

Northland Regional Council meeting – 17th April 2012

[LINK to appropriate Agenda.](#)

Cr Greg Martin from WDC was noticed to briefly appear prior to the commencement of the meeting, to a gallery full of the 'boys from down on the swamp'. He promptly retreated outside, later entering the gallery and closely followed by Cr Phil 'lucky he was close' Halse, only moments before the door was about to close at the commencement of the meeting. *Was it a just a case of needing the cavalry?*

It was 1300hrs and Chairman Craig Brown welcomed all to the meeting and explains the emergency exits and position of rest room facilities.

Chairman Craig Brown paid his respect reading a eulogy as an acknowledgement of the recent bereavement of Mangonui Harbour Warden, Jimmy Osborne. All present rose to their feet and stood for a period of silence, as a mark of respect in remembrance of Jimmy.

1.0 APOLOGIES

Item No.1.0 and there was one apology for Cr Ian Walker.

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Craig Brown reminds them that any '**Declarations of Conflicts of Interest**' were to be advised item by item as they progressed through the agenda and they would be dealt with accordingly and then decided what, if any action is to be taken.

We must wonder if Cr John Bain will be going for some counselling? It appears the micro phobia has again kicked in; as the microphone that stood proudly prior to the meeting, now hangs limply on the table, or is a dose of 'Vi_gra' needed to resurrect it back to its intended erect form, enabling it to relay the 'sounds of John'? Would one really hate to think John has a fear of being heard?

The representatives from Far North District Council had not arrived so Item No. **3.0 PRESENTATIONS** Far North District Council – Collection of Outstanding Rates Arrears, is held off until later in the meeting.

A comment was made that they are possibly held up by road works in the North.

4.0 COUNCIL AND CEO'S OFFICE

4.1 Confirmation of Minutes – 27 March 2012(1303hrs)
No discussion was entered into on this item.

4.2 Chairman's Report to Council (1304hrs)
No discussion was entered into on this item.

Time still at 1304hrs. 4.3 Chief Executive Officer's Report to Council (0hrs)

Cr Joe Carr had a query in regards IRIS on page 22.

CEO Malcolm Nicholson gave a brief explanation to its progress.

Cr John Bain had a query in regards to the LTP and Regional Land Transport Programme hearings dates.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley had a brief query in relation to video conferencing. *This is an interesting topic as we personally have seen how well video conferencing at Far North District Council has worked on some occasions we have been at their meetings.*

Cr Bronwyn Hunt queried the rates return on forestry land.

Craig Brown gave a brief account, but stated it was up to individual councils, rightly or wrongly, how they strike their rates.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley, Cr Joe Carr Cr and Graeme Ramsey all entered into the debate that had been kindled by Bronwyn's query.

Cr Graeme Ramsey made comment that it was most interesting, *by the debate*, who has forestry interests in the committee.

Graeme Ramsey continued with a question back on page 13 in regards to bullet point one.

CEO Malcolm Nicholson made some brief comments to this.

Cr Graeme Ramsey continued by asking about the costs.

Lisa Aubrey, General Manager Finance and IT was asked to give some details which she gave some explanation.

Craig Brown suggested to Graeme Ramsey that he follow this issue up.

Cr Graeme Ramsey continued with questions in relation to the RPS (Regional Policy Statement) on page 24.

Regional Policy Senior Programme Manager, Kathryn Ross gave some details in response.

Cr Graeme Ramsey asked if it would be possible for a copy of the draft and it was confirmed that it would be available.

4.4 Councillor Remuneration (1328hrs)

No discussion was entered into on this item but Cr Graeme Ramsey commented that they had no control over this item any way.

Time still at 0328hrs. 4.5 Process to Appoint New Trustees – Northland Regional Council Community Trust

No discussion was entered into on this item.

4.6 Options to Change Standing Orders (1329hrs)

No discussion was entered into on this item so recommendations 1 and 2 were accepted.

4.7 (Supplementary Item) - Meeting Calendar 2012 Update (1329hrs)

No discussion was entered into on this item *and can also be viewed from the Link at the top of this report.*

As the representatives from Far North District Council had arrived it was now onto Item No. 3.0 at 1329hrs. **PRESENTATIONS**

Far North District Council – Collection of Outstanding Rates Arrears (1330hrs)

Interesting to note the 'Motto' along the top of the FNDC power point presentation; "The place where talent wants to live, work and invest".

Bernard Murphy, General Manager Corporate Services and Cheryl Gavin-Young, Revenue Collection Manager from Far North District Council were there to inform councilors and all on this issue. *Bernard previously worked for WDC in their Finance Department a few years back and by comments we have heard, a very efficient financial employee. Gee, could WDC use someone with those talents now, as their debt continues to escalate out of control?*

Cheryl and Bernard discussed financial statistics of their rate demands.

Cheryl advised they were 'looking for gateways of opportunity to discuss things'. They had 'Rate Easy Pay' plans and the tougher ones were handed to Debt Collection Agencies. Direct Debit agreements were initiated and Bay Corp NZ was used for vigorous collection. Cheryl emphasized it was 'about getting into the network and talking to them'.

Cr Bronwyn Hunt, Cr Graeme Ramsey and Cr Joe Carr asked numerous questions; what targets are set and some of the political slants of the issue.

Bernard Murphy explained, politically, we are going to collect as much as we can. *Great answer Bernard; we need you back down here.*

Cr Bill Rossiter asked how far back they were going.

Cheryl Gavin-Young explained they could only go back 6 years so it was important to work hard at it.

Lisa Aubrey, General Manager Finance and IT gave a brief on NRC's perspective of uncollected rates.

5.0 FINANCE AND IT

Item No.5.1 Financial Report – 31 March 2012 (1402hrs)

Cr Bill Rossiter advised that the noticeable increase in Bio security was bringing it into line for the year to date figure.

6.0 OPERATIONS

Item No.6.1 Receipt of Regional Transport Committee Minutes – 4 April 2012 (1403hrs)

No discussion was entered into on this item.

Time still at 1403hrs. Item No.6.2 Consents Decisions and Progress on Notified Applications in Process, Objections and Appeals

Cr Bronwyn Hunt had a query on the applicant NRC in regards to earthworks and stabilisation (page 85)

Cr John Bain had queries regarding Kiwi Rail (page 88) and also the date of hearing for Mangawhai Harbour Restoration Society (page 89)

Craig Brown confirmed that they all need to know about that one.

Item No.6.3 Hikurangi Swamp Scheme – Transfer of Responsibility (1406hrs)

Craig Brown, referring to page 93, emphasized the operative word in the recommendations, was “consideration”.

Cr Joe Carr wanted to acknowledge the work the WDC had done in the Whangarei CBD regarding flooding. He believed both councils need to consider this item of the agenda.

Cr John Bain advises that he had read it a number of times and it was essential that both the WDC and NRC work closely for the concerns of the people. It must be ‘fair and reasonable; records need to be made available from both NRC and WDC and they must enter into full dialogue. *John, if your microphone had responded to the ‘blue tablet’ treatment, as seen on TV, would more people have heard your ‘election speech’?*

Craig Brown advised that the scheme belonged to the Whangarei District Council but was consented by the Northland Regional Council. He was not prepared to open the present debate up at this meeting for Phil Halse to comment. He reiterated “Consideration” was the right wording.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley claimed it was a sensitive issue and had been involved for some time. He had previously had discussions with WDC and it was correct that NRC could be involved with it. There was clearly a responsibility to the farmers in the area and they were obliged to do so.

Cr Graeme Ramsey queried if they (NRC) were committing themselves to unbudgeted expenditure?

Craig Brown confirmed it was not their (NRC) intention to take the scheme away from WDC but ‘consideration’ to work on it was in order.

Time now at 1414hrs. Item No.6.4 Marine Farm Compliance Inspections and Subsequent Enforcement Options

Cr Joe Carr advised that he would be supporting this item.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley asked if this crisis was a real issue. Will there be an environmental disaster or problem with the structures?

Operations Director, Tony Phipps advised that it was about whether people can afford to do cleanups.

This interesting article is well worth a read; could these sorts of issues also be present if GE projects went bad?

Item No.6.5 Regional Public Transport Plan 2012-2018 (1418hrs)

Cr John Bain gave some details but strongly recommended the reading of the 'Foreword' on page 105.

This whole item is a good read for those interested in how and what NRC does for public transport etc. in Northland (Pages 101 to 136)

7.0 COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Item No. 7.1 Northland Regional Council 2012 Environmental Curriculum Awards (1419hrs)

Chairman Craig Brown advised that the nominations were Cr Bill Rossiter and Cr Bronwyn Hunt and these were duly supported and received. (See page 137,138)

The meeting duly finished at 1421hrs, Chairman Craig Brown thanking those who attended and then the Councilors went into business with the public excluded.

8.0 BUSINESS WITH THE PUBLIC EXCLUDED

Item No. 8.1 Confirmation of Confidential Minutes – 27 March 2012

Item No. 8.2 Northland Regional Council Community Trust – Draft Statement of Intent 2012-2013