

Whangarei District Council meeting – 24th October 2012.

[LINK to appropriate Agenda](#)

[LINK to Supplementary Agenda No1](#) - Whangarei District Council *Public Forum* -

We are asked to all stand for 'His Worship, the Mayor'. A large proportion attending in the public gallery, remain seated for his entry to the chamber. He releases them from standing and allows them to sit down.

There were no apologies for today's meeting

At 1000hrs Morris remains standing and claims he doesn't have any words of wisdom today but wanted to thank the councilors and staff for all their work.

[Link to Morris Cutforth Christmas email](#). - 21st December 2010 - Just to remind you all why he stood for mayor

Time still at 1000hrs and Supplementary Item No.1, the 'Public Forum' (Page 1)

Morris invited the first speaker forward to speak. He was Bart van der Meer who was proposing setting up a Volunteer Centre in Whangarei. They needed local support and were looking for a partnership with this council.

Cr Aaron Edwards asked Bart to elaborate on what he had spoken about at the Work Task Force previously.

Bart gave some details of this and thanked council for today's opportunity to present.

The second speaker was invited to come and address the council. This was Kim Feickert who was to speak on Infrastructure and Services, particularly roading and sealing extensions. He wanted council to explain why 'Massey Road' was not to be done when in council's own document claims it has a higher benefit ratio than the ones council has approved for resealing. (Council had approved McKinley Road, Whangaruru North Rd and Old School Rd at Infrastructure and Services meeting 10th October 2012) He made his personal comments about in particular McKinley Road, about a proposed subdivision and was it being sealed in anticipation of this project. *Fair comment, are not developers supposed to fund projects that they directly benefit from?*

His time was over and he requested two more minutes. After stuttering and fumbling around, not making a lot of sense; not putting it to the vote of councilors as originally quoted, Morris told him he had ½ minute left. *A bad display of chairmanship certainly would have had this presenter feeling 'fobbed off'.* Morris told him to contact council staff to arrange a meeting. *A good 'chair' would have stated "I have logged in the minutes that two councilors will be appointed to arrange to meet with yourself and Infrastructure staff in an attempt to hopefully find an acceptable way forward in explaining or solving this issue. If that is unacceptable you may wish to present again to council at a later date". But you are right he is not a good chair person.*

It was now still 1012hrs. Item No. 2. Minutes of a Meeting of the Whangarei District Council held 26 September 2012. (Page 2)

Moved: Cr Greg Martin, Seconded: Cr Jeroen Jongejans.

Morris advised this also included the confidential minutes. (*Did they know that before it was moved and seconded?*)

There was no discussion on this item.

With time still at 1012hrs it was Item No.3. Minutes of an Extra-ordinary Whangarei District Council meeting held 20 September 2012. (Page 5)

Moved: Cr Jeroen Jongejans, Seconded: Cr Sharon Morgan.

Again Morris advised this also included the confidential minutes after it was moved and seconded.

There was no discussion on this item.

*Surely there should have been a 'Point of Order' raised after both Agenda Items No 2 and No 3, where Morris added **after** they had voted on, that these items included the Minutes of the Confidential as in Items C.1 and C.2. How come you missed this Cr Merv Williams?*

With time now at 1013hrs it was Item No.4. Police Report. (Page 8)

The report can be found in the on line agenda.

Morris Cutforth invites Acting Area Commander Tracy Phillips (Inspector Tracy Phillips) to speak to the meeting. Tracy advises of the privilege she recently had being involved with the military parade. Sadly the visitor's bus was entered and personal belongings removed. It was still a very positive event. Tracy continued highlighting a number of the contents in her report to council. Tracy was happy to accept questions to her.

Cr Phil Halse asked that with the influx of campers to our district was there adequate police presence to cover.

Tracy Phillips assured him there was and that they were constantly monitoring areas for the demand of police presence.

Cr Merv Williams asked if council could offer congratulations yet, for the Area Commanders position.

Tracy Phillips advised that she had been recommended for the position which was past the 1st hurdle, but the selection was still being completed going through the correct HR (Human Resources) process.

Morris Cutforth thanked the 'acting superintendant' her for the report.

Morris you need to sit down with your 'master of arms', Sergeant Syers to brush up on getting 'Ranks' correct. Tracy Phillips is Inspector Tracy Phillips. But if you get Warwick to speak slowly for you, you may just get it.

This report was received and moved: Cr Sue Glen, Seconded: Cr Shelley Deeming.

With time now at 1017hrs it was Item No.5, 2011-2012 Annual Report. (Page 11)

Morris wanted to acknowledge Mr John Scott from Audit New Zealand being present at today's meeting. John Scott gave a brief on the Annual Report 2011-2012.

Link to Annual Report 2011-2012. Sorry this is not yet available on WDC website.

Moved: Cr Warwick Syers, Seconded: Cr Brian McLachlan.

Cr Warwick Syers advised that it had been a mixed year and went on about all the great things they had done. *Praise, praise, praise! Watch you don't dislocate you shoulder patting yourself on the back.*

After Cr Syers bold introduction to the report, Cr Aaron Edwards informed the meeting that 'alongside some of the positives one of the negatives is in solid waste with it not meeting its performance requirements'.

Cr John Williamson had concerns at the amount of money being written off and asked John Scott to clarify asset recognition.

Mr John Scott advised that 'an asset is recognized only if it has 1 year of useful life'.

CEO Mark Simpson in regards to the issue of depreciation claimed that it hadn't been done since the 1980's and now they are doing these studies on them. *So where does the accountability lie and where does the buck stop? It's the ratepayers again that fit the bill for inadequacies by management.*

Cr Merv Williams had concerns at the high percentage of revenue that has been written off. Some of the write backs are excessive; \$5million, \$1.7million etc.

Merv asked the auditor "is our position sustainable, are you signing these off as they reflect strongly back over previous years".

Mr John Scott advised that council have adapted an accountancy framework. He added, look at your latest Long Term Plan and if you stick to your limits and are conservative. *I didn't really hear a YES to Merv's question but some careful words of caution from Mr Scott.*

Cr Merv Williams confirmed that "you had a problem adopting these accounts as accurate and doubted if he will be voting for this".

Cr Brian McLachlan confirmed he understood where Cr Williams was coming from, we are a non-profit organization and 'cash should be king.'

Cr Sharon Morgan suggested that Cr Syers had spoken about 'heavy infrastructure' and she would like to speak about 'soft infrastructure' they had achieved; Art Museum, Gardens, Matapouri Track etc.

Cr Phil Halse had concerns about service delivery not being attained. He wanted an 'Improvement Plan" implemented (see Page 17 in the Annual Report 2011-2012)

Cr Crichton Christie, rising to his feet, claimed the report was an interesting read and could be interpreted in many ways. There were two things of concern; 1/ Operating Costs were way up from budget; it was \$8.5million more than it should be. 2/ they keep highlighting 'storm events'; we have them every year they should not be excuses to be used all the time. They should have funds put aside for these regular events. *Dead right Crichton there appears to be little or no focus in building up reserves for these types of ongoing costs. Just like preventative maintenance on all assets; it must be budgeted for, before spending on wants of a few. Focus on the basic infrastructure needs for the district and stop wasting valuable resources of monuments of grandeur.*

Cr Warwick Syers, in his right of reply, wished to clarify some of the issues brought up by speakers. Some definitely go back to the 80's and staff m\have now been made aware; good on Audit NZ for catching up. *What about 'accountability' by the Finance manager and CEO or are they exempt from enquiry?*

A division was called for in adopting of the report. There was only one councillor that voted against this. It was Cr Merv Williams. *Good on you Merv, for having the courage to say it as it is and stand by it with the vote. You said earlier that "you had a problem adopting these accounts as accurate and doubted if he will be voting for this" and stood by that statement.*

With time at 1045hrs it was Item No.6. Tender Report for Contract 12047 Stormwater and Sewerage Maintenance and Operation. (Page 12)

Cr Greg Martin advised that he was withdrawing from this item.

Greg is a farmer in the 'Hikurangi Swamp' and this could be seen as a conflict of interest in this item.

[Link to property?](#) What about all the discussions he has been involved in as Chairman of Infrastructure and Services; has he declared COI in all relevant Hikurangi Swamp items?

CEO Mark Simpson also declared an interest as a trustee for a block of land at Hikurangi Swamp. *Marks in-laws, Bell's have a farm in the Hikurangi swamp area.*

[Link to property?](#) Is he, Mark, involved with decisions made about Hikurangi Swamp? Would that be a conflict of interest?

Moved: Cr Brian McLachlan, Seconded: Cr Sharon Morgan.

Cr Brian McLachlan thought they had done well here.

Cr Phil Halse also declares an interest in the Hikurangi Swamp item in that he is chair of meetings for it. He believed what could be contentious is the Hikurangi Swamp Scheme content being in the contract. The Hikurangi Swamp is a 'ring fenced' account and needs to be managed well. *When is WDC relinquishing control of H/S scheme to NRC then, if they want it managed well?*

Phil continued advised that they were presently working on complying with Resource Consents on the swamp.

Cr Merv Williams commented that it was good to see a new player in the market, awarding this contract to Hydrotech Drainage and Plumbing Ltd.

With time at 1049hrs it was Item No.7. Review of Class 4 Gambling Policy. (Page 14)

Moved: Cr Phil Halse, Seconded: Cr Shelley Deeming.

Cr Merv Williams wanted to remind councilors that he previously voted against the 'sinking lid policy' and felt it would now get a fair hearing as it goes out to public consultation.

Cr Sue Glen claimed she couldn't see anything positive in gambling. (As quoted page 15) *Sorry Sue but many charitable organizations and sports groups do benefit from funds distributed from gaming proceeds. One must also wonder how Sue voted for the following item 'that Whangarei District Council has on 26th September 2012, in confidential section of the meeting, granted \$200,000-00 and loaned \$100,000-00 to a sporting club in Ruakaka, being a 'Gambling Sport Club'*

Cr Aaron Edwards believed that the 'sinking lid policy' is delivering results.

Cr Shelley Deeming advised 'it is going out for consultation' so was now the appropriate discussion time.

Cr Kahu Sutherland suggested that they should wait and hear from the community as some prosper from the funds from gaming machines.

With time at 1055hrs it was Item No.8. Review of Board Venue Policy. (Page 69)

Moved: Cr Shelley Deeming, Seconded: Cr John Williamson.

There was no discussion on this item.

With time at 1056hrs it was Item No.9. . Local Government in Northland. (Page 113)

Moved: Cr Warwick Syers, Seconded: Cr Phil Halse.

Cr Warwick Syers advised that government has before it the local Government Amendment Bill and they were claiming efficiencies may be gained. He added that 'whispers they had heard was 'it will be a single unitary for the North'. Kaipara Council, their problems clearly have been parked and now we can move forward'. This resolution sets a way forward to bring it to the public domain. *Don't you think council has already wasted enough money on this issue with accounting firm Deloitte, expert advisors McKinlay Douglas Ltd, Commissioners Sir Peter Trapski and Dr Don Brash and the Innes report? These have all been paid generously with ratepayer's hard earned cash for reports and services that many believe were a total waste of time.*

Cr Aaron Edwards agreed with Cr Syers and congratulated CEO Mark Simpson for his production of this report. He added there was no evidence that the population of Whangarei was seeking change.

Cr Brian McLachlan claimed the only thing certain was 'change', but what this gives is the pace of change. We have done this in a professional manner, looking at all options; which is a contrast to our neighbours up north, but I won't go any further on that.

Cr Merv Williams suggested that "we need to protect our position".

Morris Cutforth commented that we need to get it on the agenda and learn what people want. I have heard nothing from anyone about it. *You won't with your head in the sand; close your eyes and' hope it will go away Morris'.*

Cr Jeroen Jongejans believed the Far North was lost, NRC was certain where they want to go; we have to get off the block and see where we want to go.

Cr John Williamson wished to congratulate Mark Simpson for his approach on this process. We need to be sure what we need. *Is there another parking ticket in the pipeline John that you want squashed by Mark with all this sucking up?* He added they need to walk constructively alongside the NRC (Northland Regional Council) as it looks like one unitary authority.

Cr Kahu Sutherland informed that it was a good agenda item and it should read to work with 'ALL' elected.

Morris Cutforth asked what Cr Sutherland meant by that comment. *We sure understood what Kahu was saying in the public gallery. He is probably sick of the few 'selected tight five' in many decision making processes. He is asking for 'inclusiveness', you know it's one of the words you didn't understand but you used in your campaign in 2010 but forgot many after election time.*

Cr Phil Halse claimed it was all about NRC asset stripping our cities assets. *Now that's a joke if ever I have heard one. Phil, look at WDC debt, look at FNDC debt, Look at KDC debt (like the rest of NZ has) and you have the cheek to say NRC wants to asset strip WDC. NRC are the only one in Northland that have been prudent and have assets like their Port Shares you want so badly to balance your own council books. That's why you all tried the big take over of the NRC with the Unitary Authority debacle in the last few years.*

Cr Shelley Deeming is adamant that she was elected to represent Whangarei residents and was not about taking over other councils debts. *There you are Phil, Shelley can see the light, why can't you?*

Cr Crichton Christie was happy now that the recommendation now included the word 'all'. In processes like this you must take everyone with you or it will fail. He added that this was one of the better reports the GM (Mark Simpson) had written.

CEO Mark Simpson raised the point that the report had been written by Alan Adcock, Group Manager Support Services and Dominic Kula, Governance Manager. *That explains it then.*

Morris Cutforth finished this item with "what I like is there is a lot of collective wisdom here". *Shame about the chair letting the team down, eh?*

With time now at 1118hrs it was Item No10. Northland Events Centre Trust – Trust Deed Amendment. (Page 121)

Moved:? Seconded:?

Cr Aaron Edwards wanted the word 'part' added in No. 3/ in the recommendation.

Cr Warwick Syers advised his was a procedural matter.

There was no further discussion on this item.

The meeting finished at 1120hrs.

Just a reminder, didn't Morris campaign that he wanted open and transparent council? And he always also tends to vote for it to go into confidential. Just another thing he did an 'about turn on'.

CONFIDENTIAL INDEX

C.1 Confidential Minutes of a Meeting of the Whangarei District Council held 26 September 2012. (Page 1)

C.2 Confidential Minutes of an Extra-ordinary Meeting of the Whangarei District Council held 30 September 2012. (Page 3)

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