

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE

MINUTES OF DRAFT BUDGETARY PLAN MEETING OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER, ARAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL, GALWAY ON WEDNESDAY, 21st OCTOBER, 2020 AT 2.00 p.m.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Keaveney

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill: Cllrs. T. Broderick, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, D. Geraghty, Dr. E. Parsons.

Oifigigh: Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services; Mr. Ger Mullarkey, Head of Finance; Mr. D. Mitchell, Senior Engineer; Mr. E. Lydon, Executive Engineer; Mr. P. McLynn, Assistant Engineer; Ms. A. Monaghan, Staff Officer; Ms. D. Hansberry, Clerical Officer.

To consider & adopt (with or without amendment) under Section 58 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 a Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Ballinasloe, as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive **MDB 20054**

Mr. Mullarkey gave a summary of the budgetary position. He explained that the Council incurred expenditure across many services. These services were part funded by way of Government Grants and income from goods and services. This left a balance referred to as net expenditure which had to be funded. He then outlined that the only two sources of funding available to the Council were Local Property Tax (LPT) and Commercial Rates. He noted that at the September meeting the Councillors had elected not to vary the LPT, in addition he outlined that the CPG had requested that the draft budget should not reflect an increase in Commercial Rates. He noted that at this point in time there was no indication of any additional funding being made available from Central Government. He also noted that the report presented to the September meeting had indicated that there was an estimated excess of expenditure over the projected income. Given that the LPT and Commercial rates were not being increased he stated that in order to produce a balanced budget, reductions in expenditure would be required. He explained that the draft budget before the members reflected that approach. He also explained that the Roads Grants for budget 2021 would reflect the actual allocations received in 2020 and that this represents an increase over the amounts budgeted for in 2020. The actual roads grants for 2021 would be notified in February 2021 and would be reflected in the schedule of municipal district works and road programme for 2021.

Mr Mullarkey also confirmed that on the advice of the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) the proposed additional funding of €1 Million had not been reflected as part of the MD budgets and would be considered further by the CPG.

In general, Councillors expressed satisfaction at the increase in roads funding but expressed disappointment at the reduction in the discretionary headings such as maintenance of housing units, economic development and the area of community grants.

Mr. Mullarkey advised that to produce a balanced budget, cuts needed to be made in the areas of discretionary expenditure as noted. He stated that if additional funding was to be made available then these would be the first areas where funding would be restored.

Cllr. M. Connolly noted that in the recent National Budget it was stated that there would be a 100% rebate on rates for the Local Authorities. Mr Mullarkey noted that the rebate would be for 9 months and would apply to those businesses adversely affected by Covid-19.

Cllr. Geraghty raised the point of reducing overheads to decrease expenditure. Mr Mullarkey replied that every avenue was being looked at including examining all cost headings for potential savings, he also noted that income from goods and services e.g. parking, PEL income, etc. had been adversely affected by the pandemic.

Cllr. Broderick expressed his dissatisfaction at the way the restart grants had been administered, the fact that they were paid to all business whether they were in arrears or fully compliant. Mr. Mullarkey noted the concerns raised and confirmed that the Council were administering the restart scheme on behalf of DBEI and had no input to the design of the scheme.

Cllr. D. Connolly stated that while we are heading in the right direction, we are falling short in places for example in housing maintenance where there are both staff and money shortages. He noted that community grants are down by half and that the budget for parks and open spaces had been reduced by €9,500. Mr. Mullarkey noted the concerns raised and advised that if when framing the statutory budget that any additional funding was made available that these would be the first areas where funding would be restored.

Cllr. Geraghty asked if large retail outlets who had remained open during the lockdown were receiving the rates rebate. Mr. Mullarkey confirmed that the rates waiver scheme only applied to those businesses that had been adversely affected by the pandemic.

Cllr. Geraghty asked why parking charges cannot be abolished in the town as it costs 25k annually to maintain the machines alone. Mr. Mitchell replied that the parking bye laws had been implemented to assist in the turnover of on street parking and had assisted with this goal.

Cllr. Broderick raised the point that as we make contributions to the Ballinasloe Live magazine could we possibly have a page to document the good work which GCC are doing for the town. Cllr. M. Connolly noted that the publication is grant funded and distributed locally which only reached the people of the town and does not stretch out to the hinterlands.

Cllr. Broderick proposed to reject the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Ballinasloe as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive and as presented.

Cllr. M. Connolly proposed to adopt the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Ballinasloe as prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive and as presented which was seconded by Cllr. P. Keaveney. Cllr. Broderick withdrew his proposal.

As all of the Members did not agree with the proposal, the Cathaoirleach called for a vote on the proposal.

The Result of the Vote was as follows:

For: Cllr. M Connolly, Cllr. P Keaveney (2 no.)

Against: Cllr. Broderick, Cllr. Dr. Parsons, Cllr. D. Connolly (3 no.)

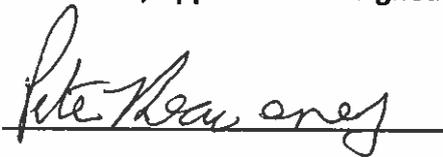
Abstain: Cllr. D Geraghty

The motion was defeated.

On the proposal of Cllr. Dr. Parsons which was seconded by Cllr. D. Connolly the following resolution was agreed: "I am putting forward a proposal here today that the company managing the Ballinasloe pool and leisure centre make quarterly management presentations to the Ballinasloe Municipal Council and I respectfully request my fellow councillors support".

CHRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN

Submitted, Approved and Signed



(Cathaoirleach to sign here)

9.12.20

(Date)