

Northland Regional Council meeting - 20th September 2011

[LINK to appropriate Agenda.](#)

It was 1300hrs and it was off to a quick start as Chairman Craig Brown welcomed all to the meeting.

Item No.1.0 and apologies were received for Cr Bronwyn Hunt and Cr Bill Rossiter.

Craig Brown begins the meeting reminding them that Item No. 2.0 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.

He continues by covering some general house-keeping, explaining the location of comfort stations to visitors and 'emergency evacuation procedures' and exits.

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

Item No. 3.1 Northland Intersectoral Forum (NIF) 2010 Achievement Report (130hrs) Aurelia Robertson (NIF coordinator was present), Chris Jenkins, Department of Conservation and Jeanette Wedding from Northland District Health Board gave an overview of the Northland Intersectoral Forum (NIF) and how their organizations were working together. Chris Jenkins explained that fire prevention was of the utmost importance in Northland. Jeanette Wedding emphasized it was about pride in the community. (Report page 1 to 6 on the agenda makes interesting reading

Cr Graeme Ramsey queried how was the commitment to NIF.

Cr Joe Carr asked if there was more NRC can do to help.

Cr Ian Walker commented that the crux of Northlands problems was the economy. He supported the project as working together was better than duplicating services. The region needs to be an attraction to encourage investment.

4.0 COUNCIL AND CEO'S OFFICE

It was now Item No. 4.1 Confirmation of Minutes – 16 August 2011 (1315hrs) there was no debate and this item required no discussion.

Item No. 4.2 Chairman's Report to Council still at 1315hrs.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley, referring to the listed meetings Craig attended, asked if it was going to be renamed from Northland Regional to Northland Ruakaka Council.

Chairman Craig Brown explained that it just happened that way.
Cr Graeme Ramsey queried a meeting held with Ross Blomfield (Real Estate Agent) and Craig Brown gave some brief details.

Item No. 4.3 Chief Executive Officer's Report to the Council at 1317hrs.

Cr John Bain had a query about the Aeromagnetic Minerals survey (page 19)

Acting Chief Executive Tony Phipps explained they were processing raw data and results were to be available in February.

Cr John Bain wondered if there was an update on Kiwi Rail (page 20)

Tony Phipps advised there was no update at this stage.

Cr Joe Carr wished to congratulate Steve Westgate for the work he had done in regards to Stock Effluent dump sites (page 37)

Cr John Bain informed that he had been asked to speak at the opening of the Pararaka stock effluent site and on this occasion he couldn't be accused on speaking 'bovine excrement' *Glad it's others that thought that also and not just some of us.*

Cr Graeme Ramsey had concerns over the Financial Reports (page 25, 26) and felt they hadn't had time to consider it.

Craig Brown was trying to move the meeting on but Cr Ramsey quickly informed he hadn't finished his questions yet, asking about water quality (page 33)

Riaan Elliot, Monitoring Senior Programme Manager gave some details regarding the sewage management plans and issues being faced.

Cr Graeme Ramsey queried the three dairy farms, on page 34, that were facing Farm dairy effluent prosecutions and noticed they were all in Kaipara District queried if Kaipara was more vigilant.

Riaan Elliot advised there was no regional flavor to it as it was all done from the Whangarei office.

Tony Phipps wished to give some clarification to the earlier discussion on the Financial Reports. A lack of time factor in supplying the auditors with information and preparing the report had been an issue. He had made the decision for staff to supply information to the auditors first, as the preferential choice. *I don't think for one moment that Tony dislikes any of the councilors; it was possibly of a financial benefit to supply the auditors first, to keep their costs down rather than rush the report through for the meeting. Nice to know someone is saving ratepayers some dollars.*

It was now Item No. 4.4 Update on Northland Emergency Services Trust (NEST) at 1332hrs.

Cr John Bain declares a 'conflict of interest'.

Cr Graeme Ramsey claims he is disgusted at the time waiting for a confidentiality agreement. *Read this report (page 45 to 47) and ask yourself why there is a need for a confidentiality agreement? What are people fearful of in the NEST accounts?* Cr Ramsey asks where the confidentiality is. Due diligence should make all the information available; he can't understand why any information is confidential. Due diligence is so we are satisfied. He will not be supporting the payment of outstanding monies until appropriate 'due diligence' is undertaken.

Cr John Bain *is trying to bust out of his cone of silence*, but Chairman Craig Brown insists “No” to John.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley queries as to any time frame.

Craig Brown advises “as soon as practicable”.

General Manager CEO’s Office and Projects, Linda Stansfield informs she is waiting for the information.

Craig Brown confirms that the planning process decided the payment of money was not dependant on due diligence. Any future money should be on due diligence. We want the report sooner rather than later. *Who is paying for this report? If parties are dragging it out then they should be paying for the extra time involved as PWC won’t be coming cheap. I say the benefactor of the funding should be bearing the costs of an investigation; if they are not willingly opening up their closet to the donors for inspection. Don’t clobber the poor old ratepayers any more.*

Cr Graeme Ramsey said he was staggered at the time this has taken. They NRC were committed to doing this investigation and the longer it takes ‘it smells like rotten fish’. *Well said Graeme; if it looks like a duck, if it walks like a duck, if it flies like a duck... well then it is most likely to be a duck. So is something really fishy? Sunlight is the best disinfectant.*

Craig Brown advises that they have asked PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC); some are playing with words, but we want an independent report.

Cr Ian Walker explains that this went through an annual plan process and council at the time thought they had done due diligence. It shouldn’t impact on today’s decision but if NEST plays this game it may have an impact on future funding. This region doesn’t need games played risking its future.

Cr John Bain, again wants to have a say and Craig Brown says “Cr Bain, you declared a conflict and you must stay out of it” *I must add, if John had shown his hand a long time ago when publicly asked questions relating to NEST, would he be in this predicament today? You only have yourself to blame John, for not stifling the rumours?*

Craig Brown comments to John Bain; “You can’t interrupt, but you can listen; tell someone to get the report in and get that message through to your people”

It was now Item No. 4.5 Representation Review and Maori Constituencies at 1344hrs. There was only minimal discussion to this item as it was receiving the report.

Item No. 4.6 Review of Local Authorities (Members’ Interests) Act (LAMIA) 1968 (1346hrs)

Cr Graeme Ramsey believed to free up time for more important debate some items like this and others could be circulated separately.

Question: - Does NEST or its Chair/CEO come into this category as payments/funding to it from the NRC exceed \$25,000?

5.0 FINANCE AND IT

Item No. 5.1 Receipt and Confirmation of the Audit and Finance Committee Minutes – 23 August 2011 (1350hrs) No discussion was entered into on this item.

Item No. 5.2 Financial Report to 31 August 2011(still 1350hrs) This item had earlier been discussed and was not to be tabled at today's meeting, therefore it required no discussion so they moved on.

Item No. 5.3 Investment Schedule and Performance – Financial Report to 31 August 2011(1351hrs) No discussion was entered into on this item.

Craig Brown asked “Are you recording this Warren?” and I replied “Trying to, I haven't used a lot of ink”

Craig replied “you haven't heard anybody say anything”

Item No. 5.4 Paid Accounts for Approval – August 2011 (1352hrs)

Cr Graeme Ramsey believed this could go to the Finance and Audit Committee

Craig Brown informed that this too was the full council.

Item No. 5.5 Lease Transactions – August 2011. This item also required no discussion at 1353hrs. This item also needed no further discussion

6.0 OPERATIONS

Item No. 6.1 Confirmation of Environmental Management Committee Minutes – 23 August 2011 (1355hrs)

Cr Joe Carr makes a comment when the minutes are discussed and his chairing of the rivers schemes that they can “sack me when I slip up”. *Not a lot of show of that Joe, as we hear you are doing a good job.*

Item No. 6.2 Receipt of Northland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Minutes – 6 September 2011(1355hrs) No discussion was entered into on this item.

Item No. 6.3 Consents Decisions and Progress on Notified Applications in Process, Objections and Appeals (1357 hrs) and this item required no discussion.

Item No.6.4 Report on Environmental Monitoring for the period 1 August 2011- 31 August 2011. (1357hrs)

Cr Joe Carr commented that staff had been very, very patient with the Far North District Council in regards to conditions of resource consent. (see page 128 for some interesting reading.)

Cr Tony Davies-Colley referred to an item on page 132. Westpoint Farms was owned by him and his share milker had let the side down. He believed a lot of the problems were system management issues and education was the answer. *Good on you Tony for putting your hand up and speaking to the issue.*

Cr Graeme Ramsey made a comment "I take it one farmer has been educated".

Craig Brown in his normal jovial tone to Tony asks "How deep are you going to dig this hole?" Craig, *it will depend on, how much effluent Tony has to bury?*

Craig continued that they had to 'put the motion,' 'excuse the phrase on this'

The motion was carried.

Item No. 6.5 Reserved Area for Commercial Operators at Te Tii Beach, Paihia (1404hrs)

A question was asked and Regional Harbourmaster, Jim Lyle was present and answered the reasons behind the reserved area for commercial operators at Te Tii Beach, Paihia.

Item No. 6.6 Ministry for the Environment 2010-2011 Biennial Survey of Local Authorities (1407hrs) No discussion was entered into on this item

Cr Graeme Ramsey believed this was another item that could have been circulated separately.

NB. Only problem with all this proposed separate circulation is that the agendas are readily available online and in printed copy. With separate circulation, less will be available to the greater population and there will be less flow of information. It could get more like our local District Council if this proposal goes ahead. At least if it's readily available you can't be accused of hiding things. Ask John?

Item No. 6.7 Busabout Kaitaia Concessionary Fare Scheme – Proposal for Local Share Funding (1409hrs)

Cr Ian Walker queried if the \$35,000-00 was the total funding.

Craig Brown advised that there was to be \$35k from New Zealand Transport Authority, NZTA, \$35Kk from NRC and the balance from the local community.

Cr Ian Walker questioned if the funding will be under the control of the NRC Transport operations staff.

Chris Powell, Transport Operations Senior Programme Manager was happy to answer that it will be done under an agreement and not left up to their (Busabout Kaitaia Service) discretion. It will be monitored on a month by month basis for the remainder of the year. This extension will give Kaitaia Bus service the time to build up its clientele and patronage.

Craig Brown enquired if it will go out to tender after this period.

Chris Powell explained sometimes it was cheaper to use existing service providers.

Cr John Bain wants assurance that there will be strict rules. *Are there strict rules with the service that you are associated with and are they open and transparent?*
Cr Tony Davies-Colley insisted that there must be good clarification of points.
Good call Tony, anything that receives ratepayer funding needs to be open and transparent.

7.0 PLANNING AND POLICY

Item No 7.1 Plan Change 4 (Aquaculture) to the Regional Coastal Plan for Northland (1417hrs) this item received no discussion or questions.

Cr Graeme Ramsey takes a sharp intake of breath.

Craig Brown asks “who’s going to ask the question?” “It happened before and Graeme Ramsey didn’t say anything”.

Item No 7.2 Measuring Up: Environmental Reporting – A Discussion Document: potential council submission (1420hrs)

Cr Joe Carr was nominated for the position in the recommendation on page 179.

Acting Chief Executive Tony Phipps gave some clarification to a number of points raised.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley, referring to Joe Carr, “This is a responsible position we are giving you”.

Cr Joe Carr requests that Tony Davies-Colley will be able to assist him.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley confirms that he will.

Item No 7.3 Transitional Policies of the National Policy Statement – Freshwater Management 2011(1428hrs) there was no discussion entered into on this item but

Cr Joe Carr required some clarification to wording in the recommendation.

The meeting finished at 1429hrs, Chairman Craig Brown thanking those who attended and then the Councilors go into business with the public excluded.

Interesting to note today that not one of the microphones were turned on to assist with hearing the discussion; so one can only assume that due to funding they are looking for sponsors for batteries to enable them to use the facilities available to them. Any assistance will be gratefully directed to the microphone monitor.

8.0 BUSINESS WITH THE PUBLIC

- 8.1 Confirmation of Confidential Minutes – 16 August 2011
- 8.2 Receipt and Confirmation of Audit and Finance Committee Confidential Minutes – 23 August 2011
- 8.3 Receipt and Confirmation of Confidential Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting – 6 September 2011
- 8.4 Integrated Regional Information System (IRIS) – Creation of the Council Controlled Organisation
- 8.5 Request to Purchase Freehold Property
- 8.6 Request to Purchase Freehold Property
- 8.7 Potential Appeal on Plan Changes 93 (Urban Transition Environment) and 103 to the Whangarei District Plan
- 8.8 Potential Purchase of Investment Property

Now you might know what the meeting, with the real estate agent, was all about that was queried during Item No 4.2 !!!!!!!