

Whangarei District Council meeting - 24th November 2010

Today's meeting started with a brief introduction after all standing for the Mayor. This mayor only believes in 'Claytons Prayers' as we had a prayer without having one if you know what I mean. ([Claytons explained](#)) Just another 180 degree turn by the mayor, so we are now getting used to it.

The new 'Public Forum' created some interest, as the timer was definitely programmed in the Councils favour (1min26sec & 1min 21sec) by interrupting the first speaker on a number of occasions, Bev Woods who discussed the Regional Policy Statement presently before the Northland Regional Council. Public Forums were deemed to be 3 minutes.

Second off the rank was a well known critic of council, Mr Mike Mansell; but by his report now a supporter of council, bouquets flying to those in front of him. In response the mayor commented 'Thanks Mike for your encouragement, I do hope that we are um, more than just lip service'

It is apparent that Cr Syers doesn't like the idea of public forums. This assessment is made by his comments made about the timing problems experienced and some wanting the presenter to have more time and him seeing a situation getting out of control in the future. Just get a decent stopwatch; one like accountants use when billing clients rather than just a cheap egg timer.

Item 2, the minutes from the previous meeting were all approved with no issues developing from them.

Item 3, the Police report and the Mayors memory again failed forgetting the name of the Inspector introduced only minutes earlier. A little hint Morris, see the [attachment](#) and all can be revealed to save calling Inspector Clifford Paxton, 'What's your name' in future. A plea by the police to all watch carefully over friends and families during the coming festive season with added pressures of alcohol and financial difficulties influencing peoples judgment. Tourist spots are becoming targets for thefts, so please

hide any valuables out of sight in vehicles to help prevent opportunist crimes.

The Code of Conduct, Item No 4, created some debate. One councillor felt the need for more restraint was not required and voted accordingly, not supporting the change for more action allowed to be taken on complaints against an elected official.

Item No 5, the Appointment of Committees raised some concern by Cr Kahu Sutherland in regards to the CEO Review Committee. He wished that it be changed and held in the 'Confidential' section of the meeting to avoid some embarrassment to some. Shame on you Kahu, why take something that should be aired in the open back to a "Secret Squirrel Type of Council". The CEO or any others should be able to take any borax if there may be embarrassment to any. An old saying 'if it's too hot in the fire.....' This item was duly decided and to be held in Confidential.

Cr Sutherland wanted to be on the 20/20 Inner City Development Sub-Committee and others, (Cr Syers) saw a potential conflict of Interest as Kahu has involvement with contracts in the Town Basin area. Fortunately it was defended by Kahu's mate Simo, (who Kahu had earlier batted for keeping the CEO review Committee in Confidence) who felt there was no conflict. This matter was passed with Cr Sutherland included. Later it was blatantly obvious that Cr Brian McLachlan was not wanted on the Harbour Dredging Committee. Do you think that they were probably concerned Brian may have dredged up something they didn't want to know about?

Elected Members Appointments in Item No 6 had some changes to be made and these were outlined by Cr Halse, as in a couple of the appointments, there were conflicts with him being a trustee in some organisations. Surely conflicts should be notified when there are associations with family members being involved in senior positions in some of these associations. Maybe stronger magnification is needed on the glasses of those checking these issues, as it is understood there may be other conflicts and some just choose to ignore them.

Rejoining Local Government New Zealand membership Item No 7 was passed unanimously. This was pleasing as it was an issue that I personally campaigned on, but picked up by Morris after my mention of it. Oh my gosh, he hasn't done a flip/flop on this one, but others who vigorously challenged me on it during the campaign let it slip through the cracks. The majority of councillors re-elected had last term unanimously voted to scrap membership to LGNZ. A change of mind, or maybe this meeting was a tad out of their concentration span going longer than what they had been accustomed to. Finally, in my opinion, a victory to sensible governance is initiated by rejoining LGNZ.

Item No 8 and a special licence was granted to Whangarei Boys High School. It was great to see Al Kirk present to council a sound list of good reason to grant a licence for their School Leaver Ball. Al Kirk certainly runs a tight ship up there and has conducted responsible functions for over the previous ten years. Al you are doing a good job 'developing boys into fine men.' Fideliter, keep up the good work.

Item No 9 and Item No 10 were items for road maintenance in North Central and Southern areas and these were duly passed with a couple of alterations for errors in the figures presented not adding up correctly for the recommendation tabled. This was obviously displeasing to the CEO who apologised and stated "he was having some words with some people afterwards as it was not good enough"

Items 11 and 12 were removed from the agenda and upon questioning from Cr Williamson will be discussed at a later date. Could one be scheduled for confidential? We must wait and see.

It was good to see Stan Semenoff and Vince Cocurullo there to witness the about-turns by the new mayor. Many of these issues, the turn-about have occurred with, were extremely important election campaign subjects. Were the hooks in the ceiling, at the rear of the chamber, there to thread the strings through for the puppeteers at the back, possibly mentoring the new mayor?

The meeting concluded at 1118hrs with the meeting moving to a section with the public excluded. I along with others thought Morris campaigned on 'open and honest meetings' or is my memory failing me. Is the transparency fogging over a little?

[LINK to appropriate Agenda](#)