

Insults fly as new council meets

Searing attack on one of two nominees for chairmanship

by Rosemary Roberts

The ink was barely dry on the documents after the swearing-in of the new Northland Regional Council when first-time member Tony Davies-Colley launched a searing attack on one of two nominees for the chairmanship, Craig Brown.

Cr Davies-Colley seized the opportunity to draw the battle lines for the new council when he nominated another new member for the role of chairman, Graeme Ramsay.

Cr Brown survived the attack to win the vote four-three.

Cr Davies-Colley, highest polling candidate of the four council members for Whangarei district and co-owner of the former Port Whangarei, said Cr Brown was "well-known for blundering and blustering" and called for "articulate and visible leadership to unite Northland".

"The leadership role is not a rite of passage ... not a job for

someone's ego, not an old boys' network," he said.

"Our first responsibility is to the region, not to one another."

He said a majority of Northlanders had voted for change and "the old regional council had only survived because there were a lot of candidates".

"The public has spoken and you must consider their voice."

Cr Ramsay then came in with a "good cop" performance, saying that the region was not "making the progress it could be making".

He called for "new ways of doing things".

"It would be a brave decision to elect me as chair — I am a newbie and I am not well known but this is a time for boldness and bravery."

Taking the chair, Craig Brown, a former mayor of Whangarei and long-serving local body politician, acknowledged Cr Ramsay for his tilt at the chair despite being new to council and said they had



TAKE THAT: New Northland Regional Council member Tony Davies-Colley launches an attack on sitting member Craig Brown (at right), at the first meeting of the newly elected council yesterday.

worked together over the years and he believed they would work together in the future just as successfully.

He also acknowledged his



STICKS AND STONES: Sitting Northland Regional Council member Craig Brown in the chair, following a close vote and an attack by new member Tony Davies-Colley. Council CEO Ken Patterson is beside him.

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attacker, saying they were both "pretty hard-nosed".

"I'd like to have thought the attack was made tongue in cheek — but I have a pretty thick hide and I can take it."

He said he believed he and Cr Davies-Colley would "get on with the job together".

Sitting member John Bain was the only nominee for the role of deputy chairman.