

Whangarei District Council Finance and Support Committee meeting – 28th March 2012

[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 everyone.

There was an apology for Cr Kahu Sutherland who was caught in traffic.

It was advised that there was an additional item Better Local Government that would be discussed at the end of the meeting

Item No. 1. Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance and Support Committee held 22 February 2012 (page1) (0901hrs) these were received with no discussion required.

Cr Kahu Sutherland arrived during this section of the meeting and Cr Warwick Syers thanked him for calling in with his late expected arrival. *Gee Kahu you weren't that late; the new bridge is surely speeding things up a lot.*

With the time now at 0902hrs, Item No.2. Financial Report for the Eight Months Ending 29 February 2012 (page3)

Cr Warwick Syers asks Group Manager Support Services Alan Adcock, to take us through the report.

Alan advised that page 4 was similar to previous months with external debt basically standing still.

The debt is at \$150.87million (page19) Last month we borrowed our first (\$25mil) from the Local Government Funding Agency at 3.6% which is approximately 1% lower than other sources. The Accounts Receivable (page 21) total in 90+days has come down.

Cr Phil Halse congratulated Alan Adcock on him making savings on the debt.

Cr Sharon Morgan asked if the storms and heavy rain of last week had resulted in cost for damage to roads. *Sharon, but there has been yet another sewage spill into our harbour closing it again and that incurs a huge cost to our communities.*

CEO Mark Simpson advised that we got off relatively light, about \$0.75million which is manageable. *Say's he who is on only \$260,000-00 per annum. Tell that to a pensioner surviving on \$20,000-00 per annum.*

Cr Sue Glen commenting on the report; we are looking very good here but that doesn't mean we should go and spend. *I think Sue is really telling more than she is letting on by her comment.*

Cr Brian McLachlan asked if the property sales, as per page 4, were on track.

He was advised; Yes.

Item No. 3. Northland Regional Landfill Limited Partnership – Draft Statement of Intent 2012/2013 (page25) (0913hrs)

There was a brief discussion by the chair Warwick Syers, if he should vacate the chair as being Chair of Northland Regional Landfill Limited Partnership there may be a conflict of interest. *The 'vacating muscles' didn't even arouse* so it was decided as it was only a "Draft" Statement of Intent it was not necessary. *He looked damn well comfortable there anyway.*

Cr John Williamson asked that as this was a draft, what happens from here.

Alan Adcock advised that they would be given any changes and it will come back for any further discussion.

Cr John Williamson queried (page 28) re are the objectives different from last year, especially about green waste. *Was John just playing lip service for a Green Waste interested party in the gallery, as that is not his normal line of enquiry?*

Cr Warwick Syers informed that it was similar to last year. *Similar, but different? There is a difference.*

Time at 0920hrs Item No. 4. Whangarei District Airport – Draft Statement of Intent 2012/2013 (page38)

No discussion was required on this item.

Item No. 5. Local Government Funding Agency – Draft Statement of Intent 2012/2013 (page51) (0921hrs)

Cr Sharon Morgan questioned regarding the appointees on the Agency and wanted to know if council had any there.

Alan Adcock gave some details about the number of shareholders.

No further discussion was therefore required.

Item No. 6. Whangarei Tourism Trust – Exempted Organisation (page66) (0922hrs)

Cr Shelley Deeming gave some clarification to this item, quoting from some of the details on the agenda.

Added Item to the Agenda – Better Local Government – (0923hrs)

[Link to Better Local Government March 2012](#)

*** Please note the last pages on the Department Internal Affairs document on 'Local Authority Financial Statistics' have been removed because of errors, but included in the copy distributed by Whangarei District Council.**

Cr Warwick Syers advised a little about this document explaining briefly the 8 points outlined on page 3 of the brochure. He explained they were moving away from the 4 well beings (Social, Economic, Cultural and Environmental) He *then got sidetracked and started waffling about 'power trusts'; Could he have some interest in what is happening with North Power at the moment and the shares?*

See North Power Review of Future Ownership and have your say now before submissions close on 30th April 2012 [LINK to North Power Review of Future Ownership](#) * See submission details on page 5. Print the page & send it in with your say.

Warwick Syers continued quoting the rates figures on page 15 but as you will note the **bold information** above these pages are inaccurate. He advised that there was now a key in the door to move towards unitary authorities and in his opinion, there has to be considerable savings to be made.

Cr Brian McLachlan gave some of his personal comments on the Better Local Government paper.

Cr Aaron Edwards also made some comments where he has areas of concern.

Cr Merv Williams explained that the document looked very nice but the proof will be in what happens. He had concerns about mayors making committees without input from councilors. *Good point Merv, you are on to it.* 'The proof will be in the pudding' he added.

Cr Phil Halse advised that he welcomes the reforms; he felt the 4 well beings hadn't given the benefit for the growth. Everything should be reviewed every decade and there were gains to be made by streamlining councils.

Cr Warwick Syers advises at 0946hrs that the meeting ends, thanking all for attending.

No time today to go to the library for a coffee & chat before 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](#).