

Northland Regional Council meeting – 21st August 2012

[LINK to appropriate Agenda.](#)

It was 1300hrs and Chairman Craig Brown welcomed all to the meeting explaining the emergency exits and position of rest room facilities. He also explained that he had a damaged ear drum so if seen turning his head to one side he was not being rude. Cr John Bain commented that we now had a one eyed and one eared chair.

Craig Brown asked that councilors leave their microphones on. That was for John Bain of course. *Too late, Johns micro phobia had already set in with the droops set in on the microphone stand as per normal; does it need 'pick me up medication'?*

1.0. APOLOGIES

Item No.1.0 and there was an apology for Cr Ian Walker who would be late as he was attending a funeral.

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 case by case.

Item No. 3.0. PRESENTATIONS

There are no presentations scheduled for this meeting

It was on now with the agenda.

Cr Graeme Ramsey asked if they were trying out a new agenda format.

CEO Malcolm Nicholson advised that they were trying to have pages that were not decisions or reports, separate. They were splitting it between information and governance matters.

Cr Ian Walker arrived during this discussion at 1308hrs.

OPERATIONAL REPORTS

4.0 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO COUNCIL (Pages 1-2) (1309hrs)

Moved by Chairman Craig Brown, seconded by Cr Bill Rossiter.
No discussion was entered into on this item.

5.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT TO COUNCIL (Pages 3-34)

These reports were moved by Cr John Bain, seconded by Cr Bill Rossiter at 1310hrs

Item No. 5.1. Community Representation and Engagement (Page 3)

Item No. 5.2. Economic Development (Page 4)

Item No. 5.3. Resource Management (Page 6)

Item No. 5.4. River Management (Page 14)

Item No. 5.5. Hazard Management (Page 16)

Item No. 5.6. Transport (Page 17)

Item No. 5.7. Support Services (Page 20)

Discussion in relation to the reports above commenced.

Cr Bill Rossiter claimed there was an adding mistake in the report.

Cr Bronwyn Hunt queried the 'Northtec' item on page 5.

Malcolm Nicholson gave some clarification to this.

Cr Graeme Ramsey asked, in regards to page 24 'Maori Language Week', how many staff picked up the offer.

Malcolm Nicholson advised that that will be covered in a presentation to follow by Rachael Ropiha, NRC's Iwi Liason Officer.

Cr Bronwyn Hunt had queries in regards to Waitangi River Illegal diversion and earthworks plus Kaimaumau Swamp vegetation clearance and earthworks items on page 11.

These were duly discussed.

Rachael Ropiha gave a presentation, 'Te Wiki o Te Teo Maori presentation'. She advised there had been a 'haka challenge' from Whangarei District Council. WDC had only 5 participants leaving NRC to win the challenge with 27 participants. Fun had been had by all who participated and attended with WDC reissuing a challenge which was to have a poi challenge.

The NRC with 122 full time staff and WDC with 333 staff it equates to 22% turnout for NRC compared to 0.015% turnout for WDC in the haka challenge. Who has the better teams in the work place?

GOVERNANCE MATTERS

6.0 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Time now at 1324hrs. Item No. 6.1. Minutes of the Council Meeting – 24 July 2012 (Page 35-44)

Moved by Cr Bronwyn Hunt, seconded by Cr John Bain.

No discussion was entered into on this item.

Time at 1325hrs. Item No. 6.2. Minutes of the Audit and Finance Committee – 30 July 2012 (Page 45-56)

Moved by Cr Bill Rossiter, seconded by Cr Bronwyn Hunt.

No discussion was entered into on this item.

Time at 1326hrs. Item No. 6.3. Minutes of the Regional Transport Committee – 1 August 2012 (Page 57-62)

Moved by Cr John Bain, seconded by Cr Joe Carr.

Cr John Bain advised that the cycle ways projects were asked to be recorded at the last meeting.

7.0 FINANCIAL REPORTS

Time still at 1326hrs. Item No.7.1. Regional Rates Collection 2011-2012 – District Council Reconciliations (Page 63-70)

Moved by Cr Bronwyn Hunt, seconded by Cr Ian Walker.

No discussion was entered into on this item.

8.0 DECISION MAKING MATTERS

Time now at 1327hrs. Item No. 8.1. Tax Refund \$1,018,623.12 (Page 71-74)

Cr Joe Carr wanted this item to be addressed after the next agenda item.

Craig Brown advised that this item had been presented for the agenda first. He asked if it should lie on the table until after the next item or discussed together.

It was decided to discuss them together.

Time now at 1329hrs. Item No 8.2. Notice of Motion from Councillor Carr on the Targeted Council Services and the Targeted Land Management Rates (Page 75-80)

Craig Brown advised that there was some information before the councillors which is legally privileged and not for general release.

Cr Joe Carr moved the motion.

Craig Brown asked if there was someone to second the motion and Cr Graeme Ramsey obliged to get the debate going.

Cr Joe Carr asked if staff had contacted any of the councils in regard to have rates refunded if the motion is passed.

Lisa Aubrey, General Manager Finance and IT advised that she had spoken to the 3 councils. It wasn't an issue with Kaipara District Council as they had not set their rates yet. Whangarei and Far North District Councils would need to pass on system and administration costs. WDC had 30% of rates paid up front; the next installment 20 October due for payment 20 November will minimize postage costs. It was not an option to hold a credit and it must be refunded. It was estimated that it would cost \$25,000-00 per council (FNDC & WDC) to cover the costs of the changes and refund administration.

Cr Bronwyn Hunt asked if those costs were above the normal costs to get the payments through the District Councils.

It was confirmed that it was.

Craig Brown asked Joe if his question was answered.

Cr Joe Carr advised that "we as a council should not take an opportunity to grab money. I am disappointed staff hadn't put an alternative forward to make it happen. It is out of sync to what the Local Government Minister is saying to keep rates to a minimum. It is a principle process; operational surpluses have been huge. I believe we owe it to our communities". He continued, reading out the motion (as seen on page 77).

Cr Bill Rossiter advised that they didn't know the tax refund coming until the 14th June. He could not support this motion proposed by Cr Carr; the cost to send out a cheque would equate to approximately \$2-50 per ratepayer.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley sympathized with Cr Carr's empathy to ratepayers. His intention is amicable. It was a tax credit from a capital refund. Timing is important. The clarity of

reporting could be better. We make financial decisions and may have overlooked it. The associated cost of doing this is too great so we must decide what to do with the \$1million. Cr Graeme Ramsey informed that it hadn't been clear with reporting. There had been knowledge in the organization for some time; the issue is we have a wind-fall. How do we apply that for the best interests of the North? We are in tough times and the people of Northland are really hurting; this needs to provide relief for people in Northland.

Cr Ian Walker claims he is a little surprised; economic times haven't changed since I put up my notice of motion. I voted against the rate increase so something has been lost here. This is not a wind-fall; it is a financial management issue. This is a return of capital to the ratepayer. Timing has been bad and I think the rate increase is too high.

Cr John Bain commented that the actions by the financial team have been good and he would not be supporting the motion.

Cr Bronwyn Hunt claimed she didn't disagree with anything that had been said but wanted some clarification.

Craig Brown advised he would allow a point of clarification.

Lisa Aubrey gave some details pointing out this would affect everyone differently.

Cr Graeme Ramsey claimed he had looked at this for some time. He had sympathy with Cr Carr's goal. The refund had been applied for a long time ago; it was not well advertised or discussed, but was well known. It was councils spend of money on a cause, with money raised from council's investments. I believe council staff has behaved appropriately. The money should be spent in the area I was created and would vote against Cr Carr's motion as it was debt for the stadium.

Cr Joe Carr gave his right of reply.

Cr Ian Walker wanted clarification for some of the excesses to be discussed.

Lisa Aubrey gave some details.

Cr Joe Carr and Cr Graeme Ramsey voted in favour of the motion; the balance against it. It was now to discuss the payment to be applied to the internal loan. (Item 8.1)

Cr Joe Carr asked how the \$3million funds were originally obtained from.

Lisa Aubrey gave some details.

Cr Joe Carr asked for an amendment to offset the loan to the debt of the rail corridor.

Cr Graeme Ramsey seconded the amendment to open up the discussion.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley gave some details on investment principles.

Cr Bronwyn Hunt wanted some clarification of the implication of Cr Joe Carr's amendment.

Lisa Aubrey gave some details to assist in a decision being made.

Cr John Bain gave a detailed definition of what was happening and claimed he would be supporting the original motion.

Cr Graeme Ramsey wanted to know how they could get maximum value. He was advised it will reduce the loan from 7 years back to 6 years approximately.

Craig Brown gave his right of reply.

They voted on the amendment. Cr Joe Carr and Cr Graeme Ramsey voted in favour; the rest voted against it.

It was not back to the original recommendation.

Craig Brown moved it and Cr Bill Rossiter seconded the recommendation.

Cr Graeme Ramsey, Cr Tony Davies-Colley and Cr Joe Carr voted against it.

Time now at 1432hrs. Item No. 8.3. Request for Approval to Carry Forward Operational Budget from the 2011-2012 Financial Year into the 2012-2013 Financial Year (Page 81-88)

Moved by Cr Bill Rossiter, seconded by Cr Bronwyn Hunt.

Cr Graeme Ramsey had a query about the Mangawhai Mangrove removal group.

There was also a large amount of discussion about \$30,000-00 towards Maori funding to better Maori engagement.

Cr Bronwyn Hunt gave details of projects that could be assisted by this funding.

Time now at 1450hrs. Item No. 8.4. Request for Approval to Carry Forward Capital Expenditure Budget from the 2011-2012 Financial Year into the 2012-2013 Financial Year (Page 89-94)

Moved by Cr Bill Rossiter, seconded by Cr Tony Davies-Colley.
Cr Joe Carr advised he would be voting against this.

Time now at 1451hrs. Item No. 8.5. Request for Approval to Set Aside Funds in the Environment Fund Reserve from the 2011-2012 Financial Year into the 2012-2013 Financial Year (Page 95-98)

Moved by Cr Bronwyn Hunt, seconded by Cr John Bain.
Cr Tony Davies-Colley asked for some clarification of the poplar and willow distribution. Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Operations Director, Tony Phipps gave some details of the situation.

Time now at 1456hrs. Item No 8.6. 2012 Representation Arrangements Review (Page 99-142)

Linda Stansfield, General Manager - CEO and Projects gave a presentation of this project. *I must say Linda's presentation was informative and professionally undertaken.*

Cr Graeme Ramsey claimed it was a job well done but there were some questions. Clarification was sought about if a candidate had to reside in an area; it was confirmed that the nominator and the seconder needed to reside in the area.

Moved by Cr John Bain, seconded by Cr Joe Carr.

Time now at 1515hrs. Item No 8.7. RMA Principles Technical Advisory Group Report – Potential Council Feedback (Page 143-150)

Moved by Cr Graeme Ramsey, seconded by Cr Bill Rossiter.
Cr Joe Carr requested a copy of the draft being submitted.
Cr Tony Davies-Colley confirmed that the Regional Policy Statement Committee have done a great job.

Time now at 1517hrs. Item No. 8.8 Northland Regional Road Safety Action Plan 2012-2015 (Page 151-172)

Moved by Cr John Bain, seconded by Cr Joe Carr.
Cr Joe Carr advised Northland is lambasted with finances to make safe improvements to roads.

Special Note – There was a large amount of debate about financial surpluses that the NRC was attempting to allocate to appropriate divisions.
Does our District Council finally have some benefits in having high debt? Not having to debate such issues.

The meeting duly finished at 1518hrs, Chairman Craig Brown thanking those of us who attended and then the Councilors went into business with the public excluded.

9.0 BUSINESS WITH THE PUBLIC EXCLUDED (Pages 173-174)

9.1. Confidential Chief Executive Officer's Report to Council (Pages 175-176)

9.2. Confirmation of Confidential Minutes

9.2.1 Confidential Minutes of the Council Meeting – 24 July 2012
(Pages 177-182)

9.2.2 Confidential Minutes of the Audit and Finance Committee – 30 July 2012
(Pages 183-186)

9.3. Property Purchase for Whāngārei Detention Dam Site (Pages 187-190)

All information in regards to this meeting's agenda and others are available on the Northland Regional Council website by clicking on this [link](#).