

THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 JUNE 2020, AT THE OFFICES OF THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL, 388 MAIN SOUTH ROAD, GREYMOUTH, COMMENCING AT 10.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

S. Challenger (Chairman), A. Birchfield, P. Ewen, D. Magner, B. Cummings, J. Hill, L. Coll McLaughlin, J. Douglas, F. Tumahai (via Zoom)

IN ATTENDANCE:

M. Meehan (Chief Executive Officer), R. Mallinson (Corporate Services Manager), H. Mills (Planning, Science & Innovation Manager), N. Costley (Strategy & Communications Manager), R. Beal (Operations Director), T. Jellyman (Minutes Clerk)

Cr Birchfield read the prayer.

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. MINUTES

The Chairman asked the meeting if there were any changes to the minutes of the previous meeting.

Moved (Ewen / Coll McLaughlin) *that the minutes of the previous Resource Management Committee meeting dated 28 April 2020, be confirmed as correct.*

Carried

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

PRESENTATION

M. Meehan introduced C. Brown (Regional Director – Civil Defence & Natural Hazards) to the meeting. C. Brown provided a presentation on the West Coast Civil Defence Emergency Management's (WCCDEM) involvement with the Covid-19 pandemic. She provided information on the Alert Levels and WCCDEM's role and national direction. C. Brown advised that on 10 March the National Crisis Management Centre (NCCMC) was activated in support of the national health coordination health centre, and this was an all of government response. C. Brown advised that on 11 March the World Health Organisation declared Covid-19 had the characteristics of a global pandemic. On 21 March New Zealand went into Alert level 2, two days later New Zealand moved into Alert Level 3, and 2 days after that New Zealand moved into full lockdown at Alert Level 4. She stated that on 25 March New Zealand declared a national state of emergency. C. Brown advised that during April New Zealand began to move back through the levels, moving from Level 4 to Level 3 on 28 April, on 13 May the state of emergency was replaced with a national transition period, on 14 May New Zealand moved from Alert Level 3 to Alert Level 2 and on 29 May gatherings increased from 10 to 100, and on 1 June New Zealand moved to Alert Level 1.

C. Brown advised that WCCDEM is one of 16 CDEM groups around the country and has a responsibility under the New Zealand Influenza Pandemic Action Plan to manage the non-health consequences of the pandemic. She spoke of legal requirements and advised this was a co-led event with DHB and CDEM, and outlined how the event was managed on the West Coast. C. Brown advised that the ECC / EOC was established at Westland Recreation Centre with a Group Controller, Response Manager, iwi liaison, public health information, logistics, intel, operations, welfare, planning and health liaison. She advised that daily intel gatherings were held with daily recordings and status reports carried out. C. Brown advised that an 0800 number was established as a household goods and services helpline. C. Brown explained Caring for Communities and stated that this was direct support for people and food and essential needs. She advised that BDC took 80 calls, GDC 221, WDC 35 phone calls from their districts. C. Brown stated that at a national level there was a lot of concern about whether groups were getting good intel and it was important that WCCDEM was informed of what was happening both nationally and across the region as this type of event had been dealt with before. She spoke

of the various agencies involved locally and the impact of Covid-19 on them. C. Brown spoke of the lessons learnt and the resourcing required during this time.

C. Brown stated that now that New Zealand is back at Alert Level 1, the recovery starts. She offered to answer questions from Councillors. The Chairman stated that an impressive amount of work has gone into this event. He acknowledged that the West Coast was the first region to have a death, but noted that numbers of cases of Covid-19 were low on the West Coast. Cr Hill commented that New Zealand is going to get pandemics regularly, and we need to be prepared for them. Cr Hill stated that New Zealand is in a wonderful position globally and can close borders. He noted that during the pandemic there was no appetite to close West Coast borders to isolate ourselves from the main urban centres. He asked C. Brown if this is a possibility in the future. C. Brown stated that there is still a possibility that New Zealand could move back up the alert levels but is unsure if local and regional borders would close. M. Meehan advised that the regional approach was discussed but the government took that a consistent approach across the country would be taken. Cr Cummings asked if the pandemic plan going to be updated, at a national level. C. Brown advised that at every level, Covid-19 has shown how things can be improved but she is not aware as yet of work in this area. She advised that currently we are still heavily in response, but it is likely that the work programme will continue for a number of years. Cr Ewen queried whether it would have been better to focus the call centre on one council rather than three. C. Brown responded that this was set up quickly, due to the circumstances and there was a need for local knowledge in each of the three districts. Discussion took place on the need for resources such as hand sanitiser, face masks etc. C. Brown stated that there is a critical level of resources that should always be on hand on the West Coast. Cr Birchfield spoke of hearing of people who had come from Christchurch and had cleaned out West Coast supermarkets. M. Meehan noted that there was a lot of panic at supermarkets. He stated that Covid -19 was a very different event for New Zealand. C. Brown answered various questions from Councillors. She stated that remote communities were in need of support and with a lot of need for those who could not get out of their homes including vulnerable people and those suffering from financial hardship and those with mobility issues. C. Brown stated that she felt this was more of an urban issue than rural.

Discussion took place of the rescue of people in mountain areas. C. Brown advised that there has been a lot of work go in to this from councils around the South Island. M. Meehan advised that Development West Coast is the economic recovery lead, but a lot of the work now is in following the lead from NEMA. M. Meehan stated that Council needs to be in a position to respond to any needs from NEMA. He advised that NEMA had funding available for resilience, but due to the Covid situation this was not a normal process. Groups were approached by NEMA and offered temporary shelters with 11 temporary shelters available and the West Coast gaining three temporary shelters. M. Meehan explained how they function and stated that they will be located in Westport, Greymouth and Franz Josef. The Chairman thanked C. Brown for her presentation and acknowledged that there will be a lot of learning coming out of the pandemic.

3. PUBLIC FORUM

There was no public forum.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cr Challenger stated that he has had a quiet month with nothing to report.

5. REPORTS

5.1 PLANNING AND OPERATIONS GROUP

5.1.1 PLANNING REPORT & HYDROLOGY REPORT

H. Mills spoke to his report and advised that RPS is still with the Environment Court. He stated that Plan Change 1 decisions were notified publicly on 29 May, with the statement discussed by Council being added to the decisions report. H. Mills reported that there are some processes on hold for plan changes.

H. Mills advised that the three freshwater groups were put on hold over the lockdown period. He stated that online meetings with the Kawatiri group were held.

H. Mills stated that Minister Parker made the announcement on 28 May for the decision on the Freshwater package, which outlines the high level direction of the Essential Freshwater Package. H. Mills stated this is going to affect the West Coast fairly significantly. He stated that one of the Key issues contained in Council's submission, and the only real traction gained, was on the harvesting of sphagnum moss.

H. Mills advised that non-significant wetlands will be gazetted in July and with regard to Plan Change 2, this may also have effects on the West Coast, he stated that a close eye will be kept on this, as the whole freshwater package will have significant implications for farmers and water users.

H. Mills reported that staff have incorporated feedback received in its submission on the NES for air quality. H. Mills reported that Council was fortunate to have four projects approved for Envirolink funding with approximating \$80,000 worth of funding received.

H. Mills reported that seven floodwarning alarms were activated during the reporting period but none were recorded during lockdown.

M. Meehan advised that along with the Freshwater Package, government also announced \$700M to support farmers with the implantation of the freshwater package. M. Meehan stated that because of Covid-19 there is a lot of packages opening up, with \$80M to be spent in the next 1 – 3 months for fencing, planting and water reticulation. He stated that the expressions of interest criteria are now to hand so staff are putting together information to be sent to landowners informing them that this funding is available. M. Meehan advised that Council has also applied for funding from the Covid-19 packages for farm planning staff and staff to assist with this going forward. M. Meehan stated that government's focus is not just water quality but getting people into jobs post Covid-19. He advised that Council will put together the funding application and will be reliant on the polytechnic and MSD to find staff and to get training in place. Cr Birchfield expressed concern with the government being able to impose commissioners on Councils. H. Mills advised that the government want to streamline the process and want to rush it through as fast as possible, but Council is able to appoint two councillors, but this committee will get the final say.

Cr Birchfield expressed his concern on matters relating to climate change, including concern that government has set the standards on this but have allowed hospitals to be built at sea level.

Cr Coll McLaughlin asked H. Mills if the timeframes on RMA Amendment Bill are likely to be in place by the end of the year in view of the Bill going through under urgency. H. Mills stated that the timeframe for the Freshwater Package is within the next month.

H. Mill answered questions relating low slope areas in relation to stock exclusion zones. H. Mills advised that there is a slope classification that says if it is steeper than a certain slope then there will be different rules.

M. Meehan stated that most of the areas on the West Coast are considered low slope areas.

Cr Ewen expressed concern with the costs of ecological work on wetlands, he stated that central government needs to be reasonable about this issue, as this is a snowballing cost. He stated that ratepayers will be paying for costs associated with the One District Plan, and he feels that non-significant wetlands will likely become significant following the election. Cr Ewen feels that government should be fronting with costs that have been put onto our region, as we have a low rating base to pay for these type of things. Cr Ewen stated this is getting out of hand, and he is concerned with the impact these costs will have on businesses, and provinces.

Cr Coll McLaughlin stated that at the last meeting of the Te Tai o Poutini committee there was discussion about trying to get some of the funding for the research from other funding streams, through DoC. Cr Ewen requested that congratulations are passed onto staff for getting funding from the various sources. M. Meehan agreed with Cr Ewen's comments on the constant change with freshwater reform and the biodiversity NPS, as Council is awaiting the draft. M. Meehan spoke of the overlap between SNA identification, wetland identification and now non-significant wetlands. He stated that it might pay to pause on some of this issues until a clear path is found. M. Meehan stated that most concerning issue is the biodiversity NPS and the impact on the region. He stated that Council needs to understand the non-significant wetlands and the implications of this. Cr Coll McLaughlin noted that the RMA Reform Bill suggests making all district plans aggregated to regional plans, and as Council is already in the middle of doing this, if that is a change then it will inform how Council needs to go about this process.

Cr Challenger expressed concern regarding the NES for air quality, he stated that this could be stifling innovation as if people replace their multifuel fire with a compliant one, the OekoTube makes existing fires compliant. He stated that manufacturers need to make better fires, as West Coaster have a source of energy here. Cr Challenger feels that fires should be improved each time new ones are manufactured. Cr Hill agreed with Cr Challenger's comments. Cr Hill stated that those with coal burners are likely to have to get rid of them next time they replace their fire. Cr Hill stated that a town like Reefton needs to use coal but on a district heating system. He explained how a centralised coal heating system, with a big boiler, offering through a heat exchanger, every household heating. Cr Hill explained how this type of system could work. He stated that government needs to help and support councils to move ahead with technology. H. Mills stated that one of the key points in the submission was to be allowed to use aftermarket products to bring non-complying burners into the standard while still using coal. It was noted that there are currently no burners on the market that are compliant while burning coal. Discussion took place on what could work on the West Coast, it was agreed that a very narrow view has been taken on this. Cr Hill commented that the current government are using the current NES to get rid of coal fired burners. Cr Hill stated that Reefton could become carbon negative by using technology and could be one of the first towns in the world to do this, and he feels this is where the West Coast should be heading. Extensive discussion ensued on this matter.

Moved (Hill / Coll McLaughlin)

1. That the report is received.

2. *That the Council approves the submission on the proposed changes to the National Environmental Standard for Air Quality.*

Carried

5.1.2 REEFTON AIR QUALITY SUMMARY

H. Mills spoke to this report and advised that there have been no exceedances of the air quality NES during the reporting period.

Moved (Cummings / Magner) *That the report is received.*

Carried

5.2.1 CONSENTS MONTHLY REPORT

M. Meehan spoke to this report in H. McKay's absence and advised that this covers the Covi-19 lockdown period. He advised that 12 non-notified resources consents were processed, and seven changes to consent conditions were granted during the reporting period. M. Meehan noted that some of the consents coming through are for flood infrastructure in Franz Josef, Westport and Grey.

Moved (Birchfield / Magner)

That the June 2020 report of the Consents Group be received.

Carried

5.2.2 COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT MONTHLY REPORT

M. Meehan spoke to this report and advised that this report also covers the Covid-19 lockdown period. He advised staff were still able to do some inspections relating to complaints during the lockdown period.

Cr Ewen asked if the two issues at Roa Mine are related. He stated that he has received complaints about the 10 Mile Creek. M. Meehan advised that the site was compliant at the time of inspection. Cr Cummings noted that the creek was clear the next day.

Cr Hill drew attention of to the stormwater complaint at Fairdown, and noted that there was no breach of region rules, but he asked in this case what is the right course of action for the owner to take. M. Meehan responded that stormwater can be difficult to work though in a rural area, as opposed to urban areas. M. Meehan advised that sometimes these issues end up being a civil matter between parties. He stated these are sometimes drainage issues between properties and Council can only deal with issues where a rule has been breached. Cr Coll McLaughlin noted that this is complicated by the fact that a highway is involved and the culvert in this area belongs to NZTA.

M. Meehan answered questions relating to mining discharges and mining work programmes. He confirmed that all mining work programmes are done in house. M. Meehan advised that large mining work programmes are put out to consultants. He explained the process in detail to councillors.

Moved (Ewen / Magner)

1. *That the June 2020 report of the Compliance Group be received.*

2. *That the bond of \$15,000 for RC13158 Hokitika Gold Ltd, \$12,000 for RC98005 MJK Mining Ltd and the \$5,000 for RC91038 Francis Mining be released.*

Carried

GENERAL BUSINESS

There was no general business.

The meeting closed at 11. 37 a.m.

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Chairman

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Date