



MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MONTHLY MEETING OF THE GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL, HELD IN THE LOUNGE ROOM, JAMES CUMMING WING, ARDWICK STREET, GORE, ON WEDNESDAY 11 JUNE 2008, AT 1:43 pm

PRESENT His Worship the Mayor (Mr Tracy Hicks JP), Crs Bolger, Davis, Dixey, Dixon, Gardyne, Grant, Harvey, Heller, Highsted, McLennan and Sharp.

IN ATTENDANCE The Chief Executive (Mr Steve Parry), General Manager, District Assets (Mr Paul Withers), General Manager, Corporate Services (Mr Russell Duthie), Parks and Recreation Manager (Mr Ian Soper), Corporate Support Officer (Mrs Jo Waddell) and 21 members of the public in the Gallery.

1. HEARING OF SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED TO THE DRAFT 2008/09 ANNUAL PLAN (46.23.17)

His Worship outlined the format of the hearing. Submitters would be invited to make their submission to the Council. Councillors were able to ask questions for clarification but there was no room for debate. It was a formal process and every submitter had a right to be heard.

A memo had been received from the Chief Executive advising that submissions on the draft Annual Plan had closed on 26 May. A total of 30 submissions had been received.

Gore Counselling Centre

The submission had been circulated and was presented by Dr Bruce Wilson. The submission was seeking funding from the Council for its annual rates account of approximately \$1,500, as well as covering facility hire costs for community presentations at the James Cumming Wing.

Cr Harvey asked for a balance sheet to be provided to the Council.

Dr Wilson replied it would be.

Cr Harvey said there had been difficulty in getting paid for counselling in the past. Had that been remedied?

Dr Wilson replied Work and Income paid the Centre directly which had rectified the problem.

His Worship asked for clarification of under funding.

Dr Wilson said Child, Youth and Family Services (CYFS), together with the Centre, had set the number of clients at a limit of 100 for funding purposes. The Centre had actually doubled the number of its clients, hence being under funded.

His Worship asked what other alternatives to the Gore Counselling Centre were available.

Dr Wilson said there were private counsellors in Gore and services available in Invercargill, however, some of the services provided were exclusive to the Centre. Exclusive contracts with all alcohol and drug clients, CYFS and 95% of Accident Compensation Corporation cases meant the Centre was critical for the community.

His Worship asked what the difference was between the Centre and the Mental Health team at the hospital.

Dr Wilson clarified mental health was a medical model with certain criteria needs to be met and often those who did not meet the criteria would be turned away. However, the Centre would not turn anybody down. If someone could not pay for the services, the Centre would try to find a solution. Unfortunately there was a cost to it eventually in terms of staff time.

Cr Dixey asked if any other Council's in the Southland region funded the Centre.

Dr Wilson confirmed funding was provided by the Southland District Health Board, CYFS and Probation, but not from other Council's.

Cr Sharp asked how much the annual rate account would be.

Dr Wilson had estimated it would be \$1,500.

Cr Sharp noted the earlier comment that services had doubled and asked why the account could not be paid given the extra income earned.

Dr Wilson responded the operational costs had quadrupled.

New Zealand Red Cross

The submission had been circulated and was presented by Sally Wäst, Southern Area Manager for Red Cross and Mr Dave Devonport, President of Eastern Southland Grey Power. The submission requested a \$10,000 grant for fuel for the recently commenced Eastern Southland Rural Transport Scheme. The Scheme would be providing transport to Invercargill three times per week and twice weekly to Dunedin, with an emergency service provided at the weekend for those with limited or no access to transport to attend medical appointments, community services and programmes.

Cr Harvey asked whether it had approached the Total Mobility Scheme.

D Devonport replied it had not.

Cr Harvey asked if contact would be made with the Total Mobility Scheme at any stage.

D Devonport hoped the schemes could join up eventually.

Cr Harvey asked if any government funding had been provided for the initiative.

D Devonport replied the Committee had been through the channels but it had not worked.

Cr McLennan asked whether the people who used the service were ratepayers.

D Devonport thought ratepayers would use the service.

Cr Heller asked if it was a free service or was a contribution required.

S Wäst confirmed it was a free service but donations could be made.

Cr Heller asked where the funds would go to if the Council decided to make a contribution.

S Wäst replied Red Cross would manage the funds. It had a responsibility to ensure the service continued and it would not put any financial pressure on the other organisations that had donated time to the Scheme.

Cr Heller asked if Red Cross would report back to the Council, if it was successful.

S Wäst advised three monthly reports would be provided to the Council.

Cr Davis asked what the fuel costs were expected to be per annum.

S Wäst said based on three trips to Invercargill and two to Dunedin per week, it would cost \$11,464 per annum for fuel. It did not include the weekend emergency service which would probably cost an extra \$2,000. The estimate was based on a fuel cost of \$1.93 per litre.

Cr Grant asked if it would be possible to get people to travel together.

S Wäst advised she had been in contact with the hospitals to arrange for the appointments for Gore residents to be held on the same days, to make it more economical for travelling.

Cr Gardyne asked if there was provision for a second vehicle in the costings.

S Wäst responded that it was necessary to have the Scheme being semi-viable and hoped the support from the community would help with the acquisition of a second vehicle.

Cr Gardyne asked if ACC would contribute its 27 cents per kilometre travel subsidy towards the Scheme.

S Wäst said hospitals paid its clients for travelling to appointments, but the Committee would need to work directly with the clients to get the travel costs signed over to the Scheme, and it hoped to be able to do the same with ACC.

Cr Bolger asked for elaboration on the comment about the Scheme being self funded in three years.

S Wäst hoped the Scheme would be self sufficient in three years because of community support. Red Cross would cover any shortfall in the first six months, but it could not be ongoing.

Mrs F S McIntyre

Mrs Sally McIntyre presented the submission concerning parks and reserves, roading, recycling, healthy homes, employment of a Community Development Officer and other staff positions, staff using the Waikaia and Waipahi rooms in the James Cumming Wing, Council's consultants and debt repayment.

Cr Sharp asked what would be achieved by bringing roading back to pre 2004/05.

S McIntyre advised roading and essential services had been separated from other Council accounts, which would achieve transparency. As roading had a subsidised government component and was the main part of the Council's expenditure, it would be easier if rural was separated from urban roading.

A copy of the submission was to be tabled. It was received subsequent to the hearing and is attached as Appendix 1, forming part of these minutes.

Southland HEHA Reference Group

Melanie McKenzie, Southland Healthy Eating Healthy Actions (HEHA) Manager and Janice Burton, Health Promotion Co-ordinator and Manager for the Cancer Society, presented the submission concerning community development, healthy homes, District promotions, grants, dog control, food inspections, aquatic services, parks and reserves, footpaths and cycle lanes, street lighting, safe drinking water and recycling options. The submission requested the Council become a signatory by signing the Southland HEHA Charter to contribute resources, time and funding where relevant, to achieve goals identified in its Plan. The Charter launch was to be held in July.

Cr Heller asked how many children actually walked to school.

M McKenzie advised a national survey had been undertaken, but she thought the Gore Physical Activity Strategy could potentially gather the data in the Gore District.

J Burton said walking school buses had been greeted with little enthusiasm.

Cr Davis asked how HEHA was funded. There seemed to be funding from a number of sources.

M McKenzie said that would probably be a fair summary. All the agencies already committed to helping the HEHA plan, and hopefully the Council would be among the recruited, would contribute from resources within their own organisations. Resources could be staff time or core activities the organisations already had available. All the organisations received funding from various streams, HEHA from the Ministry of Health, and the Cancer Society from the community. There was a variety of different avenues to tap into, but HEHA was not asking for organisations to do anything extra, just work collaboratively.

Cr Davis asked if HEHA was requesting a grant from the Council.

M McKenzie said it was not, the Charter was a partnership to work together and build opportunities.

Cr Dixey asked how different HEHA was to Hokonui Horizons. Was it duplicating services?

M McKenzie said Hokonui Horizons had a much broader wellbeing scope for Eastern Southland and HEHA was specifically about healthy eating and healthy actions and included the whole Southern region. It was not duplication.

A copy of the submission was tabled subsequent to the hearing and is attached as Appendix 2, forming part of these minutes.

New Zealand Landcare Trust

The submission had been circulated and was presented by Janet Gregory, Regional Co-ordinator of New Zealand Landcare Trust. The submission concerned the Biodiversity Southland forum, a \$5,000 grant for building weed control capacity, a Southland Biodiversity Strategy and a funding request for an Inventory of biodiversity in the region, to be accomplished over a five year period. She endorsed the Council employing an Asset Planner.

Cr Sharp asked whether the Trust was aware of the QEII Trust.

J Gregory replied she was and it was part of the Southland Biodiversity forum.

Cr Sharp thought five out of the projects listed in the submission would qualify for funding from the QEII Trust.

J Gregory responded it was correct, and they had received funding through the Trust's covenant. A covenant covered some of the fencing costs so landowners were only required to pay a third, the Biodiversity Conditions Fund paid for a third, with the QEII Trust funding the balance. The Trust could not fund weed and pest control, which was the reason for the submission.

Cr McLennan asked why a request had not been made to Invercargill City Council for weed control.

J Gregory said the cutoff date for Invercargill City Council's submissions had been completed before the Trust had finalised its own, so it had missed out for the current year. However, it did already have a list of significant natural areas for the inventory. She said the Trust would still be looking for in-kind input from Invercargill City Council and would approach it again over the next four years.

Cr Gardyne asked what response the Trust had received from its other submissions.

J Gregory advised she had made a submission to Southland District Council the previous day and would make one to Environment Southland the following week. She could not give an indication to what the responses would be.

Cr Gardyne asked if Department of Conservation (DOC) had reneged on its weed control responsibilities.

J Gregory said the biodiversity areas were on private land and not owned by DOC.

Cr Gardyne asked what the relationship was with landowners who entered into arrangements with QEII Trust or the New Zealand Landcare Trust.

J Gregory said the Trust's contributed towards material costs of fencing and weed control, and landowners would contribute their time.

Gore Native Forest Group

The submission had been circulated and was presented by Janet Gregory on behalf of the Gore Native Forest Group. The submission requested support from the Council of \$1,000 in kind time to control weeds on the native forest to be planted on the former Gore landfill site.

Cr Sharp thought members of periodic detention would be able to control weeds on site.

The meeting adjourned for 15 minutes.

Energy Smart

The submission had been circulated and was presented by Robin McKeown and Mr Neil Boniface. The submission concerned a funding request of \$25,000 for the Southland Warm Homes Project.

His Worship clarified the Council had signalled in its Annual Plan that it ask the community whether funding of \$25,000 for this project be considered. It had not been included in the budget at this stage.

Cr Sharp asked if it was possible for the power retailers to repay the ratepayers via savings on power bills.

R McKeown said both Meridian and Contact had been approached and were not prepared to make any repayments.

Cr Gardyne said it was indicated in the submission what other local authorities had contributed towards the project. He felt the request to the Council for \$25,000 given its population size, was quite high in comparison to the Invercargill City and Southland District Councils. Was it considered appropriate?

N Boniface said the problem was a number of Invercargill based organisations were contributing funds for the project and he was concerned it would not be spread across the region. He would expect the Council to tag its funds for retro-fit insulations in the Gore District to protect its investment. He agreed \$25,000 was a little high when calculated on population base.

R McKeown referred to the contributions of \$62,500, \$30,000 and \$15,000 from Dunedin City, Central Otago and Clutha District Councils respectively.

Cr Gardyne asked if it would be appropriate to put a type of encumbrance against the property title for a period of five to ten years, given public funding had been spent on improvements to privately owned houses.

N Boniface said there had been some debate on this issue and agreed there could be a capital benefit, but the overwhelming good for the community outweighed it. He did not believe any further value would be added if a property was insulated. If the project did not go ahead, pre 1978 homes would never be insulated. The benefits to the community overrode any personal advantage to be gained. The landlords could possibly expect a gain, but there would be a statutory clause that kept rent from being increased for a certain period, which is yet to be determined, and the retro-fit had to be repaid within a two year period. The project would improve the quality of people's lives.

Cr Grant asked if the Maita Licensing Trust had committed any funds to the project.

N Boniface said Energy Smart had not approached the Trust as it had already committed funding to retro-fitting 50 homes in the Gore District, but it would approach the Trust in the future. He asked if the Council could record the retro-fit on its LIM or property reports.

Cr Davis asked about the possibility of Council getting its money back by way of a loan.

N Boniface said it would depend on the Community Trust of Southland's decision. If it decided to give an interest free loan for five years, it would be lodged with all the Councils on a population basis, and interest could be claimed back from EECA. When the money was uplifted, a scheme would be put in place to cover the interest. Some administration costs would need to be provided by each Council and it was currently being worked on.

Cr Davis queried whether the contribution at this stage would be unrecoverable.

N Boniface replied it would add to the value of the homes in the Gore area.

Cr Davis said there had been some confusion about it and she had been under the impression that it could be repaid to the Council.

N Boniface replied it could not.

New Zealand Historic Places Trust

The submission had been circulated and was presented by Mr Owen Graham, Otago Southland Area Manager of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. The submission concerned implementation of a schedule of heritage buildings, inventory of archaeological sites, establishment of a Heritage Incentive Fund, preparation of District Heritage Strategy and Inventory, discounting rates and consent fees, discretion on earthquake strengthening on heritage buildings, Willowbank windmill repairs and inter-agency co-operation.

Cr Gardyne asked how historic places were funded locally and did the Trust put funding towards the issues noted in the submission. Secondly, he asked whether the Willowbank windmill repairs would be funded locally.

O Graham understood the Gore District had assumed responsibility for the windmill, so it would require community support. The Trust could provide assistance with preparation of plans and seeking funding, but not consultations. The Trust was funded by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. It had limited funds to put into capital works. Owners of Category 1 properties had the opportunity to apply to the National Heritage Preservation Fund, for assistance up to \$50,000.

Federated Farmers – Southland Province

The submission had been circulated and was presented by Andrew Morrison and John Gardyne concerning transparency of the draft Annual Plan, proposed rates increase, increasing organisational capacity, proposal to employ an Asset Planner, Rooding Supervisor and a Community Development Officer, funding for parks and reserves, rooding, community outcomes, healthy homes programme, kerbside recycling and rubbish collection, and reform of local government funding.

Eastern Southland Federated Farmers

The submission had been circulated and was presented by Andrew Morrison concerning employment of an Asset Planner, Assistant Rooding Supervisor and Community Development Officer, explanations for administration increases in parks and reserves, and increased rooding performance criteria. He asked for the Rooding Manager's monthly report to be included on the Council's website again.

Cr Davis asked for examples of how other Councils had contributed to funding for the Healthy Homes Initiative.

John Gardyne thought Councils had probably approached private enterprises such as the Mataura Licensing Trust or other Trust's in their communities, and he would provide that information.

Cr Sharp referred to the administration costs for parks and reserves, was it correct?

A Morrison said it had been worked out from the estimates available prior to the Annual Plan being drafted.

Cr Gardyne asked for clarification of a possible change of contributions concerning healthy homes from the current 1:3 EECA subsidy, soon to increase to 1:2.

J Gardyne said the subsidy from EECA was expected to increase, so it might not be beneficial for the Council to make contribution yet.

His Worship asked what particular scheme he was referring to. Was it the rental scheme?

J Gardyne was unsure.

Gore Rural Ratepayers Group

Messrs Peter Hargest and Mark Copland presented the submission concerning the 7.53% rate increase, proposed creation of an Asset Planner, Assistant Roothing Supervisor/Manager, and a Community Development Officer, refuse, energy, parks and reserves.

Cr Sharp asked if the Group was aware the Rates Rebate Scheme was government funded.

M Copland said he was aware it was.

P Hargest added the point being made was the alarmingly high statistic of 1 in 5 eligible for the Scheme in the District.

Cr Grant asked how it compared to other Districts

P Hargest replied he had not made the comparison.

Cr Bolger asked for a comparison on the Rates Rebate Scheme eligibility to be submitted.

Cr Heller said it was “perceived” by the government that 1153 people were entitled to the subsidy.

Cr Bolger asked about the return of \$130,000 to funding for rural roading seal extensions and asked whether the rural ratepayers would be pleased to have a 6% rates increase.

P Hargest replied that it would not be an increase if \$130,000 was removed from parks and reserves.

Cr Bolger said those two activities were not linked at all.

P Hargest asked if the rumours about fuel cards were true or not.

Cr Bolger asked for a request to be submitted to the Chief Executive about fuel cards.

A copy of the submission was to be tabled. It was received subsequent to the hearing, and is attached as Appendix 3, forming part of these minutes.

The meeting concluded at 4:37 pm.