

Whangarei District Council Finance and Support Committee meeting - 23rd November 2011

LINK to the appropriate Agenda

This month's Finance meeting started at 0900hrs with Cr Warwick Syers in the chair wishing all a good morning and welcoming those present.

There was an apology for Cr Kahu Sutherland.

Item No. 1. Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance and Support Committee held 26 October 2011(0901hrs) these were received with no discussion required.

With the time still at 0901hrs, Item No.2. (page 2) Financial Report for four months ending 31 October 2011.

Cr Warwick Syers asks Group Manager Support Services Alan Adcock, "to take us through the high lights as he does such a good job of it".

The debt is at \$157million (page 18) and debt maturity is sitting outside policy (page19)
Cr Brian McLachlan asked if property sales were ahead of budget.

Cr Merv Williams advised that he had requested accounts for the Hikurangi Swamp and these were still outstanding.

Cr Phil Halse in regards to the debt policy believed that after the road shows, they must be clear with this policy.

Cr Warwick Syers claims "\$130million debt was only a target; it was never set in policy'. *Sounds like Morris Cutforths promises; all now about face, just as debt was discussed as being below \$135 million. Are you changing with the wind also?*

Item No. 3. Delegated Authority - Financial (page 24) (0909hrs)
This item was received with no discussion required.

Time still 0909hrs Item No. 4. Northland Events Centre Trust – Annual Report for the Year Ended 20 June 2011 (page 25)

Cr Warwick Syers explained that as Chairman of the next 2 items, as they were only receiving the reports, he would not be regarded as it being 'a conflict of interest'. *Even when there have been Conflicts of Interest in the past and he moves his chair away, he still hasn't managed to keep his trap shut.*

Warwick Syers welcomed John Lynch, Rachael O'Gorman and Shaila Workman, staff from the events centre, to the meeting.

Cr John Williamson had a query (on page 20? Of the attachment)

Cr Sharon Morgan asked about the 'Toll Stadium' naming rights.

Cr Warwick Syers informed this was being negotiated along with others but most had 3 year contracts.

John Lynch advised we were in tough economic times but there was some interest in tenants and/or advertisers (sponsors) coming forward.

Cr Warwick Syers claimed commercial space was filling up. He continued that \$18.5million was the cost of the stadium to a completed shell stage. Capital grants (page 31) refers to \$737,182-00 being for ceilings, fit out of kitchen, partitions etc. (*and bar?*) \$427,000-00 was capital grant from Whangarei District Council and \$310,000-00 was grant from NRC. Whangarei District Council also underwrote an additional \$171,000-00 for the first year 'shortfall'. *How many more years of shortfall will we have to look forward to in the future? We possibly won't be having any more World Cups in the future, as they don't come round every couple of months.*

He added that the report was pretty complex and didn't want to go on about it.

CEO Mark Simpson commented with "I think council needs to know the feasibility study said it would be 5 years, before it broke even"

Group Manager Support Services Alan Adcock advised that these were audited accounts.

Cr John Williamson asked the chair Cr Warwick Syers "are you happy with the \$18,560-00 audit fees?"

Cr Warwick Syers replied "not at all". *Was that because they didn't go through his accounting company?*

Cr Phil Halse wanted to thank Cr Warwick Syers as chairman and the trustees. There had been accolades from RWC which were great. *(Of course there were, they (RWC & Rugby Union) made all the money from a venue and business provided and paid for by the 'people of Northland', who were forced to shell out to fund the venue and all ongoing expenses by their local District and Regional Councils for years to come..... Good deal, if you ask me)* He thanked John Lynch and his team asking how much spirit to our ratepayers and harmony to the district with this opportunity to go forward. They had filled the stadium twice in its first year; the ratepayers are very proud.

Cr Warwick Syers wanted to congratulate the council but advised it was an event centre; not just a stadium. *Is this a 'mutual admiration society' or what?*

John Lynch advised they had 448 indirect bookings in this 1st year with only 17 being sport events. *Must say the staff would have probably worked very hard through challenging times, with a new venue getting up and running.*

[Link to something to reflect on all this back patting that appears to be going on at this meeting.](#)

Item No. 5. Northland Regional Landfill Limited Partnership – Annual Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2011 (page 47) (0922hrs)

Cr Warwick Syers advised that the report was fairly detailed.

Cr Merv Williams thanked Cr Syers for his management, a great job you have done. It's a shame most details can't be revealed due to 'commercial sensitivity.' He advised there had been a reduction in cost to businesses. *Haven't heard that story; many have been moaning about waste removal costs; I must be talking to different people.*

Cr Warwick Syers advised that council as a whole had benefited. *Is that as in, HOLE?*

Cr Crichton Christie explains that this was another example of a great success from council. *Does he just want to get back on the Christmas card list?* We have met our target in the 1st year. When we brought Puwera about 15 years ago it was looked at as a long story but was now a success. He thanked Warwick for taking it to this stage and also paid passion to Wally Redwood for his vision on the project.

Cr Warwick Syers claimed the secret to the success is having the partner.

CEO Mark Simpson advised that council was doing very good work on 'e waste' with product going to Sims in Auckland; also they had a project with green waste.

Cr Warwick Syers advises at 0928hrs that this 'draws us to the end of the meeting' thanking all for attending.

Off to the library for a coffee & chat readying oneself for the Council meeting at 1000hrs.

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