

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 182<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND  
GAME COUNCIL, HELD ONLINE (VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS) ON TUESDAY 28<sup>th</sup>  
APRIL AT 7.00PM**

**Present**

Crs David Woolner, Ngahi Bidois, Lindsay Lyons, Murray Ferris, Barry Roderick, Laurance Tamati, Geoff Thomas, Alan Baird, Ken Coombes, Adam Rayner and Debbie Oakley.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Andy Garrick, Kate Thompson and Carmel Veitch (Eastern Fish & Game).

**1.0 WELCOME AND KARAKIA**

1.1 Cr David Woolner (Chairman) opened the meeting at 7.00pm, welcomed all present and invited Cr Ngahi Bidois to perform an opening Karakia.

**2.0 APOLOGIES**

2.1 There were no apologies received, all members of Council were present.

**3.0 MINUTES OF THE TWO PREVIOUS MEETINGS (11 FEBRUARY 2020 & 13 APRIL 2020)**

3.1 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Lindsay Lyons) that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [20/04/3.1]*

3.2 *Agreed (Geoff Thomas/Adam Rayner) that the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 13 April be confirmed as a true and correct record. [20/04/3.2]*

**4.0 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY**

4.1 No items were identified for inclusion in Council policy from either meeting.

**5.0 MATTERS ARISING**

5.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes of either the Council meeting held on 11 February 2020 or the extraordinary Council meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 13 April 2020.

**6.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS**

- Andy Garrick - Game Season update
- Andy Garrick - Game Season Day licence
- Andy Garrick - Confirm date for next meeting of Council
- Cr David Woolner - Preferred teleconference platform for meeting

**7.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER**

7.1 Councillors were asked to inform the chair of any conflicts of interest. No conflicts of interest were recorded.

**8.0 ESTIMATED END OF YEAR FINANCIAL POSITION**

8.1 Andy Garrick provided Council with a brief explanation of how the Estimated End of Year Financial Position was developed using the worst case scenario of receiving no Game or Non-Resident licence revenue for the remainder of the financial year, and no further income from resident anglers either. It was however premised on generating \$15,000 from a previously unprogrammed contract with Genesis at Lake Waikaremoana, and putting a halt to all non-essential spending from 23 March 2020.

Andy advised that several projects had been cancelled, and some deferred to reduce overall expenditure. Cr Barry Roderick was concerned that we may see between 10-25% loss of income on the sale of NZ resident licences following the economic turmoil created by the lockdown and questioned whether costs had been cut enough? Carmel Veitch provided an insight into revenue modelling that was being undertaken at a national level and advised that the Eastern Region had undertaken a thorough job of reviewing and cutting costs for the remainder of the financial year. Kate Thompson advised that the worst-case scenario presented here included sales up to 31 March 2020. There was still an expectation that Fish licence sales to NZ residents will occur between now and the end of the financial year as several sales, particularly Winter Season, have been occurring during the period of lockdown. Cr Lindsay Lyons felt that by the end of May we will have a fair idea of revenue for the year, particularly if the Game Season is able to proceed.

- 8.2 Cr Murray Ferris moved the discussion to the 2020/21 OWP year where it was likely that a more significant decline would be seen. Cr Debbie Oakley agreed and emphasised the need to act promptly in developing a worst-case scenario for the 2020/21 year.
- 8.3 Andy Garrick informed Council that we will have a better idea of revenue in the next six to eight weeks for the current year, and that he understood the NZ Council was developing a national strategy/guidelines for preparation of next year's budgets. Carmel Veitch confirmed that at its last meeting the New Zealand Council had formed a Standing Finance Committee to review the situation, and noted while this was the case it would be worth front footing the issue and looking at scenarios based on revenue reductions of 10-30%.
- 8.4 Cr Barry Roderick queried the NZ Council policy on spending of reserves. Carmel Veitch advised that there is a National policy for use of reserves requiring any expenditure of reserves needed to be applied for and approved by the NZ Council. Any additional spending of reserves over and above current budget levels was not being considered at this point in time as it is the reserves that will absorb any losses incurred this financial year. Cr Lindsay Lyons asked why this Council had not approved the applications staff had made for use of its reserves next year prior to these being put forward to the NZC? Andy Garrick noted for the benefit of Council that Cr Lyons was referring to this region's request to utilise non-resident reserves for three projects including a 12 month contract to employ a hatchery trainee as part of a staff succession strategy. Andy commented that the turmoil caused by COVID-19 had resulted in previously scheduled meetings and other processes being turned upside down. What was intended to have occurred was set out in the 11 February 2020-21 OWP agenda item and again in today's agenda, i.e. applications to use reserves or apply for contestable funding were required to be submitted to NZC staff for collation ahead of both this Council's meeting scheduled to have occurred on 9 April, and the joint meeting of managers and NZC which was programmed to have taken place on 17 April. However, prior to being tabled at the NZC meeting, this Council would have decided on 9 April whether or not it wished to proceed with the applications proposed, and if it didn't, notice would have been given that these were being withdrawn. Andy advised it was not a fait accompli, but given the present circumstances, both the proposed budget that staff had drafted pre COVID and the applications to utilise reserve funding were no longer applicable. It was very likely that use of regional reserves would not be an option for the coming year and it would be back to the drawing board for the 2020-21 budget and work plan.

## **9.0 2020-2021 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN**

9.1 Andy Garrick re-iterated that the draft 2020-21 Operational Work Plan was largely academic now along with the applications for use of non-resident reserves which had been prepared prior to COVID-19. These applications were now on hold and the future of the 2020-21 budget and workplan was dependent on revenue forecasts and we would need to take on board any national strategy or collective response that the NZC might be recommending or requesting of regions. Andy briefly overviewed the proposed changes that had been made to budgets and activities in recognition of the substantial reduction in licence revenue we are likely to experience next year, and the principle that we minimise all non essential funding at this point in time. These changes were outlined in the agenda item. One proposed change that he particularly wanted to draw Council's attention to, was the establishment of a new project labelled "R3 Programme" (Code 1812) under Output 8 Management/Strategic Planning. Given the ongoing decline in licence revenue this region had been experiencing well before the COVID outbreak, there was a need, all the more urgent now, to direct much more effort not only into R3 initiatives to increase licence sales, but into business development and ways in which we could generate additional and alternative forms of revenue. It was proposed this be funded initially by moving the \$8,500 currently sitting in the newsletter and magazine publications budget to this new project as the magazine was funded now by the NZC. A number of staff including himself would have a portion of their hours directed specifically to this project.

9.2 CR Barry Roderick queried the savings that could be made if the number of fish raised by the hatchery was reduced? He also queried whether there was a succession plan in place for the hatchery staff. In response to the latter, Andy Garrick advised that the hatchery manual that deals with all operational matters associated with the hatchery operation was in the process of being updated to ensure that the wealth of knowledge and experience in the heads of the two key hatchery staff was documented to the extent it could be. More importantly, the proposal to utilise our non-resident anglers reserve for a one off period of 12 months to bring on board a hatchery trainee immediately prior to the anticipated retirement of our longest serving hatchery officer was advanced as a key part of our succession plan. Operating a hatchery along with all of its associated activities is a highly specialised undertaking requiring skills that are not readily available in the market place. Barry also suggested there might be a need to reduce staff hours and/or cut wages, and Cr Murray Ferris questioned whether this had been considered? Andy commented that everything needed to be on the table, and he had been looking into all options. He noted however, that until we had a better understanding of where the organisation was likely to be heading both within the region and nationally, it was premature to be proposing staffing cuts. Cr Ngahi Bidois agreed there needed to be a conversation about cutting costs and we really needed to look at alternative ways of making money e.g. contracting out our staff. Cr Lindsay Lyons suggested it might be more appropriate at this time to upskill some of our current staff to work in the hatchery. Cr David Woolner spoke of staff welfare, with engagement and wellbeing on the job being top priority.

## **10.0 2020-21 LICENCE FEES AND CATEGORIES**

10.1 Council had reviewed this item prior to the meeting and no further discussion was required.

**10.2 *Agreed (Geoff Thomas/Adam Rayner) that Council supports no changes to licence fees or categories for the 2020-2021 Seasons. [20/04/10.2]***

**11.0 ANGLERS NOTICE REVIEW**

11.1 Cr David Woolner informed Council that Andy Garrick had proposed to defer the Anglers Notice review until the next meeting. Andy Garrick confirmed this as discussions around this item typically occupy a considerable amount of time. He advised that submissions had been included in the Papers for Information for this meeting and confirmed the Anglers Notice Review would be included on the agenda for Council to consider at its next meeting.

**12.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS**

**12.1 *The New Zealand Fish and Game Council***

Cr Lindsay Lyons informed Council of items discussed at recent meetings of the New Zealand Council via Microsoft Teams and later Zoom. The upcoming Game Season opening and season conditions were top of the agenda, and Lindsay provided Council with an overview of those discussions. Cr Alan Baird expressed concern that the delay would mean hunting into the nesting season. Cr Adam Rayner said that he had seen birds with eggs right through May in the past five seasons and Andy Garrick suggested that with global warming it may not be uncommon for mallard to be breeding all year round in years to come. Lindsay informed Council that there is an option to gazette a special season for paradise shelduck to provide additional opportunity for hunters this year, but it was noted that there were already seasons available for the hunting of these and those seasons had been determined on the basis of trend counts and what was considered to be sustainable. Andy commented that paradise shelduck have a delayed maturity, nesting at two years of age, so can very easily be over exploited compared to mallards which breed in their first year.

The second meeting of the New Zealand Council saw a change of the Chair to Paul Shortis from the Wellington Fish and Game Council. This was followed by a Public Excluded session relating to the financial impacts of COVID-19 on Fish & Game revenue and the establishment of a Standing Finance Committee to co-ordinate a review of revenue forecasts and budgets.

Cr Barry Roderick queried Lindsay about a proposed review of Fish & Game that had been bandied around and asked what the main drivers for this were and whether this was a directive from the Minister of Conservation? Lindsay advised that the Department of Conservation had been watching Fish & Game very closely and had concerns about how it was operating. Lindsay said DOC will drive the process, it will be an external review, and there was no doubt that it would take place. Cr Murray Ferris, while not opposed to a review, expressed concern about the Department of Conservation's involvement in the light of its history and performance, and wished to highlight that it was critical it be a totally independent exercise. Lindsay responded that the current model of Fish & Game is not fit for purpose and needs to be modernised. Any reviewer would be very well qualified, the review would be external and not undertaken by the Department of Conservation, and will benefit all of Fish & Game. He welcomed Councillors calling him for updates at any time.

Cr David Woolner on behalf of Council expressed thanks to Lindsay for his service and commitment to Fish & Game in his role of Chairman to the New Zealand Council for the past six years. Lindsay thanked Council for their support said he would not have done it if he didn't love the organisation.

### **13.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS**

13.1 Council had reviewed the operational reports prior to the meeting and no further discussion was required.

*13.2 Agreed (Ken Coombes/Ngahi Bidois) that Council receives the Health and Safety Report, Management Report, and Licence Sales Report. [20/04/13.2]*

*13.3 Agreed (Ken Coombes/Ngahi Bidois) that Council receives the Finance Report and approves payments for January and February 2020 totalling \$399,145.45 [20/04/13.3]*

13.4 Ken Coombes queried the likely levels of Winter Licence sales to residents. Kate Thompson advised the sales to this category had dropped back after the introduction of the new licence categories, but there were still over 500 sold last season.

### **14.0 GENERAL BUSINESS**

14.1 Andy Garrick was intending to talk about the proposed Game Season but a lot of what he was going to inform Council of had already been covered by Lindsay Lyons in his New Zealand Council report. He said that there were still some questions on the table in relation to what regional travel constituted, and staying overnight. The rahui placed on the Waikato River by Tainui iwi was briefly discussed and questions raised whether this might be extended to include the upper Waikato also. Cr Murray Ferris felt that references to "regional" boundaries were confusing for many, and suggested putting a recommendation to the Minister to limit travel to 100-200kms from place of residence.

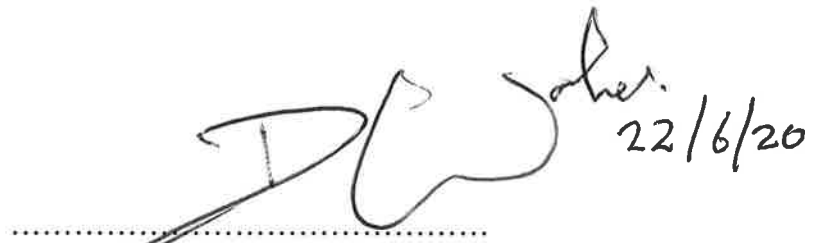
14.2 Andy Garrick advised that the Game Day licence typically becomes available two weeks after the game season has got underway, and this was currently gazetted to be 13 May this year. Since this agenda went out Council had been invited to provide feedback on the idea of pushing the date for day licence availability out to two weeks after the revised opening date for the season to discourage hunters from purchasing day licences for Opening Weekend in preference to a whole season licence. Being an item of General Business, Council was unable to pass a motion on this but agreed that Council supported this proposal.

14.3 The proposed date for the next meeting of Council was discussed and Andy Garrick advised that a key focus of the next meeting would be business planning for the 2020-21 operational year. He suggested it might be appropriate to hold off meeting until such time as we had received information from the Standing Financial Committee that would assist us with producing a redraft of the OWP and budget. Carmel Veitch suggested that didn't prevent regions from starting to plan now for various scenarios, and Andy agreed and advised he would be working with staff to review the operational work plan in the light of differing forecasts of income for next year. Cr David Woolner suggested Council reconvene when more definitive information was at hand.

14.4 Cr David Woolner asked Council whether they were happy to continue to use Microsoft Teams for online meetings, or whether there was a preference to utilise Zoom. Those who provided feedback suggested that Zoom was a more stable platform. It was agreed that future meetings would be held via Zoom, and David and Andy would assist those who are not familiar with it to get it set up and running.

**15.0 MEETING CLOSED**

15.1 The meeting closed at 8.21pm with a closing karakia (in English and Maori) from Cr Ngahi Bidois.



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**David Woolner**  
**Chairman**

## SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

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