

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL ON MONDAY 3rd DECEMBER 2007.

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Cllr. S. Canney

ILATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill:

Cllrs. M Carey, S Connaughton, J. Conneely, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, Cllrs. J. Cuddy, M Fahy, P. Feeney, M Hoade, P Hynes, J. Joyce, S Kyne, M Maher, T Mannion, J McDonagh, T McHugh, M. Mullins, Comh Ni Fhatharta, S O’Tuairisg, Cllrs. M. Regan, T. Reilly, S Walsh, T Walsh, T Welby, B. Willers.

Oifigigh:

Ms. M Moloney. County Manager; Messrs. J. Cullen, P. Ridge, K Kelly, J Morgan, F Gilmore, F Dawson, Directors of Service; G Mullarkey, Head Of Finance, M. Lavelle, L Gavin, Ml Dolly, Senior Engineers; T. Murphy, County Secretary; D. Barrett, A. Comer, G Scully, Senior Executive Officers; M O Donnell Administrative Officer, P. O’Neachtain, Oifigeach Gaeilge; J Keane, Staff Officer. Oriena O Connor, Eilis Farrell Clerical Officers.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

RESOLUTIONS OF SYMPATHY

1523

A Resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

Mr. Tommie Varden, The Golf Club, Oranmore, Co. Galway
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Gardiner, Drim, Kylebrack, Loughrea, Co. Galway
Mr. Peter Dolan, Kilclooney, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
Ms. Pauline Coyne & Family, Mullaghmore, Moylough, Co. Galway
Mr. Robert Canavan & Family, Marley, Tuam, Co. Galway

BUDGET MEETING 2008

1524

It was agreed that the Budget Meeting would be held at 1.30pm on 17th December 2007 and that the Monthly Meeting of the Council would take place at 2.30pm or at the conclusion of the Budget Meeting or at such other time as the Council decide.

TO CONSIDER BUDGET OUTTURNS 2007

1525

Report dated 3rd December 2007 was already circulated to the Members.

Mr. Mullarkey gave a detailed presentation of the expected outturn for 2007 as compared with the Budget as adopted by the Council in December 2006. He said that although there was over-expenditure on the operation and maintenance of the Council's water and wastewater facilities there were savings on other program groups which would see the Council achieve a break-even situation for the 2007 financial year i.e. that projected expenditure would be matched by a corresponding level of income.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Mullarkey for his presentation. In reply to the Mayor, Mr. Dawson said that the €3.2M expenditure on broadband was the Council's contribution towards the installation of broadband in five towns throughout the County this year. Cllr. McHugh said that it was useful for the Council to review how it was operating in relation to the adopted Budget and also if Value for Money was being achieved. He asked if all the Capital Money allocated had been spent during the year. He queried the role of the Council in administering the Higher Education Grants Scheme and also the VEC Pension Scheme.

Cllr. Welby noted that there were projected savings in the provision of the Fire Service and asked whether there were any proposals for improving the service on the Islands as had been discussed at the Budget Meeting in December 2006. In relation to the volumetric metering of water he asked if the decrease in usage was due to leakages. He also asked if the Council was recouping the cost of the Cryptosporidium crisis from the Department. Cllr. Welby also referred to the Capital Budget and pointed out that the expenditure for the year was much less than what had been budgeted. Cllr. Mullins queried the apparent under-spend in the Capital Budget and asked what impact the cap on recoupment was having on the ability of the Council to carry out Capital Works. He also queried the amount spent on demountable dwellings.

Cllr. Joyce proposed that a person or group be appointed to monitor and research all EU funding that may be available to the Council. He referred to the fact that there had been savings on public lighting and he suggested that this was caused by the difficulty in getting lights installed. Cllr. Mannion referred to the increased costs relating to the operation and maintenance of water services infrastructure and queried the implications for future years relating to the additional facilities now being constructed.

Cllr. McDonagh expressed his dissatisfaction in relation to the provision of public lighting and proposed that the policy in relation to this be brought back before the Council. Cllr. M. Connolly said that public lighting should be provided for the benefit of the Commercial Sector who were the rate payers in the County. Cllr. Kyne requested information in relation to

Minutes of Special Meeting held on 3rd December 2007

the expenditure on broadband. He also asked what amount was being spent in relation to the WRBD and what were the Council getting for their investment.

Cllr. Cuddy referred to the cost of providing the Fire Service and suggested that the City Council should take over the cost of operating the service in the City. He also asked for an update on the Development Contribution Scheme. Cllr. Hynes requested information in relation to the proposed swimming pool in Loughrea.

The Mayor thanked the Members for their contributions to the discussion and invited the Manager and the respective Directors of Service to comment on the points raised.

The County Manager said that Value for Money was constantly being assessed by the Council and that the Council is constantly investigating cost saving measures. In relation to the Capital Budget she said that it is the best estimate in relation to proposed capital works at the time it was being put together and that it depends on the timing and delivery of the Capital Projects.

The County Manager said that the administration of the Higher Education Grants Scheme being taken over by the VEC was being discussed nationally, but there was no proposal to have VEC pensions removed from Local Authorities.

She said that there were 1150 whole time equivalent employees and that 85 of these were employed on Capital projects. She said that approval had been received from the Department for additional staff in the Water Service Section.

The County Manager said that a report on development contributions would form part of her report for the 2008 Budget. She explained that the under spend on the Fire Service was demand-led and that the out turn is only estimated at this point.

Mr. Gilmore said that the Council no longer installs demountable dwellings and that these have been replaced by pre fabricated units. He said that the Council had advertised for the removal of the old demountables to start in 2008 and this would take two to three years to complete.

Mr. Morgan said that the under spend on the Roads Capital Budget was attributable to the Major Inter Urban routes. He said the land owners had not completed proof of ownership in many cases and this contributed to the €45m under spend.

In relation to the Kilonan Pier Development he said that it was hoped to sign the contract in the next few weeks.

He said that a revised public lighting scheme would have to go back to the Strategic Policy Committee for consideration.

He said that much of the delays in relation to Public lighting were due to the ESB not carrying out the required work and that the Council had meetings with them but there was still little progress.

Minutes of Special Meeting held on 3rd December 2007

He said that in relation to the Councils contribution to non national roads that this depends on the money available at any one time. He said that the Department have queried the Councils' contribution and that this should be noted by the elected members in the context of any new development contribution scheme.

Mr. Cullen said that there was a request at last years meeting in relation to a Fire Service for Inis Boffin and that a plan has been developed for emergency arrangements for the Island. He said this will be coming before the next meeting of the Islands Committee.

In relation to the Volumetric Water readings he said that the difference in the projected amount for non domestic users is that all meters were not installed at the time of last years Budget and therefore some of the metered figures were estimates. He said that all non domestic users have now had meters installed.

He stated that in relation to the water crisis there will be huge additional costs in maintenance and treatment at the Luimnagh Plant. A claim for recoupment of the costs relating to the Cryptosporidium crisis had been sent to the Department and a reply is awaited.

He said that the level of funding required for the operation and maintenance costs of Water & Sewerage schemes would increase dramatically next year as result of new EU Regulations being implemented. There will also be a number of new schemes coming on stream such as Carna and Headford. He said that these increases in maintenance costs will not impact on the provision of new schemes.

He said there was no precise figure for the cost of monitoring sludge in East Galway but that the figure would be a salary cost of approximately fifteen to twenty thousand euros.

He stated that a detailed presentation in relation to the Western River Basin District would be made to the elected members following the public consultation process which is due to be completed at the end of December.

He said that the breakdown between the City and County for the cost of the fire Service was not available at this time. He said the cost is based on a shared services agreement which is in place between Galway City Council and Galway County Council.

In relation to EU funding opportunities, Mr. Dawson said the Council and the other Gaeltacht Local authorities are members of NASC and the Councils contributes towards the cost of a staff member being located in Brussels and Mr. Brian Barrett Community and Enterprise Development Officer is the Council's Liaison Officer in relation to this matter.

He stated that the expenditure on Broadband was in respect of the completion of the fibre brand network in five towns across the County. This involves the provision of the physical broadband network for Industries in these towns. These networks will be managed by a nationally appointed company. He said that spending on this is 90% recouped from the Dept of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

He said that the Council had no physical role in domestic broadband provision and that this is matter for Eircom and other private providers.

Cllr Ml Connolly said that when new projects such as Roads and Railway are being constructed that the ducting for broadband should be provided. He said that the maximum aid should be given to broadband service providers in rural areas and that there are many instances of successful groupings.

Mr. Kelly said that the Council has provided for the maintenance and repairs in Loughrea and Athenry playgrounds.

He said that the Council would be notifying members of six additional playgrounds that would be going ahead and that this would bring the total up to forty to be provided/aided.

In relation to Loughrea Swimming Pool, Mr. Kelly said that a number of issues had arisen in relation to various legal documents that had to be prepared and entered into by some or all of Galway County Council, the Developer and DAST and that proposals from Galway County Council in this regard were currently being considered by DAST.

Cllr Welby wanted to know what was situation in relation to the re-allocation of the funding for the N59 at Derrylea. Mr. Morgan said that some of the funding had been transferred to other areas because the National Roads Authority had changed the contract documents and had now decided to re-tender under the new Department of Finance guidelines.

TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 ON THE DISPOSAL OF 0.61 HECTARES OF LAND AT COURSE ROAD, CASTLEBLAKENEY, CO GALWAY **1526**

Report dated 1st November 2007 was already circulated to the members.

On the proposal of Cllr D Connolly, seconded by Cllr M Connolly, the disposal of 0.61 hectares of land at Course road, Castleblakeney, Co Galway, was approved.

ESTABLISHMENT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS) ACT 2006. **1527**

Report dated 23rd November 2007 was already circulated to the members

On the proposal of Cllr Mullins and seconded by Cllr Mannion, the Audit Committee comprising of three external member nominated by the County Manager and two members nominated by the Council, was agreed. Mr. Kelly said that the Managers nominees were as follows;

Ms. Hannah Kiely, HC Financial Services, Oranmore Business Park, Galway

Mr. Brian Flynn, Moyliss House, Threadneedle Road, Salthill, Galway

Mr. P.J. Mc Govern, Carnmore, Oranmore, Co. Galway.

It was proposed by Cllr. Mc Donagh, seconded by Cllr. Mannion and agreed to accept the Managers nominees as members of the Audit Committee.

Minutes of Special Meeting held on 3rd December 2007

It was proposed by Cllr McDonagh, seconded by Cllr Mullins, and agreed, that Cllr McHugh be a member of the Audit Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr Mannion, seconded by Cllr Hoade, and agreed, that Cllr S Walsh be a member of the Audit Committee.

The County Manager said that a letter had been received from Mr. William Henry thanking all involved for their support in organising the Remembrance Service held recently for those soldiers and sailors from Galway who died in World War 1.

Criochnaigh and Cruinniú Ansin.