

Wanganui District Council Meeting – 2 May 2011

Index

	Page
Horizons Regional Council’s Draft Annual Plan 2011-2012	866

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Wanganui District Council held at 1.00PM on Monday, 2 May 2011, in the Council Chamber, Municipal Office Building, 101 Guyton Street, Wanganui

Present: Ms Annette Main – the Mayor – in the Chair, Cr RM Wills – Deputy Mayor, Crs AR Anderson, P Baker-Hogan, JT Bullock, R Dahya, NA Higgle, HCS McDouall, RM Stevens, RV Vinsen and SM Westwood.

Apologies: Crs MB Laws and C Solomon.

In Attendance: Mr A Taylor (Chairman, Wanganui Rural Community Board).

Officers in Attendance: Mr K Ross (Chief Executive), Mr J Harkness (Deputy Chief Executive), Mr R McGregor (Property Manager), Mr J Reweti (Infrastructure Manager), Ms M Heron (Customer Services Manager), Mr S Hylton (Senior Policy Advisor). Minutes: Helen Couper (Governance Services Officer).

Council’s Resolution

Proposed by Cr Bullock, seconded by Cr Stevens:

THAT the apologies from Cr Laws and Cr Solomon, and Cr Anderson for lateness, be received.

CARRIED

1. Horizons Regional Council’s Draft Annual Plan 2011-2012

Policy on Determining Significance – In terms of the Policy the recommended decision is not significant.

Stuart Hylton, Senior Policy Advisor, reports:

“Introduction

The purpose of this report is to receive a presentation from Horizons Regional Council (Horizons) on its draft Annual Plan 2011/12 and to discuss issues for a submission to that Annual Plan.

Closing date for submissions is 6 May 2011.”

Presentation

Mayor Annette Main welcomed Bruce Gordon, Chairman, and Michael McCartney, Chief Executive, Horizons Regional Council, to the meeting.

Mr Gordon and Mr McCartney spoke to a PowerPoint presentation – Summary of Horizons Regional Council’s Draft Annual Plan 2011-12, and answered Councillors questions.

You live work and play in a great Region

- To keep it that way we look after the land, air, water keep you safe' help get you where you need to go; and help you prosper.

Mr Gordon reported a rate increase of 3.78%, plus a 2.2% increase for GST, making a predicted increase of 6%, which was less than forecast in the Council's Long-term Community Plan. Mr McCartney noted submissions were anticipated to reduce this percentage. He said the works programme that had been in place for the past five years was continuing. Mr McCartney explained the business of the Regional Council was in the flood protection area, pest control, sustainable land use, and transport. Next year Horizons would take its 10-Year Plan back to the community.

Horizons budget was \$48M, of which \$34M was from rates, with the balance through user charges and fees. Total capital expenditure for next year was \$9.8M, mainly for flood protection works. Balgownie's flood protection has been completed at a cost of \$3.3M. Next year community consultation would be carried out on stages two and three of Wanganui's flood protection works. Damage from the September 2010 storm events was significant and had impacted on this year's Annual Plan. Earthquakes in Christchurch in September 2010 and February 2011 meant insurance would be a big issue for Horizons.

Preserving our Patch

- Pest Control – an extra \$156,000 for Horizons possum control.
- Biodiversity programmes – \$168,000 reduction.
- Animal Health Board (AHB) levy – \$650,000 levy, targeted rate properties over four hectares at a cost of \$0.34 per hectare.

Mr Gordon advised that the AHB had written to rural landowners requesting they submit that Horizons reinstate AHB funding to \$750,000. He noted the AHB was paid on completion of projects, was behind in its work, and there was currently \$100,000 available to carry over to next year. In response to a Councillor's question Mr Gordon explained there was a Government subsidy on AHB funds. Farmers paid for every head of cattle slaughtered as well as a targeted rate for those who owned four hectares and over. To protect the investment, once the AHB rid an area of TB by eradicating opossums, Horizons opossum control took over.

Cr Anderson joined the meeting at 1.12pm.

Alan Taylor, Chairman, Wanganui Rural Community Board, suggested that if Horizons made it clear the AHB levy was not a Horizons' rate it may be more acceptable. Mr McCartney explained it was a rate legally collected under the Rating Act. Mr Taylor said he had been assured the AHB would spend its total allocation this year yet today we have been advised that was not correct. Mr Gordon said the programme was behind at this stage and the AHB had been invited to comment.

Mr McCartney explained the biodiversity programme was a blend of protecting areas of native land, wetland, pests and animal pests. As Horizons felt funding for this was a luxury in the current economic climate the budget had been reduced by 10%. Cr Westwood commented that Genesis River Enhancement Trust may have input to increased funding for blue duck. Mr McCartney said that would be a wonderful opportunity providing it could be spent.

Cr McDouall joined the meeting at 1.19pm.

Flood Protection

- Whanganui – Design and consultation for Stage Two of the Lower Whanganui Scheme \$50,000.
- Rangitikei – Scheme rates increase by 3.2%.

Mr Gordon invited Councillors to Palmerston North to view enhancements and amenities added as part of flood protection work.

Cr Vinsen thought it important to let the community know that Wanganui's most recent floods had not been major floods. He thought the Central City area around Moutoa Quay, rather than Kowhai Park and Putiki, needed flood protection. Cr Vinsen asked what would happen from the end of the current flood protection at Castlecliff out to the moles. Mr McCartney said this would be addressed as there were clear areas of responsibility. He said Horizons was committed to the long-term river protection upgrade and this would be addressed through community consultation. Of the \$10M for the flood protection project, Balgownie – completed for \$3.3M, Kowhai Park and Putiki combined – \$4.5M, although these could be done separately, (\$3.9M is for Kowhai Park), and the Town Basin – \$2.3M. Mr Gordon said 20% of flood protection is paid for from the general rate.

Kevin Ross noted that the preliminary flood protection design for the Kowhai Park area had been done, and also that extensive consultation would need to be carried out for the central city flood protection. He said there were questions about the integrity of the current Kowhai Park flood protection made of silt.

Cr Westwood felt it important a number of different ways were explained to the community about how it could pay for flood protection according to the level of protection required.

In response to a query, Mr McCartney advised Wanganui's flood protection scheme was debt funded over 30 years.

Managing the Environment

- Water quality and quantity
 - \$400,000 towards Manawatu River Accord. \$8.10 targeted Catchment rate.
 - Water monitoring costs increase by \$286,000

Mr Gordon explained that the Manawatu River users had formed a group who had signed an accord document which included actions for users. In response to a query Mr McCartney advised that Federated Farmers had been involved in the action plan although not as a signed member. The accord document will be put out for public comment.

- One Plan – An additional \$1.5M to cover One Plan appeal period.

Mr McCartney said the One Plan was into the appeal and mediation period. \$1M (debt funded) had been set aside for this. There were 22 appeals, however he was optimistic over half of the appeals may be resolved without a Hearing.

- Sustainable Land Use – Extending timeframe from 10 to 15 years to match affordability and Government funding.

Mr Gordon explained this was a ‘no blame’ approach to stabilising hill country erosion to prevent silt coming down and blocking waterways. He noted that previous Governments had given farmers huge incentives to clear land.

Information and Community Engagement

- Discontinue the use of the Green Rig saving \$104,000

Mr Gordon noted most of the submissions received to date were wanting to retain the Green Rig. Horizons had three areas of education – the Green Rig, Trees for Survival and Wai Ora. In response to queries Mr McCartney explained how and why the Green Rig was established and the reasons it was being discontinued. Mr Gordon said the basis for a rumour that the Green Rig delivered messages of anti-farming did not exist.

Following the February 2011 Christchurch earthquake the Green Rig was used to run the North Island part of Civil Defence from the carpark at Horizons. In response to a question – would the projected savings for the Green Rig result in staff cost savings, Mr McCartney said there was currently a vacant position which would be factored into savings.

Civil Defence and Emergency Management

- Improve safety education on the Whanganui River and to pay for an upgrade of navigation markets – \$10,000.

Cr Bullock left the meeting at 2.00pm.

Mr McCartney believed this region had the best Civil Defence and Emergency Management group in New Zealand which the Ministry had endorsed last year.

Regarding Whanganui River bylaws Mr McCartney said Horizons had worked with the Wanganui District Council about options. Currently the Whanganui River was managed by Maritime NZ which was not ideal. Horizons had explored options around the level of regulation because of concerns of safety and conflict of users, however the cost of \$190,000 to develop and operate the bylaws was considered too expensive for Horizons Regional Council.

Cr Bullock rejoined the meeting at 2.13pm.

In response to queries, Mr McCartney said the Manawatu River had bylaws, the result of conflict over duck shooting and recreational use. The Manawatu River Users Group was a subcommittee of Horizons and since its establishment there had been no incidents on that river.

Mayor Main referred to a comprehensive and agreeable process that had been undertaken with Whanganui River users regarding use of the Whanganui River. She said it was disappointing to have funds cut for developing a bylaw. Lake Wairitoa and the Whanganui River came under the Maritime Safety rules of a five knot speed limit. She said Wanganui District Council should make a strong submission on this matter.

Kevin Ross confirmed the Regional Council was the only body with authority to make the bylaw for the Whanganui River and Lake Wairitua. Wanganui District Council could be given delegated authority to make bylaws.

Mr McCartney advised that submissions close on 6 May 2011.

Cr Westwood, noting \$140,000 allocated for 16 different Iwi groups queried Horizons policy regarding Iwi relationships. Mr McCartney said that Horizons respected that Iwi currently had other priorities. Horizons had an open door policy and was keen for local government collectively to deal with issues.

Cr Stevens queried the rate increase as a result of the increase in GST.

In response to a query on Wanganui District Council resolutions regarding a unitary authority, Mr McCartney said from a management point of view the current relationship would not be affected at an operational level. The issue of a unitary authority was the community's decision and the community needed to be provided the correct information to make a decision.

In response to a query, Mr McCartney explained the local authority shared services (LASS). Kevin Ross said Wanganui District Council was part of a regional archives storage facility and noted that councils can determine at what level they wish to be involved and pay for.

Mr McCartney confirmed Horizons policy for funding regional sporting facilities was that the matter be first discussed and agreed upon at Regional Chiefs' meetings before it was included in Horizons' Plans.

Mayor Main thanked Mr Gordon and Mr McCartney for their presentation. She said Horizons Councillors were always welcome to attend Wanganui District Council meetings. The presenters then left the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2.41pm, and reconvened at 2.48pm.

Stuart Hylton, Senior Policy Advisor, tabled and spoke to the draft submission written to Horizons. The following points were noted:

- The Rates/Financial Information was accurate.
- Appreciation of the good relationship between Horizons' transport staff and Wanganui District Council be acknowledged.
- Concern was expressed about the proposal to trial a commuter service between Wanganui and Palmerston North. Mayor Main asked for clarification on this matter.
- Water safety measures on the Lower Whanganui River and Lake Wairitua – Mr Hylton explained that as Wanganui District Council considered the current default situation inappropriate it was offering to help draft bylaws and believed that a co-ordinated approach to water bylaw development could be achieved for less than \$50,000 per annum. If Horizons was unwilling to adopt a safety management regime, it should consider delegating its bylaw making powers.
- Agreed the word 'extremely' be added before 'disappointed' in the first bullet point. Councillors expressed concern about what would happen if there was an accident on

the Whanganui River or Lake Wairua and the need to take action now. Mr Hylton said the Council could ask for an uplifting of the speed limit in the interim.

- Point 4 – delete words ‘soft start’.
- Add additional point 6 – that reflects that whatever regime is adopted it should be in place for the 2011/12 season.
- Flood Protection Scheme
Kevin Ross explained Horizons was in charge of river control. It was agreed that discussion be commenced with Horizons about river issues be added.
- River and drainage schemes – Mayor Main asked that the outcome from of a recent meeting held regarding the Whangaehu and Mangawhero Rivers be confirmed before this submission was sent.
- One Plan and Environmental Protection Management correct.
- Green Rig – by a show of hands it was agreed that Wanganui District Council supports continuation of the Green Rig, acknowledging the investment that has been made by communities over past years and acknowledging the difficulty that has occurred over the perception of the message.
- Cr McDouall thought the resolution of the Council about a unitary authority should be addressed.
- That Horizons not collect the Animal Health Board levy was not supported.

Cr Baker-Hogan left the meeting at 3.37pm.

Council’s Resolution

Proposed by Cr Stevens, seconded by Cr McDouall:

- 1.1 THAT the presentation from Horizons Regional Council on its draft Annual Plan 2011/12 be received
- 1.2 AND THAT the submission to the Horizons Regional Council’s Annual Plan 2011/12 as tabled, with amendments and additional comments, be forwarded.

CARRIED

ACTION: Stuart Hylton

The meeting closed at 3.39pm.

* * * * *

CERTIFICATE OF CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Wanganui District Council held on 2 May 2011 were confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting at a meeting of the Wanganui District Council held on 30 May 2011.

.....

Annette Main
Mayor of Wanganui District

.....

Date