

Minutes of the Fish & Game NZ, Southland Region Council meeting held at the Council Office, 17 Eye Street, Invercargill on Thursday 11th February 2021.

Present: Lindsay Withington (Chair) Cory Carston
Lyndon Norman Dave Harris
Paul Stenning Mike Hartstonge (via Zoom 6.00pm)
David MacGregor Craig Horrell
Bevan McNaughton Chris Owen
Richard Crean

In attendance: Zane Moss (Manager),
C Mason (Minutes).

The Country was currently at Alert level 1 of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

1 Welcome

The Chairman opened the meeting at 5.45pm & welcomed those present.

Council recorded that the current start time of 5.30pm was too early for some Councillors to get to meetings on time because of work commitments. With that in mind the Council agreed to change the start time of meetings back to 6.00pm to allow more time for those coming straight from work.

Resolved Owen/McNaughton that the Council meeting start time from the next meeting on would be 6.00pm. Carried.

Cr Carston noted that he had previously agreed to the meetings being changed from 6.30pm to a 6.00pm start with the proviso that he would be late to those meetings due to work commitments. Council had accepted that Cr Carston would be late to the meetings with the change and that it was still the case.

2 Apologies:

Resolved Harris/Owen that apologies be received and accepted from Cyril Gilroy, Ken Cochrane, Len Prentice, Gavin Roy & for lateness Mike Hartstonge (6.00pm via zoom). Carried.

3 Declarations of Interest:

The individual member declaration of conflicts of interest with any item on the agenda had been circulated to members for signature before the start of the meeting.

Any conflicts were noted by the Chairman.

The Chairman noted that he had a Conflict of Interest in respect to the Mataura River discharge discussion.

4 Confirmation of Minutes.

The minutes of the public meeting held 10th December 2020 were considered.

In relation to the minutes of the meeting held 10th December 2020, Cr Carston referred to page 4, Heading 9, and the discussion on the Mataura River discharge. Cr Carston said he did not have a Conflict of Interest as stated. He was not an employee of the Plant but had worked there

as a Contractor and had noticed the discharge to the Mataura at the time. It was agreed that sentence would be removed from the minutes.

Resolved Crean/MacGregor that the minutes of the Public meeting held 10th December 2020, with the above correction, were a true and correct record. Carried.

5 Notices of Motion.

a) **Health & Safety Report to 31st January 2021.**

The Council health & safety report for the period 1st December 2020 to 31st January 2021 was attached to the agenda for consideration. The report showed a nil return for the period. All known hazards were listed in the Southland Health & Safety Plan.

Resolved Horrell/Stenning that the Health & Safety Report to 31st January 2021, be received & accepted. Carried.

b) **Game Bird Hunting Guide's Licence, Latent Provisions.**

DOC had sought Fish and Game's view on the retention of the latent provisions for game bird guides licencing under the Wildlife Act. DOC intended to advise the Parliamentary Counsel Office to retain the sports fishing guides licences provision under the Conservation Act, but unless Fish & Game could provide adequate reason, DOC did not see any reason to retain the latent provisions relating to game bird hunting guide's licence under the Wildlife Act.

NZC had requested Regional Council's to comment whether the game bird guide licence latent provisions should be retained and if so for what reasons.

Council considered the letter from NZC with comments made below.

- If the latent provisions were removed there would be no requirement to have a game bird hunting guides licence.
- Fish & Game have been battling for a sports fish guides licence for over thirty odd years, why would we have the same provision for game bird hunting guiding removed, as it would prevent us at some time in the future, reactivating that, if it became necessary to do so.
- There was anecdotal evidence that the amount of game bird guiding behaviour was significantly increasing in Southland and was also happening in other Regions.
- The Council was concerned that if that continued to escalate, they wanted to retain the ability to ensure that any game bird hunting guides operating did so within reasonable parameters, so they did not impact on existing users.
- Council intended to monitor the situation and be proactive rather than reactive should it escalate further.
- Council unanimously wanted to keep the provision in legislation.

Resolved Stenning/Norman that Southland Council agreed that Fish and Game should retain the latent provision for game bird hunting guides licence with reasons as discussed above. The Manager would reply to the NZC Chair letter on behalf of the Southland Council. Carried.

c) **Draft Email Security & Access Policy (Microsoft 365).**

Since the agenda was distributed the NZ Council had decided that this Policy (attached to the agenda), would be better addressed through the Manager's Group and Chief Executive as they saw it as an operational matter. Therefore, the Chairman removed it from the agenda for discussion.

6 Staff & Administration reports.

The staff report was attached to the agenda and taken as read.

Paradise Shelduck Counts.

Numbers of moulting paradise shelduck were now highest on record, which was encouraging after numbers dropped significantly when bag limits were increased in 2010. The population has now gradually increased in number since bag limits were dropped again in 2012.

Black Swan counts.

Black Swan numbers were also the highest on record. The Manager asked Council to consider the future of black swan. More crop complaints were being received, particularly from the lower river/estuary areas. Increased bag limits have had no effect on numbers, as hunters did not value them as much, with low harvest numbers recorded. If numbers continued to increase, we will be required to look at other options e.g., a cull.

Dr Phil Liver, Landcare Research, spoke to Council a few years ago about Iwi being interested in exploring cultural rights in harvesting black swans. Council needs to consider extending that opportunity to Iwi. They may not take it up in any significant form but should be offered the opportunity. The Manager asked Council to consider a cultural harvest of black swan.

Council generally agreed that while they had some concerns, despite raising bag limits swan numbers were increasing and we needed to avoid a cull and turn it into an opportunity by engaging with Iwi to see if they wanted to culturally harvest black swan.

Resolved Stenning/Horrell that the Manager explore with Iwi to see if they would be interested in the opportunity of a cultural harvest of black swan and report back to the next meeting. Carried.

Signage

Signage was gradually being replaced throughout the region. Manapouri boat ramp was mentioned as needing a change of signage. Staff were working on the signage changes.

Cats GPS study.

An intranet story re the cat study, by Dr Clement Lagrue, Dept of Conservation, Dunedin was attached to the agenda.

This was an expansion study of our own study on cats which we were working with DOC on.

The collared cats would be recaptured in April.

Administration Reports.

The Accounts paid & direct credit/debit payment list since the last meeting, licence sales progress to 19th January 2021, Budget to Actual progress to 31st January 2021, Correspondence list and the draft Budget 2021/2022 were attached to the agenda for Council's consideration.

Cr Harris noted that the licence sales progress nationally were better than expected. Southland would still make a loss but hopefully not as great a loss as originally expected, which was 10%.

The Manager reported that in respect to the Southland Water & Land Plan mediation has just been scheduled for April -May 2021.

Correspondence – The Chairman referred to an OIA request and asked Cr Owen what correspondence he was not getting.

Cr Owen said that sometimes in the past there was inwards mail listed but no corresponding outwards in reply. He wanted to see what was missing.

The Worsley & Clinton ballot system had attracted some correspondence. Some of it very positive and showing strong support and some negative comments as well. One group of anglers in particular had negative comments to date. These seemed to be local anglers who were used to just going to the area when they wanted to, usually when the weather was good. The Manager pointed out that there was still plenty of opportunity with the ballot system to fish the areas and if they wanted to go at a particular time to ring our office and see what was available.

Cr Harris noted that when he won the ballot for the Worsley there were still plenty of other vacancies in the two-week period that had no ballot. This reinforced that a simple phone call to the office would give the opportunities available. Cr Harris also gave an example of anglers who would never have fished the area if it did not have a ballot system. They had won a ballot and were very positive of the system.

Cr Owen referred to a letter that was sent to him and the office but was not on the Correspondence list. He queried that. The Manager explained that any correspondence sent after the agenda was distributed was added to the next meeting correspondence unless it related directly to a discussion on the current agenda. In that case it would be tabled on the night. If people wanted it on the agenda list they needed to get it to the office seven working days before the meeting, as with speaking rights. The letter referred to only arrived the day before the meeting and would be on the next correspondence list. The letter referred to also queried why the physical correspondence itself was not sent out to the public with the correspondence list.

The Chair assured the meeting that any correspondence sent to him that was relevant to the Council was passed on. The sheer number of emails received everyday by the Manager meant he had to make a decision on what was operational and what was governance. All governance correspondence was added to the correspondence list for Council or anything that the Manager thought was of interest to Council. Operational matters were not usually passed on.

Draft Budget 2021/2022 for Council consideration.

The draft Southland budget for 2021/2022 continued with the conservative approach as last year until NZC meet in February to determine 2021/2022 budget amounts. They were working on scenarios of trying to predict year end sales at present. The draft budget for Southland has used the same conservative bulk funding amount as last year with a 5% reduction in costs and a 10% loss to come from reserves.

In the previous budgets due to COVID -19 we had abandoned our budgeted capital expenditure, including vehicle replacements as cost saving measures. In the 2021/2022 budget we are looking to replace two vehicles as we are one year behind in our scheduled six-year turnover of vehicles. To do this we have budgeted \$44,941 from our Asset Replacement Reserve, subject to approval from NZC.

In last years budget NZC had asked for another cost saving due to Covid-19 being no CPI increases 1.9% for staff throughout the regions.

The Manger has submitted that staff should not fall further behind in their remuneration, with respect to the external market and with this in mind had budgeted a 2% increase for Staff salaries in 2021/2022.

Cr Owen asked if the Council could see a paper on the vehicle replacement policy as he had not seen it for review. Cr Hartstonge noted that was an operational issue and not a governance issue. Cr Stenning said that Council should review a vehicle policy as there could be large expenditure in the future that the Manager may have to budget on e.g. hybrid/electric vehicles.

A vehicle policy for review would be brought to the next meeting.

7. Council Information Reports.

a) Fish and Game Resource Allocation project:

The Fish & Game Resource Allocation report by Concept Consulting was distributed with the agenda. The Manager, who was part of the resource allocation project team, referred to the charts on page 22 of the report which showed the total cost- \$ per day of hunter/angler activity in the regions. The activity measure was called a hunting/fishing day equivalent (DEQ). The average spend was \$7 per day of angler/hunter use. (DEQ).

The chart showed immediately the regions which were out of step with their expenditure compared to their average daily angler/hunter use. Southland was below the average in their spending per day of activity (DEQ).

Cr Harris said the report was paid for by the Dept of Conservation. The report would be discussed at the next NZC meeting and would probably eventually be tied into the Ministerial Review.

b) Discharges to freshwater by Gore District Council.

A report by Jacob Smyth on discharges to freshwater by the Gore District Council, best practicable option, consideration of alternatives, application of the regional planning framework and next steps was attached to the agenda for Council's information.

The Manager and Staff had met with Hokonui Runanga who had been invited by GDC to be involved in a working group. The Runanga would like Fish and Game on that group also. The Manager would write to the GDC to arrange that. Iwi strongly favoured disposal to land. The Manager would also write to the Ministry for the Environment who had indicated an interest in the consenting application process. The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment was also doing work in the catchment as well. There were other options than discharging to the River. The GDC would be reminded that it was not only a storm water discharge but industrial discharge as well. Council was generally pleased that Staff were pushing forward with this process.

8. NZ Council update

Cr Harris noted that there had not been a NZC meeting since the last Southland meeting, but he updated what was happening in the meantime. The next NZC meeting was scheduled for next week where budgets and Committees would be discussed and a replacement CE.

- Cr Harris provided clarity on the function of the NZC Office & the CE position. The CE was only the Chief Executive of the NZC Office in Wellington and had no authority over the Regions. The NZ Council had functions as prescribed under the Conservation Act – to coordinate between the regions and government and to manage in consultation with the Regions, budgets and policies.
- The CE resigned late last year and he could give no further info on that.

Paul Shortis was standing in temporarily as CE in the meantime but wanted to leave the position as soon as possible for family reasons.

Councillors commented that the whole resignation of the CE was handled very badly from Wellington in respect to communication and press releases. It could have been handled much better for licence holder's information.

Time 7.29pm Resolved:(Crean/Hartstonge)
To move into Public Excluded meeting.

Section 48, Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, to:

a) Confirm Public Excluded minutes of the meeting held 10th December 2020.

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter and the specific grounds under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

GENERAL SUBJECT OF EACH MATTER TO BE CONSIDERED	REASON FOR PASSING THIS RESOLUTION IN RELATION TO EACH MATTER	GROUND(S) UNDER SECTION 48(1) FOR THE PASSING OF THIS RESOLUTION
A) Public Excluded Minutes	Good reason to withhold exists under section 9(2)(I) of the Official Information Act 1982	Section 48(1)(a)(ii)

This resolution is made in reliance on Section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by Section 9 of the Official Information Act 1982 which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public are as follows:

ITEM	REASON UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982	SECTION	PLAIN ENGLISH REASON
A) Confirmation of Public Excluded Minutes	Section 9(2)(i) OIA The withholding of information is necessary to enable a Minister of the Crown or any department or organisation holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage commercial activities.	Sec 9(2)(i)	Section 48(1)(a)(ii) That the public conduct of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist.

Note Section 48(4) of the Local Government Official Information & Meetings Act 1987 provides as follows:

“(4) Every resolution to exclude the public shall be put at a time when the meeting is open to the public, and the text of that resolution (or copies thereof):

- (a) Shall be available to any member of the public who is present; and
- (b) Shall form part of the minutes of the Council.”

Time 7.30pm Resolved:(Owen/Stenning)

To exclude Staff from the Public Excluded meeting.

Section 48, Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

That the Staff also be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, for:

A) An Executive Committee update.

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter and the specific grounds under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

GENERAL SUBJECT OF EACH MATTER TO BE CONSIDERED	REASON FOR PASSING THIS RESOLUTION IN RELATION TO EACH MATTER	GROUND(S) UNDER SECTION 48(1) FOR THE PASSING OF THIS RESOLUTION
A) Executive Committee update	Good reason to withhold exists under section 9(2)(I) of the Official Information Act 1982	Section 48(1)(a)(ii)

This resolution is made in reliance on Section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by Section 9 of the Official Information Act 1982 which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public are as follows:

ITEM	REASON UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982	SECTION	PLAIN ENGLISH REASON
A) Executive Committee Update	Section 9 (2) a Protect the Privacy of natural persons.	Sec 9(2)(a)	Information provided identifies a particular person or can easily be connected with a particular person.

Note Section 48(4) of the Local Government Official Information & Meetings Act 1987 provides as follows:

“(4) Every resolution to exclude the public shall be put at a time when the meeting is open to the public, and the text of that resolution (or copies thereof):

- (a) Shall be available to any member of the public who is present; and
- (b) Shall form part of the minutes of the Council.”

Time 8.15pm Resolved Stenning/McNaughton

To move out of Public & Staff excluded and back into a Public meeting.

Staff returned to the meeting.

9. Items for the next agenda

- Re-election of Council positions.
Chairman
Deputy Chairman
NZ Councillor
Executive Committee

- Waituna Lake Control Authority consent renewal.

There was no further business, and the meeting was closed at 8.25pm

Chairman _____ Date _____