

NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting
Held on Tuesday 19th February 2019
At 595 Johns Road, Harewood
Commencing at 6.30 pm

1. Present:

Councillors: Dave Coll, Rex Gibson, Stu Henderson, Trevor Isitt, Roy Knight, Ken Lee, Phillip Musson, Richard O'Keefe, Alan Strong (Chair), Bill Southward, Daniel Maxwell (Federated Farmers Rep)

Staff: Debbie Ambler, Richard Cosgrove

In Attendance: Graeme Nahkies, Paul Watts, Bruce Kelly, Larry Burke, Mike Agar, Mike Bate, Greg Tarras, Colin Eaton, Neil McLean, Phil Ball, Russell Mackay, Jamie McFadden, John Hill

2. Apologies:

Councillors: Dave O'Neill

"That the apologies be accepted."

Moved:

Seconded:

3. Appointment of Interim Manager

Cr Strong stated that the current General Manager, R Cullinane had given notice and would finish on the 31 March 2019. He advised then asked the meeting to ratify R Cosgrove as interim General Manager who would work for two days per week for a period of six months. This would allow Council to complete a full staff review and enable the proper recruitment process for a General Manager to be completed.

Concern was raised that working only two days per week in the position was not enough to manage NCF&G. It was explained that R Cosgrove would oversee the operational role and that between D Ambler and C Veitch (NZC Accountant) undertake the financial role.

"That the appointment of R Cosgrove as Interim General Manger be accepted."

Moved: Cr Strong

Seconded:

Carried

Cr Strong explained that staff would not be required to attend Council meetings unless technical input was required. That Council would direct the General Manager in all matters who then in turn would advise staff of work priorities.

4 Notification of General Business

Nil.

5. Conflict of Interest:

Cr Musson - Shareholder in Fonterra

D Maxwell - Federated Farmers

6. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Any changes to the Minutes below are in italics and underlined;

6 a Minutes from Council Meeting – 17 October 2018

Under 7d - Discussion on the Draft Audit Report;

“accusations from P Watts towards Cr Isitt occurred with Cr Isitt reiterating that the total amount of the Bequest was still intact and Cr Musson reminded the meeting that NC Councillors voted to give a year’s interest from the Bequest to the WWHT”.

Under 9E – National Sea Run Salmon Committee;

“Cr Musson tabled a paper on the future of salmon returns (actual v ideal).”

6 b Minutes from Council Meeting Public Excluded – 17 October 2018

Taken as reported.

6 c Minutes from Council Meeting – 14 November 2018

Under 4E ii– Allocation of Portfolios for Advisory Committees

“That C Brankin and Cr Henderson be co-convenors of the Gamebird Advisory Committee”

This motion was carried.

Under E iii – Compliance

In paragraph 4 – S Pearson stated the need to engage with stakeholders on important issues and that the Committee could meet three times a year.

Under 4f – North Canterbury F&G Council Bank Signatories

“That R Cullinane (General Manager) and Cr Strong (Chairman) be appointed Kiwibank signatories, with the other two being appointed by recommendation from the Executive Committee”.

This motion was carried.

Under 7b – Briefing on the Water and Wildlife Habitat Trust (WWHT)

The following motion be deleted from the minutes as the amended version had been carried.

“That this Council supports in principle the Fresh Waters programme activities”.

6 d Minutes from Council Meeting – 12 December 2018

Taken as reported.

“That the Council and In Committee Minutes from the 17 October 2018, 14 November 2018 and In Committee Minutes from 12 December 2018 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.”

Moved: Cr Gibson Seconded: Cr Isitt Carried

6 e Action Sheet

From 19 Apr 2017 - Research Cost of Computerised Microscope – L Burke to ask M Burke if this was still necessary and if so an updated purpose and capability paper be submitted to Council.

From 13 December 2017 - Wheelchair Platform – legal advice on adding to access brochures - R Cosgrove to send letter to ECan requesting update.

From 21 February 2018 - Assisting with Mallard/Grey Duck Collection – deleted off Action Sheet

From 20 June 2018 - Reserve Funding for Hatchery 2018/19 – deleted off Action Sheet – discussion followed on Council requiring actual costs for running the hatchery and the release by the Freshwater Enhancement Society of fish into the Selwyn River in March 2019. Discussion on the Cawthron Report findings was discussed. Cr Hodgson asked that any discussion on the Cawthron Report be held over as the National Sea Run Salmon Committee(NSRSC) would be publishing their findings relating to the Report. NSRSC is requesting a national strategy be set on a standard set of procedures for running a hatchery.

Cr Hodgson requested that all reports relating to salmon be published on the NCF&G website. R Cosgrove to co-ordinate.

From 15 August 2018 - National Sea Run Salmon Committee Strategic Outcomes – deleted off Action Sheet.

Million Trees Project – P Watts to discuss with E Arthur-Moore and R Cosgrove.

From 14 November 2018 - Draft Audit Report to Councillors and Volunteer of the Year Award voting – deleted off Action Sheet.

7. Health and Safety

No incidents - R Cosgrove stated the intention was to review the Health and Safety Policy and procedures. Cr Strong stated also that Councillors under the Health and Safety Policy were immune from prosecution should an incident occur but have a responsibility to ensure the Policy is carried out correctly.

8. Public Session

B Kelly asked that the Council meeting dates be published in the Weekly Fishing Report. He also stated that passing minutes from previous meetings months after was not good. Cr Strong replied that due to outcomes from the Audit Report that the priorities as set out by NZC had to be dealt with, with urgency at subsequent meetings.

9. Meeting Business

9 ai Appointment of G Nahkies to the NCF&G Council

“That G Nahkies be co-opted to the NCF&G Council as a governance specialist.”

Moved: Cr Knight Seconded: Cr Musson Carried

The appointment was for a minimum of 12 months.

9 a ii Draft Terms of Reference for Appointment of External Governor

A paper was tabled that has set out the outcomes and deliverables for the governance specialist to assist with the reset of NCF&G to ensure it is an effective and efficient governance entity by the end of 2019.

“That Cr Strong as Chairman sign the Terms of Reference on behalf of NCF&G.”

Moved: Cr Strong Seconded: Carried
Cr Isitt abstained from the vote

9 a iii Letter from Cr Isitt

Cr Isitt spoke to his letter regarding accusations laid by Cr Musson at the October Council meeting. Cr Musson read out a prepared statement that;

In reference to Cr Isitts’ letter of 6 December, I wish to make the following statement;

In regard to the record of item 7d of the Council minutes dated 17 October 2018, my perception remains that the incorrect statements about the Bequest were made and were thus misleading. I therefore request that the sentence:

“At this point P Musson accused Cr Isitt of lying and called for his resignation”
Be replaced by:

“At this point Cr Musson stated that he felt that Cr Isitt’s statement misled the meeting and therefore called for his resignation”.

I apologise to the Council if my comment was seen as disrespectful in terms of Standing Orders 3.4.1.

G Nahkie stated that part of any future governance policy should include a code of conduct.

Cr Isitt stated he had never had his integrity come into question before but wanted to move on and would now like the matter to rest.

“That the apology via a statement from Cr Musson be accepted and the statement change be reflected in the minutes of 17 October 2018.”

Moved: Cr Southward

Seconded: Cr Lee

Carried Unanimously

9 a vi Application to Hold Rangers Fishing Competition

It was advised this was a low-key competition after concern was raised on the amount of fish that possibly could be caught given the state of the salmon fishery.

“That it be notified to the organisers that Fish and Game will require any scientific data details of any salmon caught would be collected on the day. Fish and Game staff to follow up.”

Moved: Cr Knight

Seconded: Cr Gibson

Carried

Cr O’Keefe recorded his vote

against

9 b Statement of Purpose and Priorities for 2019-2021

G Nahkies presented a statement outlining the framework prepared by Council that was intended to give direction to the preparation and implementation of a 3-year operational plan and other plans.

He stated that R Cosgrove as General Manager should have regular staff meetings to measure work completed against priority outcomes and a report be presented at Council meetings.

The four key priorities outlined were;

1. That the North Canterbury salmon fishery has demonstrated credible signs of recovery – discussion about how long this could take and that overtime this be defined and refined further;
2. That key stakeholders be more engaged. On bullet point 5 under this heading, the words “next generation farmers” be replaced by “farmers and rural communities” to more accurately reflect that demograph.
3. That priority habitats have been protected from further degradation – staff need to identify key habitats and prioritise. In general discussion M Bate spoke on sprays/chemicals used in waterways and asked if ECan could be asked to stop this practice and to test water quality more often. Staff to co-ordinate with NZSAA and M Bates regarding spraying to co-ordinate an approach to ECan.
4. That the Council has demonstrated it is in a positive, sustainable financial position.

It was decided that key priorities 1 and 3 be used to start to formulate an Operational Work Plan using the guidelines outlined in the paper. At the next Council meeting, Council need to consider what values NCF&G should be judging themselves on.

As this is a working document, the order of priority required that priority 3 become priority 2. R Cosgrove to publish this draft on the NCF&G web site.

9 b i Fish and Game NZ Bequest Policy

After discussion and general consensus of the Policy – Cr Knight to look up the email for the slight wording change and email this change out to Councillors.

The wording “In-tact” required clarification and was a legal issue. G Nahkies to seek clarification from R Sowman as the wording required to be clearer for the public to understand.

9 b ii Setting National Policy

The paper outlined the requirement under the Conservation Act 1987 to provide guidance, cohesion and direction to be consistently applied across the F&G organisation. The process for doing so was briefly discussed.

R Cosgrove to convey to NZC that the NCF&G Council agree with the proposed setting a national policy procedure.

9 b iii Code of Practice for Game Bird Hunting

After a brief discussion on the proposed Otago changes to the gamebird hunting code of conduct, R Cosgrove to advise NZC that NCF&G have no changes to make.

9 b iv Proposal to Restrict the Non-Resident Licence to Each Specific Region

A paper raised by Southland F&G relating to removing the interchangeability of the non-resident licence making it like a local area licence and keeping the cost the same as it is currently.

Points raised in general discussion were;

- consider the affect on finances and licence sales and how much revenue that would potentially be lost;
- put back on Southland to come up with further structure and process;
- need to control pressure on rivers, maybe look at a balloting/booking system;
- any changes require ministerial approval;
- decide who the fishery is for and what will the future look like;
- comes back to habitat – people fish in what is deemed a good fishery.

R Cosgrove send a letter to Southland F&G stating that we sympathise with their situation but look forward to any solutions they come up with.

9 b v National Sea Run Salmon Committee – Suggested Changes

Council considered the four recommendations from the NSRSC;

1. suggestions on salmon fishing regulations for 2019/2020 that were region specific;
2. NSRSC views on a put and take fishery;
3. Request for regional staff to participate in formulating national breeding and production or release guidelines/strategies;
4. Attendance of a staff member to attend the next NSRSC meeting on the 27th March 2019.

Cr Strong advised that discussions had been held with CSI F&G to form a Salmon Technical Working Party with members S Terry, T Hawker (NC), M Webb and H Stevens (CSI). That this working group look at the science to formulate answers to the four questions above and have information available for the next NSRSC meeting on 27 March 2019.

Points raised in general discussion;

- close Waimakariri River off at Waimakariri Bridge to concentrate anglers to where fish would be caught;
- fishery would not recover without drastic measures;
- look at reasons why salmon are spawning in the Kaiapoi River even with the high nitrate levels that are in that River;
- important to have fair consultation with all interested groups and any decisions made, be across all rivers and not some;
- revisit production and breeding processes;

- calibration of water takes were inconsistent and needed to be discussed by the working group;
- ensure stakeholders are involved in discussions throughout this process;
- that all salmon related reports be uploaded to the NCF&G web site as soon as possible. (R Cosgrove to co-ordinate).

10 a Chairman's Report

Cr Strong advised he had been busy working on the NZC recommendations from the Audit Report of NCF&G. He stated the Governance session had been completed, that a 3 Year Strategy had been drafted which would assist in formulating an Operational Work Plan and budget for the next three years. That he had been working on a staff review process with the Executive Committee to meet with staff shortly. The outcomes to be discussed at a public excluded Council meeting yet to be arranged.

10 b Staff Report

Discussion on the make up of the staff report and content followed. R Cosgrove stated that in future, staff would furnish individual reports with more detailed information. Councillors wanted to see what outcomes and action points were raised from external meetings. G Nahkie stated the reports required balance and that the Operational Work plan would provide the key to this. He stated it was up to Council to set objectives that would be aligned to reporting systems.

D Maxwell stated that the Hurunui/Waiapu Zone Committee wanted to re-engage with NCF&G.

10 c Finance Report

The first Xero financial reports to Council were tabled. Cr Strong reported the cashflow report was nearly ready. Cr O'Keefe would co-ordinate the financial reporting with NZC Accountant and D Ambler. Cr Gibson asked that under staff training and other expenses on the Profit and Loss Report be split to show separately. That all employee costs be taken out of hatchery and put into employee related expenses.

10 d NZC Report

Cr Knight reported;

- first meeting NZC and Chairs from each region went well, with all regions behind NCF&G in its rebuilding;
- that his suggestion that a national template to align accounting reporting be set up was received well;
- that to ensure better public alliance the word 'farmers' be dropped from all media and be replaced with 'habitat sustainable land use' or protection against pollution-based land use be used;
- cost savings over the Fish and Game entity were being looked at, with uniforms being the first to be standardised;
- discussion on audit costs;
- Upland Game statutory declaration was signed off by regions;
- Public Excluded meetings to be set to a minimum;
- meeting to consider contestable funding to be held shortly.

Discussion of the need to reconnect and develop relationships with Federated Farmers, Fonterra and any other strategic allies by Fish and Game was considered a priority. Council to ask S Pearson to develop a strategy for this and to provide technical input. Cr Musson to provide information from Fonterra to table at next Council meeting.

Cr's Strong and O'Keefe to meet with Federated Farmers and further the possibility of an introduction with Fonterra.

10 e Salmon Trout Advisory Committee

Cr Gibson reported the committee consisted of Cr's Strong, Isitt, Musson and himself. He advised he would be speaking to two fishing clubs within the next two weeks. Cr Isitt to send Cr Gibson the email contacts used from the previous Committee.

10 f Gamebird Advisory Committee

Bird carcasses being left at Lake Forsyth and the possible reasons why were discussed. Need more rangers in the area over season. Urgent decision required on molt and the length of season was required before setting new regulations. Reported the duck hunter's competition was a success.

11. General Business

1. Cr Knight asked that NCF&G Council support the removal of "farmers" from F&G vocabulary.

"That this Council supports the removal of Farmers from F&G vocabulary and be replaced with "habitat sustainable land use" or "protection against pollution-based land use" be used."

Moved: Cr Gibson

Seconded: Cr Musson

Carried

D Maxwell to follow up on letter between Hurunui/Waiiau Zone Committee and NCF&G.

2. B Kelly asked the status of the Water and Wildlife Habitat Trust. Cr Strong stated a Memorandum of Understanding was required to be developed between the Trust and NCF&G with the Executive Committee to meet with the Trust to do so.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 10.09pm

_____ (Chairman)

_____ (Date)

Next Meeting:

Wednesday 20th March 2019
595 Johns Road
Harewood
Commencing at 6.30pm