



REPORT OF THE ORDINARY MONTHLY MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 29 CIVIC AVENUE, GORE ON TUESDAY 8 MAY 2007, AT 5:03 pm.

PRESENT His Worship the Mayor (Mr Tracy Hicks JP), Cr Bolger (Chairperson) Crs Davis, Dore, Harvey, Hellier, McFadzien, McIntyre, Sutherland and Turnbull.

IN ATTENDANCE The Chief Executive (Mr Steve Parry), General Manager, District Assets (Mr Neil Jorgensen), General Manager, Corporate Services (Mr Russell Duthie), Parks and Recreation Manager (Mr Ian Soper), Roading Manager (Mr Murray Hasler), Asset Manager, Utilities (Mr Ross Haslemore), Management Accountant (Mr Luke Blackbeard), the Corporate Support Officer (Mrs Jo Waddell) and one member of the public in the Gallery.

APOLOGIES Crs McLennan and Ogg apologised for absence.

1. FUNDING OF RURAL HALLS (1.7.4.2)

A memo had been received from the Chief Executive following an issue raised during the submissions to the Council's draft LTCCP last year about the hearing of the way in which rural halls were funded. Rural ratepayers were forced to exclusively fund their own halls via a local rate made on a uniform basis within a defined area around the hall concerned and yet were also contributing to urban community centres. The only deviation from the practice in the rural area was the annual allocation made to rural halls within the Council's grant budget. The allocation of \$7,000 was funded by UAGC which meant the majority of it was met by urban ratepayers. A comparison of neighbouring District Councils showed that the Gore District Council was not out of kilter with how other Councils funded their rural halls. It was suggested that the annual grant could be increased to address the issue in the meantime.

His Worship said an indication had been given during the LTCCP submissions hearing the previous year that the Council

would review its funding of rural halls. He had recently received a letter from Mr Bill Sutherland from the Waikaka Hall Society and had advised him that he may want to make a submission to the Annual Plan. Personally, he believed the halls should be rated across the District but he did appreciate the difficulty and time involved with amending the LTCCP and thought it was prudent that it be referred to the 2009 review. He expected that each hall could be considered on merit of the help it required until then. He tabled both the letter from Mr Sutherland and his subsequent response.

Cr Dore asked if a review had taken place on grants allocated in recent times and believed it should be increased to cover inflation.

Cr Bolger said the James Cumming Wing was currently UAGC and rural halls were a local rate and he thought they all needed to be UAGC. He said the Chief Executive's report highlighted the problem with amending the LTCCP and believed the interim measure would be to increase the grant.

Cr Hellier said the majority would be paid by urban ratepayers if the halls were added into the UAGC. He asked if there was another way to fund the halls. The District needed to keep the halls but the maintenance costs were a big problem for rural communities. He stated the UAGC was already at its maximum level and wondered if there was a way to levy each household for it.

His Worship referred to Appendix A of the report which showed how other Councils funded its rural halls. He said rural halls were key to rural communities and a responsibility of the District.

The Chief Executive felt the type of relief sought was not huge in the overall scheme of things. There was a struggle across the board because of the waning of volunteerism. People were not able to complete the projects themselves due to other work commitments. In monetary terms, \$7,000 was quite modest but it had a lot of impact on those halls. He thought a fuller review of the funding could be undertaken in 2009.

Cr Davis asked if the rural halls were owned by the Council and queried whether the repairs and maintenance budget could cover the halls.

The Chief Executive said that without checking the certificates of title he could give a categorical answer, but it was usual for halls to be owned by a Hall Society. He said that the

constitution of the Hall Society normally provided for the assets to be vested in the local Council in the event of the Society being wound up.

Cr McIntyre thought it could be prudent to look at the responsibility of the Council and mentioned the Southland District Council funded 80% of the running costs of its halls. She thought the Council should consult the Local Government Act or the Southland District Council about its obligations.

The Chief Executive said that in the case of the Southland District Council the halls were funded by a local rate and each Hall Society determined the level of the rate.

Cr McIntyre thought that would suit the Knapdale Hall Society and perhaps the policy could be reviewed for the Civic Centre.

Cr Bolger said the halls could be treated all the same and it might be able to negotiate a better deal. He certainly did not want to see the Council in the situation of owning the halls.

Cr McFadzien said the Council grant was a top up mechanism for one off items. He noted that all the halls were rated at different amounts and mentioned that in Pukerau's case it had required more money from its local residents. He believed the matter needed to be reviewed and balanced up.

Cr Bolger thought a two step process was necessary. He asked the Council if it wanted to increase the grant and then make an amendment to the LTCCP policy in 2009.

His Worship said before a policy change was made, the Council needed to meet with the local hall committees. He noted that the local rate did not cover all the halls in the District and he thought the Council should wait before making any amendment to the LTCCP.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Davis, seconded by Cr Sutherland, THAT this report be received.

Cr Davis was not sure what the level of the increase of the grant should be.

The Chief Executive advised that the Knapdale Hall Society was going to make a submission to the Annual Plan and a decision could be reached at that stage. A report could be provided on funding of the Rural Halls and Domains Scheme over the last few years to enable an informed decision.

Cr McIntyre said not all halls throughout the District were rated for, like the Waimumu Te-Tipua Hall.

The Chief Executive said those halls were still eligible for funding through the Scheme so a five year report could be produced on what funding had been requested in the past.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Davis, seconded by Cr Sutherland, THAT the Council approve in principle an increase in the quantum given to the rural halls with the amount to be determined by the receipt of a further report, based on funding application received over the past five years,

AND THAT a review of the rural halls funding policy be considered during the review of the LTCCP in 2009.

Cr Dore suggested that the Council write to all the rural halls in the Gore District inviting them to make a submission to the draft Annual Plan.

His Worship thought discussion with representatives of the hall committees around the table would be a better option.

Cr Davis agreed it should be separate from the submission process.

Cr Bolger thought one of the halls could make a submission on behalf of the rest and then the Council could meet with all of them to discuss the funding policy.

The recommendation was put and it was carried.

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN THE GORE DISTRICT (18.79)

A memo from the Chief Executive had been received, together with a report on the roles of six local authorities in regard to community development and social wellbeing. During the workshops in February and April, a keen desire had been expressed to focus on the needs of local youth with the formation of a Youth Council in the Gore District being supported by local youth programme providers.

The Chief Executive added that it was a big topic and the Council's he had selected had similarities to Gore. It had been discussed at the workshop that there was a lack of resources to deal with mainstream youth and this was where the Youth

Council and its role could be useful in Gore. It gave the Council a chance to tap into that part of society.

Cr Harvey said it was a worthy concept to start with. He believed more discussion was required on the nature of the Council's social development. He believed Gore was ready for a Youth Council. He suggested it could be necessary to visit the Invercargill Youth Council and get a couple of Councillors involved at the start.

His Worship congratulated the Chief Executive on his report and said his visits around the country had been valuable. He thought a Youth Council was a worthwhile initiative and it was a step on the way to social development. He fully supported the recommendation and thought the Invercargill City Council benefited from its Youth Council. He believed the Council needed to understand where the youth were coming from and if they could be aided by the Council it would be good.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of His Worship, seconded by Cr Hellier, THAT the Council establish a Youth Council in the Gore District and report back to Council on this matter in due course.

Cr Turnbull said she was on the Youth Committee and a Council had been strongly supported by it.

3. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR MARCH 2007 (1.1.3)

A financial report for the nine months ended 31 March 2007 had been circulated from the Management Accountant.

The Chief Executive said compared to the same time last year the Council was around \$200,000 better off. He said while this might sound like a lot of money it was only about 1.5% of the turnover.

Cr Harvey asked the General Manager, Corporate Services whether he could comment following the controversy in the last few months about supposed discrepancies.

The General Manager said he could not comment on that at this early stage but there was every indication that the Council was in line with its year end budgets. He said he would look at spreading some of the budgets where there were seasonal trends and tidy up how the budgets were sorted out.

Cr Harvey asked if the funds could be carried forward to the next year if not utilised.

The General Manager replied if the projects had not been carried out, the funds would be carried forward.

Cr Bolger said the LTCCP had put a stop to the feast or famine scenario as it was a ten year budget and if the Managers did not use their entire budget, it would not affect it for the next year.

Cr McIntyre asked for the spreadsheets she had requested.

The Chief Executive said her request had been declined.

Cr McIntyre said she wanted them.

The Chief Executive said staff were having difficulty finding the report.

Cr McIntyre said that was in terms of the property report. Why would the Council not provide the spreadsheets?

Cr Bolger said Cr McIntyre could approach the Ombudsman and asked the Chief Executive whether the property report was forthcoming.

The Chief Executive said he had had trouble finding the report prepared by the former Parks and Recreation Manager, Mr Gordon Bailey.

His Worship said the Council had decided not to make the information available to Cr McIntyre at a previous meeting. He said she could choose to ask for it again and asked her why she thought the information was necessary.

Cr McIntyre said she had a responsibility as a Councillor to view information before issues were voted on.

His Worship said Cr McIntyre had said on public record that she could not trust anyone.

Colin McIntyre approached His Worship from the public gallery.

Cr Bolger called the meeting to order and asked the Councillors to take their seats.

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Cr Hellier, seconded by Cr Sutherland, THAT the financial report for the nine months ended 31 March 2007 be received.

The meeting concluded at 5:41 pm.

