

THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 9 MARCH 2010,
AT THE OFFICES OF THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL, 388 MAIN SOUTH ROAD,
GREYMOOUTH, COMMENCING AT 11.19 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), R. Mallinson (Corporate Services Manager), C. Dall (Consents and Compliance Manager), S. Moran (Planning and Environmental Manager), T. Jellyman (Minutes Clerk),
The Media

1. APOLOGIES:

There were no apologies.

2. PUBLIC FORUM

There was no presentation.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Moved (Archer / Robb) *that the minutes of the Council Meeting dated 9 February 2010, 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 reported that most of the works mentioned in his report are emergency works as a result of weather events that occurred over the Christmas and New Year period. He advised that a substantial amount of work has been carried out in the Whataroa Quarry as contractors were working the quarry for the works undertaken in the Lower Waiho rating district. S. Moran advised that contractors have done a good job of stripping out the quarry and preparing it for future work.

S. Moran reported that work is underway with the upgrade of the Greymouth Floodwall. He advised that panels are now in place at the south end of Fisherman's Wharf and towards the south end of the lagoon. S. Moran advised that he is pleased with the design of the panels both from the inside looking from the road and also looking across from the town side of the lagoon. He stated that the contract is progressing well and regular meetings are being held with the contractors involved.

Cr Davidson asked where is rock being sourced from now that there is no more rock in the Wanganui Quarry. S. Moran responded that there are several sources of floaters around the area some are available now and some may become available over the coming year. He stated that the rating district committee is comfortable with this, there is rock in the Whataroa Quarry also if required. S. Moran advised that a wider meeting would be held regarding the Wanganui Quarry in the near future. Cr Ewen stated that he recently visited the glaciers and stopped off at the south side to look at the river. He expressed his surprise at how low the highway is and the river is on a plateau. S. Moran stated that this is the Canavans Knob area, he advised that there is a considerable amount of work being done by NZTA to extend the middle bank down to Canavans Knob itself which will then retain Canavans Creek rather than the Waiho itself. S. Moran advised there would be a small bund

on the road side which will contain Wombat Creek. S. Moran advised that NZTA are building a gravel stopbank that will be built to the one in one hundred year design, this will be a compacted gravel bank with rock spurs going out and all the way down to Canavans Knob. S. Moran advised that the work carried out by NZTA would trigger a change with the rating districts in this area with it becoming unlikely that there will need to be a rating district in place for Canavans Knob. He stated that the review of the classifications to the Lower Waiho scheme is intermingled with this.

Moved (Davidson / Robb) *that the report be received.*

Carried

5.1 CORPORATE SERVICE MANAGER'S REPORT

R. Mallinson spoke to his report advising that this is the seven month financial report to 31 January. He advised that our investment returns have eased back during January as expected. He advised that expenditure in rating districts has increased due to extra requirements for works over the Christmas / New Year period and because of these works Council quarries are performing well and have generated a surplus for the seven months of the financial year.

R. Mallinson advised that Council needs to set a date for the Budget and Annual Plan Workshop. It was agreed that this workshop would be held on Tuesday 30th of March at 2pm.

Cr Davidson stated that the Government's proposed 2.5% increase in GST could put a burden on ratepayers. He feels that Council has been working hard to keep rates down and government needs to come to the aid of the West Coast as we have such a small rating base. Cr Scarlett advised that the government have said that there will be an offsetting affect for those on low incomes and therefore we should take a wait and see approach.

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

Carried

5.1.2 ANIMAL HEALTH BOARD QUARTERLY REPORT

R. Mallinson spoke to this report stating that this is a new report as it was felt that there is a need for AHB to report to Council as a substantial amount of money is gathered from the special rate and from the general ratepayer. Cr Scarlett stated that it is good to see this report, it is a step in the right direction as the Animal Health Board had not previously reported to Council.

C. Ingle asked Councillors if they felt that the level of information contained in the report is pitched at the correct level. He stated that he feels the most important graph in the report is the one that tracks the number of infected herds because so long as the number of infected herds is declining then money has been well spent. Cr Scarlett stated that he is happy with the information contained in the report. R. Mallinson asked Councillors if they wish to receive this report quarterly or half yearly. Cr Robb confirmed that half yearly is suitable because if they are issues that come to the forefront at RHAC meetings then he can report back to Council direct.

Cr Archer asked if it is necessary to apply aerial 1080 to areas that do not have infected herds. Cr Robb responded that these areas are treated as buffer zones in order to keep Tb out especially if there are large numbers of possums in the area. Cr Robb advised that Southland is close to becoming Tb free but possum control work is still being done to maintain the current status. Cr Robb advised that there are areas on the West Coast such as Ross and Harihari which do not have many Tb infected herds but they have had in the past which is why these areas are still included in the programme. Cr Scarlett gave an historic example from the Buller area where in the early 90's possum control was stopped for a period of time and then five years later there was a huge increase in Tb infected herds. He stated that this was a very valuable lesson.

Cr Davidson asked if it is correct that stock movement on the West Coast is not well controlled. Cr Robb responded that this is not correct but there have been cases where false declarations have been made which have then led to prosecutions. Cr Scarlett advised that drivers carting stock could be prosecuted if the correct paperwork has not been completed. He stated that there was a case where the driver was fined approximately \$55,000. Cr Robb advised that an infected herd must have a permit to be moved and be cleared by a Veterinarian. If the stock is from a movement control area then the animals need to be Tb tested within 60 days. Cr Robb stated that the farming community monitor stock movement carefully as there is a perception that the cause of spread of Tb is related to stock movement. Cr Robb stated that the biggest risk for the spread of Tb is in the wild animal population.

6.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT

C. Ingle spoke to his report. He advised that he attended a number of meetings during the reporting period including the Freshwater Management Forum in Wellington on the 15th of February. C. Ingle reported that speakers from the Green and Labour Party's both saw the National Policy Statements as taking a much more central role in the future. He advised that they see the EPA as not taking over from regional councils but supporting them in the way of giving national guidance in the form of national policy statements. C. Ingle advised that the risk is that we get pigeon holed into the same category as other regions that haven't performed as well over the years. He stated that Ecan is an example of this at the moment. He is concerned that we could get these national standards imposed on our rivers which are not required.

C. Ingle advised that our staff are keeping a careful eye on this and will continue to do so at a national level. C. Ingle advised that he attended the Environmental Chief Executive's Forum. He reported that there was an interesting presentation from Treasury on the funding gap that government has, he stated there is a funding shortfall nationally which is due to the recession.

C. Ingle reported that no substantial progress has been made with the wetlands issue since the last meeting.

C. Ingle reported that he attended the meeting with the Transport Minister when he visited the West Coast.

C. Ingle reported that WCRC and Westland Milk Products have committed to complete the project on voluntary farm plans in the Lake Brunner catchment. He stated this project would tie in with the other changes to the regional plan in the Lake Brunner Catchment. C. Ingle advised Jan Derks would be doing this work. He will provide us with a short report summarising how this project has worked for farmers and where to from here for the future. C. Ingle stated that the farm plans might still have a useful role in helping farmers to achieve the new rules. C. Ingle advised that Landcare Trust is not able to carry on with this project as they do not have any funding. C. Ingle advised that he feels they will be unlikely to secure funding in view of the funding shortfalls at this time. Cr Archer asked what will be the strategic plan to deal with those farm plans that are still not complying with the regional plan rules. C. Ingle advised that they are not yet at this stage but the normal enforcement process for regional plan rules will continue. He added that assistance would be given to those that are not complying, in the first instance, and in view of the fact that there are only 22 farms in the catchment then this should not be a difficult task. Cr Scarlett stated that there might well be some peer pressure on these non-compliant farmers from those who are compliant.

Cr Chinn asked C. Ingle why was he unable to make headway with DoC with regard to the wetlands issue. C. Ingle stated that he would rather discuss this matter "in committee" as this matter is subject to a *sub judice* process. Cr Birchfield stated he is not happy about this matter being moved into committee as he feels we should be letting the people know what is going on. Cr Birchfield would like to know what areas of private land are involved. C. Ingle confirmed that maps presented by DoC in court last year are public information and offered to pass on a copy of this information to Cr Birchfield. C. Ingle advised that the discussions that he has had are about changes to the policy chapter. They are yet to work through the list of properties which will be affected as this would be the hardest stage. Cr Scarlett advised that he has requested a meeting with Hon Kate Wilkinson on this issue but he is yet to receive a response from the Minister. Cr Birchfield would like to see a map made public of these areas. He would like to know why Solid Energy are concerned about this and how much of their coal resource is at stake. C. Ingle confirmed that he is able to supply a copy of the maps to Cr Birchfield as the part of the evidence which is available to the public. Cr Chinn wishes for this matter to be kept in the public part of the meeting, as there is a lot of concern from ratepayers and he wants them to know that this Council is concerned and fighting this on their behalf. C. Ingle spoke of the importance of the information he provides to Council not prejudicing the discussions that are taking place among the parties involved. He advised that the evidence that has already been presented to the court last year, is public information. C. Ingle advised that it is hoped that a consent memorandum will be prepared on the policy changes for the court to sign off and once this is signed off then negotiations are complete and it becomes public information. C. Ingle stated that he doesn't feel that there is anything particularly controversial in the policy changes but the difficulty will be the next stage and managing the process for the land that has actually been identified. Cr Scarlett stated that the final version needs to come back to Council as a draft. C. Ingle advised there are parts of the plan (ecological criteria) that are yet to be resolved by the Ecologists

that may yet go back to court. He advised it is up to Council to go to Government about the parts that they are still not happy about. He is concerned that the court will make a decision that is not what the people of the West Coast want as the Court may have a different view of sustainable development which would be against the advise of the Council and their staff. Cr Scarlett stated that Council is most concerned about people's private property rights whereby their land is taken without any compensation. Cr Archer stated that the dilemma with participating in court initiated mediation is that the mediating parties are asked by the Mediator in the first instance "do you have the delegated authority to settle" and mediation can not be started unless all the parties have the ability to settle. Cr Archer stated this puts the process in an invidious position if our riding instructions to council management say that they cannot settle and the matter needs to come back to Council. Cr Scarlett stated that it is important the Council is kept informed. C. Ingle agreed he would continue to do this.

Cr Davidson asked if the Environmental Protection Agency has been formed yet? C. Ingle confirmed that it has been formed and it is simply a consenting authority at a national level that processes consents of national importance. C. Ingle explained the purpose of the EPA to the meeting. C. Ingle reported that Local Government New Zealand is now providing a co-ordinated submission on Biosecurity on behalf of all regional councils. C. Ingle advised that he is participating in this.

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

Carried

7.0 CHAIRMANS REPORT (VERBAL)

The Chairman reported he attended a meeting in Christchurch on the 1st of March regarding the effects of global warming on communities but that it was mainly about planting native marram grass. He hosted the Mayors and Chairs Forum on the 8th of March. He stated that presentations were made by Tai Poutini Polytechnic, Tourism West Coast and the CEO of the West Coast DHB and members of the PHO. Cr Scarlett advised the health sector representatives are not in favour of the petrol tax for health, nor were the members of the forum as it was felt that this is setting a dangerous precedent. It was noted that each citizen costs the government \$3000 for health. Cr Scarlett stated that it would be very interesting if they costed out what 31,000 people on the West Coast contribute to GDP in terms mining, dairying and tourism. Cr Scarlett advised that the Civil Defence Emergency Management meeting was incorporated into the Mayors and Chairs Forum. Cr Scarlett advised that Beech Sustainability was discussed at the Mayors and Chairs Forum and it was agreed that P. Pretorius from Grey District Council would work up a paper on this and it will be looked at again at the next forum in June with a view of going to government ministers to progress this. Cr Scarlett feels that this matter is a big ask because of the public perception of cutting down native trees.

Cr Scarlett reported that the three West Coast MP's would be invited to the next forum to discuss coast wide issues.

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

Carried

GENERAL BUSINESS

There was no general business.

The meeting closed at 12.02 p.m.

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Chairman

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Date