

Whangarei District Council meeting - 15th December 2010

Today's meeting started after all standing for the Mayor and a moments silence while the mayor had been saving his voice over a number of meetings prattled on interrupting the silence. Mayor Cutforth had a few birthday announcements and also commented 'he was celebrating his wedding anniversary which had been 44 years of very, very hard work'. Fairly comforting words from a marriage celebrant; our condolences must go to Jillian; we can see the problem you may have had with someone changing their mind on everything.

I had earlier presented, to His Worship, at the completion of the earlier Finance meeting, a small piece, of what I believed was an important item of specialised, un-calibrated equipment that he might find some what helpful today. He did thank me for the stop watch prior to the commencement of the public forum and that Carol would master it over the Christmas break.

The 'Public Forum' had some interest with four contenders battling for the councillor's attention span.

First out of the stall was Craig Brown, Northland Regional Council Chairman. Briefly he wanted to state publicly that the NRC wanted to work with all councils after 3 years of discontented relationships between them. It was time to make Regional Council relevant to the man in the street. He wanted to look council in the eye and show a willingness to work with them and offered an olive branch for the next 3 years. Good call Craig and all over in 2 minutes 07seconds.

Second off the rank was Emma Cribb. Mayor Cutforth had commented 'there were bets on if Emma would go over her time'. Her concern was the beautiful Whangarei Falls; the kids swimming in foul water and the air filled with foul language. Her plea to council to clean up the area and surrounds of rubbish, bad fences and ensure its appearance is for the better of Whangarei. Sorry Morris, someone loses- Emma was done and dusted in 2minutes 30seconds, so "tote" must be closed.

A well prepared speech followed with Julia Willemen speaking with much support in the gallery holding messages to council, on the proposed Motorsport Park at Gomez Road. [Click for a full copy of Julia's speech.](#) Well executed and surprise, surprise no questions from councillors, all being over with 3 seconds to spare.

Last but by no means least Mr Paul Berks with a sincere message; Consult early, Consult often. He believes council needs outside help with its vision to the future, professional help. As a young medical student he was told "Do no harm". His opinion is the Town Basin is important to everyone so perhaps his message is to listen to the community. His message hopefully got through in 2 minutes 42seconds.

The public forum completed and no apparent timing issues, but then some claim there were none last month. How wrong they are !!!!!

Item 2, the minutes from the previous meeting were all approved with no issues needing any discussion from them. Strange, there was no mention of faulty timing in the public forum last meeting, for Bev Woods.

Item 3, the Police report and Area Commander Inspector Paul Dimery was back after being noticeably absent for a few meetings. Paul made it quite clear, expect to be stopped and checked over the Christmas break during a major operation. For this he had no apologies as his team will be out and about to make Whangarei a safer place to be. There have been many arrests and domestic violence is again on the climb. We must as a community not accept this type of behaviour. There was much violent offending by youngster and he believed they don't understand the consequences. A very informative report by Inspector Dimery and followed by a number of questions from Cr Sue Glen, Cr Aaron Edwards, Cr Crichton Christie and Cr Sharon Morgan with substantial answers by Paul. Sorry Paul went over his three minutes and spent 22 minutes on his report. Personally we would like to wish Paul and his team a Happy Christmas, a safe New Year with good positive policing results from their strategic enforcement operations.

Items 4 and 5 were Notices of Motion by Cr Brian McLachlan regarding Parking charges at the Town Basin and Cycle ways between the Town Basin and Whangarei Falls. Both motions were changed with appropriate amendments. It was blatantly obvious Cr Warwick Syers doesn't like this style of open governance and appeared to be against these items. Would it be out in the open and out of the closet one day perhaps for him? I suppose secret squirrel politics gives some degree of anonymity and less accountability which may suit some people.

Item 6. A Notice of Motion by Cr Merv Williams regarding Northland Hockey's request for another turf. It was pleasing to see Cr Crichton (Mr. Hockey) Christie leave the chamber for the duration of this item.

Item 7. and it was all on. This item Elected Member Remuneration really struck a chord with probably the most debate and discussion of all items on the agenda today. Some believed some of the recommendations were unfair while others were just not really happy and calling for division. There is a real division showing in this council and there are some not so happy campers.

Item 8. Was all about Committee appointments and this was all over in less than a minute so not as critical as the last item which may hit ones pocket.

Item 9. Final consideration for Plan change 94 Papakainga Housing and Cr Shelley Deeming claims she was pleased to see it through. Cr Kahu Sutherland wanted to thank all those that have been involved and got it to this stage. This item was all over in less than two minutes so obviously not as complex as "Elected Member Remuneration".

The new Regional Policy Statement, Item No. 10, is a very comprehensive document and only kindled a little discussion from Cr Aaron Edwards, a greenie, who has concerns about climate change either being accepted or not accepted, believes it may be embarrassing for council. Cr Sue Glen commenting that 'all were entitled to their own views on climate change'. Sorry Aaron, they appear to be more interested in "Elected Member

Remuneration” than the well being of our future and environment and this was proven by this item all finished in also under two minutes.

It's obvious some really want objects to remember as the next Item No.11 moved by Deputy Mayor Cr Phil Halse was bandied around for the next 44 minutes. I must agree it was a good debate but those really in the know could understand why some took particular stance on this issue. There were issues about the hub, Art museum and bus station to name a few. When you look at the plans there are 3 hotels. Where, I ask are they going to get all the people from to sustain these activities. A proposed amendment to the motion by Cr Jeroen Jongejans encouraged some lively comments and even personal slurs towards his Tutukaka business. After this prolonged debate Jeroen decided it best to withdraw his amendment and the item proceeded with comments from most councillors. The only councillor that seemed to miss this bus was Cr Greg Martin who on all accounts made no comments on this, but even CEO Mark Simpson and Group Manager Environment Paul Dell were in to this interesting discussion. Cr Merv Williams obviously had some grave concerns, as depending on the outcome regarding the Art Museum, he was serious about tendering his resignation from that. Merv Williams is perhaps one that has his principals as only he and Cr Brian McLachlan voted against this item.

The meeting concluded at 1224hrs with the meeting being adjourned until tomorrow at 0900hrs to a session with public exclusion and we thought Morris wanted open and transparent council, but then again I suppose some items may have to be cautiously discussed.

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

[LINK to appropriate Agenda](#) (see how I make it easy)