

Whangarei District Council Finance and Support Committee meeting - 26th October 2011

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

Dominic Kula, Governance Manager was asked to introduce the new Senior Communications Manager, Rachael Pascoe who has recently joined WDC.

There were no apologies and Warwick informed they were to move that Item No 3 to come before Item No.2.

A little hard to hear Warwick; is his voice all 'rugbyed out' after the last few weeks?

Item No. 1. Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance and Support Committee held 28 September 2011(0902hrs) these were received with no discussion required.

Item No. 3. Northland Regional Council Community Trust Quarterly Report on Activities (0903hrs)

Jude Thompson, WDC Chief Operating Officer introduced the members from NRCCT (Northland Regional Council Community Trust): Mr Andy Britton, Chairman; Enterprise Northland General Manager, Mr Wayne Hutchison and Destination Northland General Manager, Mr Brian Roberts.

Andy Britton gave a brief introduction and then handed over to the two General Managers to give detailed information on the organizations they represent.

Brian Roberts, (*all primed and ready to go, script in hand?*) was out of the starting block commenting that he was keen to see the Hundertwasser Museum, a Marine Park and 4 star hotel in Whangarei.

Had we just experienced a puppet show? [Who does this remind you of?](#)

Wayne Hutchison explained we can't rely on the government as their help had stopped. The investments that Enterprise Northland has, returns about \$15m per annum; these can't be discussed as they are commercially sensitive. We need a good relationship

with all councils and need to involve the community. The 'paint it red' campaign had been and continues to be a success. Whangarei has 900 youth unemployed which is up from last year's 200 so that is a real problem. They had experienced a lack of direction, there needed to be a common inference. They also needed to add strength to the mayoral forum for leadership guidance. Strategies needed to be implemented and the leadership groups needed to be speaking from the same voice. *Now there is a fair amount to digest; if the cap fits.....*

Warwick Syers finished with 'thank you gentleman'.

Back now to Item No. 2. Financial Report for the month ending 30 September 2011. (0938hrs) Cr Warwick Syers, with no Group Manager Support Services Alan Adcock present, wanted to walk the councillors through the financial report starting on page 5 the 1st column. (The following comments need to be read in conjunction with the Monthly Monitoring report pg5)

He explained that Development Contributions were down from \$9million, when the place was humming, to \$2mil now. Property sales will be paying \$14million.

Interesting that Warwick Syers has himself quoted that "when the place was humming but not now" and he wants to increase our debt even more with new projects. Does this make good sense? Tell that to the families that are struggling to feed their children.

He went briefly through the other reports on pages 6,7,8,&9 and then said "We are running out of time if you want a cup of coffee." *Know where the priorities lie, don't we?* He opened it up for discussion quoting "that there were a number of number crunchers over there who will be happy to answer any questions".

Cr Brian McLachlan had a query regarding water rates on page 10.

Cr Warwick Syers explained that over the year the peaks and troughs balance out to a line.

Cr Merv Williams asked about the reporting on the Hikurangi swamp scheme.

Warwick replied it was a bit like development contributions and not reported every time.

Couldn't help but notice (page 20) that the debt is \$147,424,000-00 (\$147.42 Million) with an extra \$7.7 million Internal borrowing (debt). So much for the \$130 million everyone promised. Out of control eh? And they still want a Hundertwasser, a bridge and whatever else ding dong can think of to make Whangarei a point of difference?

This meeting was over by 0949 hours and Warwick thanked all for attending.

No time today to go 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](#).