

THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 7 FEBRUARY 2012, AT THE OFFICES OF THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL, 388 MAIN SOUTH ROAD, GREYMOUTH, COMMENCING AT 11.35 A.M.

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

C. Ingle (Chief Executive Officer), R. Mallinson (Corporate Services Manager), C. Dall (Consents & Compliance Manager), M. Meehan (Planning & Environmental Manager), T. Jellyman (Minutes Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES:

Moved (Birchfield / Davidson) *that the apology from I. Cummings be accepted.*

Carried

2. PUBLIC FORUM

There was no public forum.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Moved (Archer / Birchfield) *that the minutes of the Council Meeting dated 13 December 2011, be confirmed as correct.*

Carried

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

REPORTS:

4.1 ENGINEERING OPERATIONS REPORT

M. Meehan spoke to this report and advised that works are being carried out in the Taramakau, Waitangitaona and Wanganui rating districts. M. Meehan reported that three tenders were received for the Last Resort Stopbank Upgrade in the Karamea rating district. He advised that Ferguson Bros Contracting Ltd won the tender but the initial price was renegotiated downwards and the rating district accepted the price of \$87,457. M. Meehan advised that there are some future works in Nelson Creek and Coal Creek rating districts.

M. Meehan reported that in the Blackball, Camelback and Kiwi Quarries there is a lot of rock that has been blasted but is yet to be pulled down. M. Meehan reported that Whataroa quarry is nearing a section of this quarry's life with the majority of the rock being extracted this section. He advised that he is currently working at getting a price from Ferguson Bros Ltd to get rock out from their land but on council's permit at the area towards the back of the quarry. M. Meehan stated that this would ensure that there is a constant supply of rock in the Whataroa area. Cr Archer asked M. Meehan if the tender prices for works in the rating districts are within the price range that was put to the rating district. M. Meehan advised that the majority of tender prices were under, except for the Karamea contract where the prices were over. Discussion took place on tender processes and prices.

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

Carried

4.1.2 LOWER WAIHO RATING DISTRICT RATES

R. Mallinson spoke to this report and stated that this report is in relation to the presentation by Mr Quaife and Mr Brooks at Council's December meeting. R. Mallinson advised that council is aware of disquiet by a number of ratepayers about the level of the Lower Waiho rating. He stated that a letter was sent to all ratepayers in this rating district following the workshop held with Councillors. R. Mallinson stated that the letter advised that Councillors were looking at giving consideration to possibly reducing the total amount of the rate of the Lower Waiho rating district for the current rating year and also the next rating year. R. Mallinson advised that there are 23 ratepayers in this rating district and at the time of preparing this report there had only been two responses, one from Liz Ewins and one from Dr George Tripe. Neither of these responders was against the suggestion but Dr Tripe did urge some caution on this matter to council as it proceeds. R. Mallinson read a late response from another ratepayer, Robin Richards, to the meeting which outlines his concerns including the financial implications should flooding occur and repairs be required. Cr Scarlett invited discussion on this. Cr Davidson expressed his concern that council can overturn decisions that are made at rating district meetings. R. Mallinson responded that rating district meetings are consultative meetings but at the end of the day the final decisions rest with council regarding rating levels. M. Meehan advised that it was a very close call in favour of the rate strike at the annual rating district meeting. Cr Scarlett stated that if the rates are unaffordable then this could send people to the wall. Cr Robb clarified that there were only three responses and no major resistance from the people who originally voted for the \$100,000 rate strike, that the rate be taken down to \$50,000. R. Mallinson responded that other than Mr Richards' letter, those people did not reply. M. Meehan advised that it is important to note that the rating district made the decision to simply maintain the existing works at the annual meeting. He advised that a \$50,000 rate strike will pay for the budgeted maintenance on the existing structures and unless there are any unforeseen works the rating district will stay in the black. Cr Robb stated that if unforeseen works are required then the rating district needs to make a decision on whether to do the works or walk away. C. Ingle advised that there is always the option to raise a loan in that type of situation. Cr Chinn agrees with the recommendation, he stated that it is a one off and he will just see how things go. Cr Birchfield agreed with Cr Chinn. Cr Archer asked if there is anything in the content of the workshop relating to the Waiho River that could influence this current decision. C. Ingle felt that the Hall report was looking at longer term risks for the whole river, and it had no immediate implications. Cr Archer stated that these are difficult decisions but he agrees council should not be taking people to the wall, when they totally cannot afford to pay. Cr Archer stated that if unforeseen works are required then that is another issue that needs to be dealt with, if it happens.

Moved (Robb / Birchfield)

1. *That Council remits the second instalment of the Lower Waiho Rating District rates amounting to \$50,000 + GST. (This means that the rating income for the rating district for 2011/12 will amount to only \$50,000 + GST).*
2. *That Council rate \$50,000 + GST for the 2012/13 rating year in the Long Term Plan.*

Carried

4.2 CORPORATE SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT

R. Mallinson spoke to this report and advised this report is in line with previous reports. R. Mallinson advised that he has included investment information in this month's report. He reported that the operating surplus for the six month financial period is \$371,000 and there were positive budget variances amounting to \$96,000 in a number of general rate funded activities. Cr Archer stated that he accompanying Forsyth Barr report tends to indicate a lot more positive future which is good to see. R. Mallinson stated that he is expecting to see a sharp upswing in our investment returns to the end of January.

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

Carried

6.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT

C. Ingle spoke to his report. He stated that in terms of meetings, the December to January period has been quiet. C. Ingle advised that the West Coast Council CEO's met on the 16th of January. He stated that this meeting was arranged to welcome Buller District Council's new Chief Executive, Paul Wylie. Shared Services for the region were discussed at this meeting. C. Ingle reported that he attended a South Island wide Shared Services meeting in Christchurch on the 27th of January. He presented a paper at this meeting, which was a summary of where West Coast Councils are at with regard to shared services in the IT area. C. Ingle stated that he has issued an invitation to other small councils around the South Island to progress shared services together with the West Coast councils, as it is much easier to share with small councils who have similar needs. C. Ingle stated that the meeting was well represented with people from Otago Regional Council and ECAN as well. C. Ingle reported that work is being done in the health & safety area of council to enable ACC accreditation, which will result in a 15% discount in ACC levies. C. Ingle advised that good progress is being made with the Long Term Plan with the performance framework about to be workshopped following today's meeting. C. Ingle advised that he has attached the six month report from the AHB to his report and stated that it is good to see the graph heading in the right direction. Cr Scarlett invited Cr Robb to comment on progress to date with the Tb Free programme. Cr Robb stated the general feeling from the Tb Free committee is that things are on the right track with the new strategy and things are going well.

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

Carried

7.0 CHAIRMANS REPORT (VERBAL)

Cr Scarlett reported that has nothing to report this month.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Cr Davidson referred to a recent item in the Greymouth Evening Star where the Minister for the Environment, Dr Nick Smith, made a statement insisting that Council transfer the responsibility of prosecutions to the staff. Cr Davidson stated that this article intimated that a commissioner would be put in. Cr Davidson feels council should write to the Minister. Cr Robb feels that the media article took Cr Birchfield's response out of context. Cr Davidson would like the Minister to qualify his statement that he made to the Greymouth Evening Star and ask the Minister what are his plans for council and what options does council have. Cr Robb stated that he read the article and stated that the headline was "Council on a Slippery Slope" then the newspaper quoted Dr Smith. It was agreed that the article would be provided to councilors and discussed over lunch. C. Ingle stated that in the content of the article there was mention of the Minister cautioning council. C. Ingle stated that he was expecting to receive a letter from the Minister cautioning council but nothing has been received. Cr Birchfield stated that he has written to the editors of both The Westport News and The Greymouth Evening Star complaining over these types of articles.

The meeting closed at 12.04 p.m.

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Chairman

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Date