

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MONTHLY MEETING OF THE GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL, HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 29 CIVIC AVENUE, GORE, ON TUESDAY 28 OCTOBER 2008, AT 7:35 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 Stephen Parry), General Manager, Corporate Services (Mr Russell Duthie), General Manager, District Assets (Mr Paul Withers), Parks and Recreation Manager (Mr Ian Soper), Roading Manager (Mr Murray Hasler), Asset Manager, Utilities (Mr Ross Haslemore), HR/Administration Manager (Susan Jones) and 4 members of the public in the Gallery.

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Grant, seconded by Cr Sharp, **THAT** the Minutes of the Ordinary Monthly Meeting of the Gore District Council, held on Tuesday 23 September 2008, as presented, be confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a true and complete record.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Bolger, seconded by Cr Harvey, **THAT** the Minutes of the Extraordinary Monthly Meeting of the Gore District Council, held on Tuesday 14 October 2008, as presented, be confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a true and complete record.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr McLennan, seconded by Cr Dixey, **THAT** the Report of the Meeting of the Regulatory and Planning Committee, held on Tuesday 14 October 2008, as presented, be accepted as an accurate and complete record.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr McLennan, seconded by Cr Dixey, **THAT** the recommendations contained within the report of the Regulatory and Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 14 September 2008, as presented, be ratified.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Bolger, seconded by Cr Davis, **THAT** the report of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Tuesday 14 October 2008, be accepted as an accurate and complete record.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Bolger, seconded by Cr Highsted, **THAT** the recommendations contained within the report of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Tuesday 14 October 2008, as presented, be ratified.

2. OPERATIONS BULLETIN

The Council perused the Operations Bulletin containing reports from the Animal Control contractor, Asset Manager, Utilities, Roading Manager and the Civil Defence Officer.

Report of the Roading Manager (2.1.7)

In response to Cr Dixon, the Manager advised the Council used MWH for seal design which was a very specialised area. The Council did not have expertise in-house to do the work. MWH was also managing the re-seal contract.

Cr Harvey referred to the camber in Devon Street which was quite uneven. He recalled something was to have been done about it.

The Manager advised some years ago there had been a proposal to lower Devon Street and it was cost prohibitive. He recalled the Council was to include white lane lines along the street. Before the next reseal some smoothing work would be undertaken.

In response to His Worship, the Manager said a Streetscape Working Party had been established but it had been delayed due to the wind farm resource consent hearing. A meeting would be arranged shortly.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Davis, seconded by Cr Dixey, THAT the Operations Bulletin be received.

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4. GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATION ON VENTURE SOUTHLAND – REMUNERATION (50.49.2/46.11.1)

A report had been received from the Chief Executive following a request from Cr Heller for additional remuneration as the Council's representative on the Board of Venture Southland.

Venture Southland was not a separate legal entity and any extra remuneration payable to the Council's representative would have to be paid out of the remuneration pool for elected members as set by the Remuneration Authority. An adjustment in salaries for other Councillors would then need to be made to cover the remuneration payable to the Council's representative.

Three options to accommodate the request were suggested, namely increasing the remuneration to Cr Heller, appointing another Councillor to the Board or making an outside appointment to represent the Council's interests. Any Director's fee would need to be added to the democracy budget.

Cr Heller said the joint stakeholders agreement was in place until 2012 and he believed the previous Council and the current Council had overlooked the time involvement that was required with Venture Southland. He appreciated there was a remuneration pool for the Councils. He sat on a Directorate that had six members, three of whom were independent and were paid a meeting fee. The other three members were appointed by the territorial authorities two of whom were paid from the remuneration pool for those two Councils. Because of his accounting experience, he was Chair of the Audit Committee and also involved in establishing appropriate accounting standards. He did not expect other Councillors to take a reduction in salary. The appointment of an independent Director may be the best option, but he would not continue with his involvement with Venture Southland without payment of a director's fee.

Cr Heller declared an interest and withdrew from the meeting.

His Worship said the Council needed to take the management and policy setting of Venture Southland seriously. He reiterated comments from the Chief Executive that he had spoken also to a number of Directors who had intimated that Cr Heller had been a godsend because of his accounting ability and was adding value to the Directorate.

Cr Harvey had sympathy for Cr Heller with the time involved. He had spent seven years as the Council's representative and received a mileage reimbursement. He thought it unwise for the Council to start paying people to be a Director. It would be much better if it was sorted when the appointments were made at the start of a Council term. He felt Cr Heller should be a full representative of the Gore District Council.

Cr Dixon said if the Council did nothing then it would not have a representative.

His Worship said if Cr Heller resigned, a further appointment would have to be considered in due course.

Cr Gardyne thought it both embarrassing and sad for Councillors arguing about the pot of money that was disbursed amongst them. He agreed it would establish a precedent but thought Venture had a responsibility if it was loading work onto Cr Heller as a result of his abilities and experience, and it should be paying. Venture's ability to keep putting its hand out never ceased to amaze him. If the pot of money was to be rejigged, then he questioned whether the Chairs of the Regulatory and Community Services Committees needed to be retained, given the few agenda items those Committees had at times. Perhaps the Deputy Mayor could be Chair of all Committees and blood newer Councillors to be deputy Chairs.

He referred to the time spent by three previous Councillors on the District Plan hearings panel who had received no remuneration at all yet had spent in the order of 500 hours on the work. The Council needed to be careful where it went with the request. When Cr Heller stood for Council, he stated he wanted to give more back to the community but at no time did he acknowledge he wanted to charge for that service.

Cr Gardyne added that Cr Heller had been absent from December, March and July Council meetings and suggested he balance his contribution.

Cr Davis questioned why Venture Southland did not have the expertise in house and relied on the expertise of Cr Heller. Why did the Gore District Council have to supply it?

Cr Sharp asked why Venture did not employ an auditor.

His Worship replied it did. Cr Heller had been appointed Chair of the Audit Committee.

Cr Grant asked if the job had grown since Cr Harvey was the Council's representative.

His Worship felt that was unfair.

Cr Harvey said towards the end of his involvement and with the advent of the new Directorate, it was a different atmosphere around the Venture table.

Cr Grant said there was only one other person around the table who had the expertise to do the job and he had already turned it down. He thought that would give the Council an idea of what was involved.

Cr Harvey thought it naïve of some Councillors that Venture should employ an auditor. Anyone with knowledge of company business would know that it was part of the rules to have one. There were people who knew nothing at all of Venture Southland.

Cr Dixon moved THAT the Council investigate the option of appointing an outside Director to represent the Council's interests on Venture Southland.

The motion was seconded by Cr Grant.

Cr McLennan said the motion suggested \$7,000 of the Council's surplus was already accounted for.

His Worship said an independent Director would have to be paid.

Cr McLennan had never been a great supporter of Venture Southland but no-one had ever told him of the value the Council had put into the organisation.

His Worship disagreed and said Venture added a lot of value to the District and province. It was an organisation that the Council was an intrinsic part of and needed to be involved with.

Cr McLennan made a further observation and said the initial budget for Venture was \$1.5 million and it was now up to \$6 million.

In response to Cr Harvey, the Chief Executive said any outside appointment would be responsible to the Gore District Council and reporting processes would need to be put in place to enable the Council to be satisfied that it was being adequately represented by that person.

Cr Bolger acknowledged he had been slow to warm to the concept of Venture but felt it had evolved and would become an important organisation for the region. Cr Heller's contribution was a valuable one and it would be ideal to retain his expertise.

Cr Bolger moved as an Amendment, THAT the Council write to Venture and ask it to address the payment of Director's fees from its budget.

The Amendment was seconded by Cr Sharp.

His Worship pointed out that Cr Heller was the Council's representative. The other two parties were the Southland District and Invercargill City Councils who chose to remunerate their representatives.

Cr Gardyne questioned whether the amendment was appropriate. He wondered if it should sit on the table until such time as the Council had had dialogue with Venture Southland about Cr Heller's workload and whether it would remunerate his work on the two additional Committees.

His Worship did not believe the amendment was a direct negative.

Cr Harvey said going back to Venture asking them to pay for a Director would result in Invercargill City and Southland District paying for the Gore representative. There was one representative who would have a field day. It was a joint Council Committee.

The Amendment was put and it was carried. The Amendment then became the motion, was put and it was carried.

2008/108

Cr Grant asked if Cr Heller was doing more work than the other Directors.

Cr Heller responded and said the accounting work for Venture used to be undertaken by the Southland District Council. Prior to his appointment as a Director, the then Directorate made a decision to transfer all the accounting work in-house. As a result, it had been decided to appoint an Audit Committee and he had been appointed as Chairman. He was unsure of the total time commitment with that. As far as co-ordinating the reporting for Venture, there was time involved. He had already spent a day interviewing three Invercargill accounting firms who would assist Venture with its financial reporting. Now that a firm had been chosen, he would be more involved as he and Venture's Group Manager, Finance and Accountant finalised the accounting structure.

His Worship said it would take time for a response to be received from Venture and he asked whether Cr Heller would be willing to continue in the role until it was finalised one way or the other. For the Council's sake he thought it needed to know it had a representative on board and if not, then it would need to take steps to ensure it had a representative. He asked whether the motion passed would allow him to be the Council's representative in the interim or would he rather step aside.

Cr Heller replied he hoped it would not take 6 months. He had been appointed in May and if something was sorted out in the interim he would continue to represent the Council in the short term. As Cr Gardyne had pointed out his absence from some Council meetings, he said he did attend the Committee meetings. He had not always seen Cr Gardyne at all meetings either. He said he would do it for a further three months.

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Cr Harvey cautioned the Council that it did not wish to fall out with its fellow territorial authorities.

His Worship agreed and said the level of working together by Southland Councils was very good and something that was not obvious in other parts of the country.

Cr Heller returned to the table at 8.28 pm

5. TOUR OF SOUTHLAND CYCLE RACE – REQUEST FOR PROMOTIONAL GRANT (1.62)

A memo had been received from the Chief Executive together with a letter from the Tour of Southland organiser requesting a grant of \$1,000 from the Council to assist with promotion of the event in the Gore District area.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Gardyne, seconded by Cr McLennan, THAT the Council approve a grant in the sum of \$1,000 being advanced in favour of the 2008 Tour of Southland Cycle Race to assist with promotion of the event while it passes through the Gore District,

AND THAT future grants be referred to the annual plan process.

2008/109

6. MATAURA COMMUNITY BOARD REPORT (46.36.2)

A copy of the report of the ordinary meeting of the Mataura Community Board held on 13 October 2008, had been circulated.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Harvey, seconded by Cr Dixon, THAT the report of the meeting held on 13 October be received,

AND THAT the recommendations continued within the report be ratified.

2008/110

Cr Harvey asked whether there was any update on staffing for the Mataura Pool.

The Parks and Recreation Manager advised four applicants had been received, all from the Maitua area.

7. NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY – FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE RATE
(4.3.1)

A memo had been received from the Rooding Manager advising that the NZ Transport Agency had confirmed the financial assistance rate that would apply to the Gore District road funding during the next three financial years from 2009-10 would remain at its current rate.

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr Dixon, seconded by Cr McLennan, THAT the information be received.

2009/111

8. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS (46.12.9)

Cr Dixey reported on the Gore Counselling Centre and the resignation of the current Manager with effect from the end of the year.

Cr Heller said Venture Southland had been asked to undertake a population projection. Infometrics had been employed. It was important as health and education in particular used the population estimates provided by Statistics New Zealand.

The meeting concluded at 8.39 pm