

THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 12 MAY 2009, AT THE OFFICES OF THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL, 388 MAIN SOUTH ROAD, GREYMOUTH, COMMENCING AT 11.10 A.M.

PRESENT:

R. Scarlett (Chairman), P. Ewen, A. Robb, D. Davidson, B. Chinn, A. Birchfield

IN ATTENDANCE:

C. Ingle (Chief Executive Officer), R. Mallinson (Corporate Services Manager), C. Dall (Consents and Compliance Manager), S. Moran (Planning and Environmental Manager), T. Jellyman (Minutes Clerk), The Media

1. APOLOGIES:

Moved (Birchfield / Davidson) *that the apology from T. Archer be accepted.*

Carried

2. PUBLIC FORUM

There was no presentation.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Moved (Robb / Chinn) *that the minutes of the Council Meeting 14 April 2009, be confirmed as correct.*

Carried

Moved (Davidson / Birchfield) *that the minutes of the Special Council Meeting 22 April 2009, be confirmed as correct.*

Carried

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

REPORTS:

4.1 PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGER'S REPORT ON ENGINEERING OPERATIONS

S. Moran spoke to his report. He stated that there is a significant amount of contract work to be done in the Wanganui Rating District. This contract has grown, as the amount of land that had been eroded was larger than what was initially indicated when the contract was urgently put together.

S. Moran reported that he and R. Mallinson recently attended a LAPP (Local Authority Protection Programme) meeting. Risk managers from Civic Assurance were also in attendance. S. Moran stated this was a very good meeting, with more claims able to be accepted now that they are no longer trying to build the fund. He stated that this would be more useful to our Council.

S. Moran reported that the opinion survey for the Greymouth Flood Protection Scheme closes next Friday. Once the results of the survey are to hand a meeting of the Joint Floodwall Committee will be held.

C. Ingle advised that Cr Ewen would be overseas for this meeting. He requested that Cr Scarlett be appointed to this committee in Cr Ewen's absence.

Cr Scarlett asked S. Moran if the rock used for a contract in the Karamea Rating District had come from the Miedema Quarry. S. Moran confirmed this and advised that it would have appeared in the previous month's report.

Moved (Ewen / Robb)

1. *That the report be received.*
2. *That Cr Scarlett is appointed to the Greymouth Joint Floodwall Committee in the absence of Cr Ewen for the next meeting of this committee.*

Carried

4.2 CORPORATE SERVICE MANAGER'S REPORT

R. Mallinson spoke to this report advising that this is the nine month financial report to Council. He reported that total operating expenditure was just under \$6.5M with total revenues amounting to \$6.3M. R. Mallinson reported that the investment portfolio is continuing to generate at a loss. He reminded Councillors that there is an opportunity for them to speak to representatives from Forsyth Barr when they make their annual presentation at the conclusion of today's Council meeting.

R. Mallinson stated that there are positive budget variances in a number of areas. He advised that the consent application by Meridian Energy Ltd has cost \$800,000 to date but almost all of this is fully recoverable from the applicant. R. Mallinson reported that \$500,000 has been spent and recovered from the applicant to date for this financial year. He stated that this is an example of the impact that one consent application can have on our accounts.

Moved (Davidson / Robb) *that this report be received.*

Carried

4.2.1 NINE MONTH REVIEW 1 JULY 2008 – 31 MARCH 2009

R. Mallinson spoke to this report advising that it is a progress report and relates to the Annual Plan. Cr Ewen asked if bonds held by Solid Energy are still reviewed by Golders. C. Dall responded that the OceanaGold bond is still reviewed by Golders. Golders have amalgamated with Kingett Mitchell and Kingett Mitchell does a lot of work for Solid Energy. Malcolm Lane now does the bond review work in order to avoid any conflicts of interest.

Moved (Birchfield / Robb) *that this report be received.*

Carried

5.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT

C. Ingle spoke to his report. He spoke of various meetings he attended during the month and stated that it has been a busy month.

C. Ingle spoke of the imminent changes with the new Auckland Unitary Authority that Government is currently in the process of making. He stated that the reasons for this are not relevant to the West Coast. This is the largest merger in New Zealand history with 6000 jobs and \$23B in assets involved. C. Ingle stated that this is a huge experiment for Government and he hopes that they get it right as there are huge implications if they get it wrong. C. Ingle stated that amalgamations in other regions are unlikely at this time.

C. Ingle reported that he and Al Morrison Director General of DoC are now working together on DoC concessions and RMA consenting requirements in order to increase efficiency in this area.

C. Ingle reported that the development of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) seems to be simply re-branding the Ministry for the Environment, who already process large consent applications for matters of national significance. He stated that the intention is not to get rid of regional councils and replace them with EPA's. C. Ingle stated that MfE have indicated that they want to borrow key staff from regional councils so that they then have a network of environmental experts to call on. He stated this would be a very efficient model.

C. Ingle raised the matter of energy supply and demand planning. He is seeking support to undertake an assessment of energy needs for the long term future for our community. C. Ingle indicated that he wishes to engage an independent person to gather information to see if we are heading in the right direction, he stated this could be done within the budget. Cr Scarlett asked Councillors for their thoughts on this matter. Cr Ewen stated he feels an assessment would be an educational opportunity for the public. Cr Scarlett stated that decisions on large projects need to have a subjective approach and that decisions need to be made collectively by Council. Discussion took place on the process of hearing committees and the role that staff planners and Councillors

play in this regard. Cr Birchfield stated that Councillors have sometimes been left out of this process.

Cr Chinn asked C. Ingle if anything more came out of the meeting with Al Morrison and Mike Slater from DoC. C. Ingle reported that Mr Morrison was very interested in the procedural aspect of the Mokihinui consent application. C. Ingle discussed wetlands matters with Mr Morrison who seemed unaware of some aspects of the recent DoC appeal to the regional plan. However, Mr Morrison is aware of issues around gravel takes and the duplication of roles within this area, a meeting has been arranged for the coming week to progress this matter. Cr Chinn expressed his concern that these wetland appeal decisions could be being made in Hokitika rather than at a higher level.

Cr Birchfield asked for clarification as to if the appeal on the wetlands variation is to wetlands on private land. C. Ingle confirmed this is correct. Cr Scarlett advised that DoC is objecting to our categorisation of DoC's own conservation land, which is protected anyway. Cr Scarlett stated DoC is wanting more inclusion of wetlands on private land. Cr Birchfield stated if DoC want private wetlands locked up, this would be fair enough if DoC is going to pay for it. Cr Birchfield stated that DoC has 87% of our region's land and now they are trying to interfere with private land.

C. Ingle advised that we have a large Government department using the RMA appeal process to effectively bully us into doing what they say or they will take us to court. Cr Birchfield stated DoC is costing the ratepayer money to pursue this. Cr Scarlett suggested that our concerns be formalised by writing a letter to the department. C. Ingle advised that we would be better off writing to the Minister for Conservation highlighting our concerns and suggest changes to the Conservation Act.

C. Ingle reported that two remits from the West Coast were put forward at the recent Zone 5 & 6 meeting. The first remit was to do with the Local Government Act and cost of audit fees. This received full support and will go through to the AGM for Local Government New Zealand in July. The second remit related to transport disadvantaged people and was put forward by Age Concern in Hokitika. It relates to elderly people who voluntarily surrender their driver's licence because they are no longer confident driving. C. Ingle advised that an amendment was made to the remit that gives each region the flexibility to have their own criteria for total mobility. Cr Scarlett stated that this is a good outcome and that this service can now be tailored to suit the needs of individual communities.

Cr Scarlett spoke of the views held by Hon Rodney Hide the new Minister for Local Government who attended the Zone 5 & 6 meeting. Cr Scarlett stated that Minister Hide is practical, he wishes to cut bureaucracy out of local government and to streamline things, be more efficient and to get down to core business. C. Ingle reported that the Minister conceded that a lot of the costs of local government have been imposed by central government and much of the bureaucratic nonsense is because of the legislation, and that the solution lies in the hands of Government Ministers in changing legislation.

Cr Ewen inquired as to whether there has been any progress with the coal levy. Cr Scarlett advised that he is still pursuing this matter and wants a decision.

C. Ingle reported that both this Council and Grey District Council received one response each from the media article regarding potential for flooding in Paroa and the unstable mouth of Saltwater Creek. C. Ingle advised that his conclusion is that there is no public desire to spend money or to form a rating district in this area.

Cr Scarlett asked who paid the \$9,000 for the water sampling project for the Totara Lagoon waterways. C. Ingle confirmed this was funded by the Ministry for the Environment.

Moved (Birchfield / Davidson) *that the Chief Executive's Report be received.*

Carried

4.0 CHAIRMANS REPORT (VERBAL)

The Chairman reported that he attended the Mayors and Chairs Meeting on the 27th of April. He and C. Ingle attended the Zone 5 & 6 meeting on the 7th of May which was previously reported on. Cr Scarlett attended the Regional Land Transport Programme hearing on 11 May, he reported that there were 22 submissions to the draft of which six wanted to be heard but only four turned up.

Moved (Scarlett / Birchfield) *that this report be received.*

Carried

5.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

There was no general business.

The meeting closed at 11.50 a.m.

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Chairman

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Date