Kathleen Gavigan and Clive Hellyer in general support for the future management of the rating district.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Cr Archer asked the meeting for other items of general business. R. Anderson stated that he would like the information from W. Moen on levels sent to the farmers in the community.

G. Volckman stated that the contour drain on the west side, just down from the super bin seems to be restricted and he wonders if this is affecting anyone downstream. C. Ingle advised that W. Moen would inspect this area when he does his annual inspection and report back to the rating district at the annual meeting.

W. Moen asked the meeting if they want a resource consent drawn up for option 5 (e)? W. Moen stated that height of the bank for option 5 (e) is critical. W. Moen asked the meeting if they want the bank to be able to be overtopped or do they want the water to go out into the DoC reserve area. Discussion took place on how high the bank should be. B. Jones stated that one of the considerations should be that when water builds up, the risk to Mrs Kees's house is minimised as much as it possibly can be.

T. Archer thanked the meeting for their attendance and stated that a positive outcome has been achieved.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 2.40pm

Action Points for follow up

- W. Moen to send level information out to farmers.
- W. Moen to inspect west side of contour drain near the super bin and report back to annual meeting.
- W. Moen to prepare design proposal levels and costings for the proposed new floodwall at L. Kees's first hump.
- W. Moen to come up with a plan and costings for the contour channel proposal for the October meeting.
- W. Moen to seek an extension and variation to the Blackwater estuary outlet consent.