

Northland Regional Council Minutes

Meeting held remotely
on Tuesday 19 May 2020, commencing at 10.30am

Present:

Chairperson, Penny Smart

Councillors:

John Bain

Justin Blaikie

Jack Crow

Colin Kitchen

Amy Macdonald

Marty Robinson

Rick Stolwerk

Joce Yeoman

In Attendance:

Full or Part Meeting

Independent Financial Advisor

Independent Audit and Risk Advisor

Chief Executive Officer

GM - Corporate Excellence

GM – Strategy Governance and Engagement

GM – Environmental Services

GM – Regulatory Services

Finance Manager

Strategic Projects Manager

Biosecurity Manager – Partnerships & Strategy

Financial Accountant

Online Services Officer

Governance Support Manager

The Chair declared the meeting open at 10.31am. Proceedings commenced with a karakia by Councillor Crow.

Apologies (Ngā whakapahā) (Item 1.0)

Moved (Stolwerk / Robinson)

That the apologies from the Independent Financial Advisor for limited attendance and the Independent Audit and Risk Advisor for delayed arrival be received.

Carried

Declarations of Conflicts of Interest (Nga whakapuakanga) (Item 2.0)

It was advised that councillors should make declarations item-by-item as the meeting progressed.

Presentation - Emerging Leader of the Year Award (Item 3.0)

ID: A1314447

Report from Chris Taylor, Governance Support Manager

Moved (Yeoman/Macdonald)

That the presentation 'Emerging Leader of the Year Award' be received.

Carried

(unanimously)

Secretarial Note:

- *The GM Environmental Services acknowledged the 'outstanding achievement' of the Biosecurity Manager – Partnerships & Strategy, Kane McElrea, who had won the Brookfields Emerging Leader of the Year Award made by the Society of Local Government Managers. This award recognised an emerging leader (under 35 years) whose work had positively influenced community based control initiatives.*
- *The council commended the accomplishment, acknowledged the Biosecurity Manager as a 'true leader' and wished him all the best for the future.*

Health and Safety Report (Item 4.0)

ID: A1311465

Report from Beryl Steele, Human Resources Manager

Moved (Stolwerk/Kitchen)

That the report 'Health and Safety Report' by Beryl Steele, Human Resources Manager and dated 1 May 2020, be received.

Carried

Confirmation of Minutes - 21 April 2020 and 6 May 2020 (Item 5.1)

ID: A1311929

Report from Chris Taylor, Governance Support Manager

Moved (Yeoman/Robinson)

That the minutes of the council meeting held on 21 April 2020, and the Annual Plan Deliberations held on 6 May 2020, be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Carried

Receipt of Action Sheet (Item 5.2)

ID: A1312046

Report from Chris Taylor, Governance Support Manager

Moved (Macdonald/Bain)

That the action sheet be received.

Carried

Matters arising from Item 5.2

- Councillors and the Well Being Committee were acknowledged for actioning the well being cards to staff. The cards had been well received and the exercise had proven a 'reverse wellbeing experience' for councillors as well.

Working Party Updates and Chairpersons' Briefings (Item 5.3)

ID: A1311973

Report from Sally Bowron, Strategy, Governance and Engagement Team Admin/PA

Moved (Blaikie/Yeoman)

That the report 'Working Party Updates and Chairpersons' Briefings' be received.

Carried

Matters arising from 5.3:

- The Chair of the Water and Land Working Party drew attention to the Taranaki Riparian Planting Programme which had proven the benefits of riparian planting for the ecology of streams and reduction in E.coli. He also noted that new erosion data demonstrated that the National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry was not reflective of the erosion risk in Northland.
- The Chair of the Planning and Regulatory Working Party stressed the benefit of having Te Taitokerau Māori and Council Working Party members represented. Key work programmes going forward included the plan change to give effect to the NPS Freshwater and implementing the rules signed off in the new Regional Plan. Progress was also being made on the ongoing issue of outstanding marine farm bonds.

Financial Report to 30 April 2020 (Item 6.1)

ID: A1312923

Report from Vincent McColl, Financial Accountant

Moved (Craw/Bain)

That the report 'Financial Report to 30 April 2020' by Vincent McColl, Financial Accountant and dated 6 May 2020, be received.

Carried

Key matters arising from Item 6.1:

- Appreciation was extended to the finance team for keeping council informed during such a rapidly evolving situation.
- The Independent Financial Advisor briefed the meeting, reiterating the 'hugely changeable environment' and stress that the finance team was facing. It was suggested that the standard practise of monthly reporting be suspended, and the finance team develop a more frequent mechanism of reporting to council. It was suggested that while council had 'bounced back' significantly during the month of April there may be another down turn in the equity markets and council must remain flexible and ready to respond.

- It was suggested that a sub group of councillors be identified to go through finances more frequently and in greater detail.
- Clarification was provided that EriksensGlobal Actuary, Jonathan Eriksen, would be addressing the Investment and Property Subcommittee the following week and councillors would have the opportunity to ask questions.
- Assurance was provided that the finance team was constantly looking for opportunities for improvement and ways to adapt to the climate of uncertainty.
- It was noted that council's cashflow was currently under pressure due to large welfare payments being made on behalf of the Crown; however, these would be reimbursed in due course. There was also uncertainty regarding the payment of quarter four rates.
- The Finance Manager provided a diagrammatic representation of the actual April results. While there was substantial improvement from the previous month, council was still \$1m less than budget.

Local Government Funding Agency - Amendments to Borrowing Documentation (Item 6.2)

ID: A1313679

Report from Simon Crabb, Finance Manager

Moved (Yeoman/Stolwerk)

1. That the report 'Local Government Funding Agency - Amendments to Borrowing Documentation' by Simon Crabb, Finance Manager and dated 7 May 2020, be received.
2. That the revised Multi-Issuer Deed and Noted Subscription Deed pertaining to Attachments 2 and 3 of Item 6.2 for the 19 May 2020 council agenda be approved.

Carried

It was further moved (Kitchen/Robinson)

3. That the CEO, and the NRC Chair and the Investment and Property Subcommittee Chair be delegated authority to sign the amending documentation.

Carried

Matters arising from Item 6.2:

- Clarification was provided that the proposed amendments to the LGFA borrowing programme currently had little impact on NRC. However, if it decided to increase its level of borrowing in the future the documentation would need 'greater scrutiny'.

Triennial Resolution to Re-form the Māori Technical Advisory Group (Item 7.1)

ID: A1312091

Report from Auriole Ruka, Kaiwhakahaere Hononga Māori

Moved (Yeoman/Macdonald)

1. That the report 'Triennial Resolution to Re-form the Māori Technical Advisory Group' by Auriole Ruka, Kaiwhakahaere Hononga Māori and dated 4 May 2020, be received.

2. That council endorse the request to re-establish the Māori Technical Advisory Group (MTAG) for the 2019 – 2022 triennium, for the purposes of providing Māori technical advice and input for TTMAC into the development and implementation of council's plans and processes with an allocation cap of 10 meetings per annum.

Carried

Matters arising from Item 7.1:

- It was stressed that the technical advisory group provided crucial support for council and the Te Taitokerau Māori and Council Advisory Group given its ability to progress detailed work programmes.

Te Taitokerau Māori and Council Working Party - Nomination of New Member (Item 7.2)

ID: A1312992

Report from Auriole Ruka, Kaiwhakahaere Hononga Māori

Moved (Craw/Macdonald)

1. That the report 'Te Taitokerau Māori and Council Working Party - Nomination of New Member' by Auriole Ruka, Kaiwhakahaere Hononga Māori and dated 6 May 2020, be received.
2. That council confirms Ngāti Hau hapū membership and their representatives Mike Kake and proxy Paul Strongman, as non-elected representatives on TTMAC working party.

Carried

Matters arising from Item 7.2:

- The work undertaken by the Māori Relationships Team was acknowledged.

Chair's Report to Council (Item 8.1)

ID: A1311319

Report from Penny Smart, Chair

Moved (Kitchen/Bain)

That the report 'Chair's Report to Council' by Penny Smart, Chair and dated 1 May 2020, be received.

Carried

Matters arising from Item 8.1:

- Appreciation was extended to the Chair for her hard work and leadership to support the council remotely during such a busy and challenging time.

Chief Executive's Report to Council (Item 8.2)

ID: A1311514

Report from Malcolm Nicolson, Chief Executive Officer

Moved (Stolwerk/Blaikie)

That the report 'Chief Executive's Report to Council' by Malcolm Nicolson, Chief Executive Officer and dated 1 May 2020, be received.

Carried

Matters arising from Item 8.2:

- It was stressed that water and water security remained a critical issue in Northland. While there had been a short term improvement, rain levels remained well below average and unless there was significant Winter rain the region could be in a similar situation the following Summer. This message needed to be reinforced with the community and it was suggested that signage may be an effective way of achieving this to Northlanders and visitors alike.
- Appreciation was extended to the maritime team for the effective surveillance undertaken in conjunction with Police and customs during the lockdown period.
- Appreciation was also extended to the comms team for the successful social media engagement; which was particularly critical during lockdown for conveying key messages to the public.
- The GM Environmental Services undertook to circulate the NIWA Dune Lakes Review to elected members.
- Staff were looking to initiate a piece of work, in conjunction with the district councils and key industry, to look at opportunities for water conservation and resilience.
- There was general agreement that the terrestrial impacts of drought needed to be considered as 'another strand of climate change resilience'.
- Staff undertook to look at options to obtain baseline data on the dieback of native trees due to drought. Catchment groups and Facebook posts were a few options.

Reporting on Long Term Plan 2018-2028 Performance Measures for Quarter Three of the 2019/20 Year (Item 8.3)

ID: A1313498

Report from Kyla Carlier, Corporate Planning Manager

Moved (Stolwerk/Bain)

That the report 'Reporting on Long Term Plan 2018-2028 Performance Measures for Quarter Three of the 2019/20 Year' by Kyla Carlier, Corporate Planning Manager and dated 7 May 2020, be received.

Carried

Matters arising from Item 8.3:

- Attention was drawn to the fact that this was the third quarter reporting on KPIs but did not highlight the impact of COVID-19 on some of the performance indicators. An assessment had identified potentially 10 KPIs that had been directly impacted and as a result may not be met by the end of the financial year. These performance indicators largely related to environmental monitoring where staff had not been able to be out in the field due to lock down. There were also performance measures relating to bus passenger numbers where there was an obvious impact.
- There was general agreement that given the current pandemic event this was understandable. It was also noted that the monitoring network was under review and this would inform the redrafted KPIs within the Long Term Plan.
- In essence, KPIs were council's contract with the community and all effort would be made to articulate reasons for any non-compliance and also highlight other areas where the organisation had excelled during the pandemic response.
- Response to official information requests was one of the third quarter KPIs not achieved. Clarification was provided that while a monitoring system was in place there were on occasions extenuating circumstances that prevented response within 20 working days. The detail of this was reported monthly via the Chief Executive's Report.

Receipt of Committee Minutes (Item 9.0)

ID: A1312071

Report from Chris Taylor, Governance Support Manager

Moved (Kitchen/Bain)

That the unconfirmed minutes of the:

- Civil Defence Emergency Management Group meeting – 11 March 2020; and
- Audit and Risk Subcommittee – 15 April 2020

be received.

Carried

Matters arising from Item 9.0:

- The appointed FENZ representative on CDEM to be clarified.
- The Chair of the Audit and Risk Subcommittee advised it had been a productive first meeting addressing key programmes of work.
- Clarification was provided that the reporting back to council from committees/subcommittees was via the minutes (and any additional commentary from the respective Chair).
- The Independent Audit and Risk Advisor advised that external feedback should provide councillors confidence in the 'internal workings of audit and risk'.
- The Chair of CDEM advised the workshop concentrated on the drought response; given it was just prior to the situation with COVID-19 escalating. Appreciation was extended to the response team who had been on call for over four months due to the drought followed by COVID-19.

Business with Public Excluded (Item 10.0)

Moved (Smart/Robinson)

1. That the public be excluded from the proceedings of this meeting to consider confidential matters.
2. That the general subject of the matters to be considered whilst the public is excluded, the reasons for passing this resolution in relation to this matter, and the specific grounds under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution, are as follows:

Item No.	Item Issue	Reasons/Grounds
10.1	Confirmation of Confidential Minutes - 21 April 2020	The public conduct of the proceedings would be likely to result in disclosure of information, as stated in the open section of the meeting.
10.2	Human Resources Report	The public conduct of the proceedings would be likely to result in disclosure of information, the withholding of which is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons s7(2)(a).
10.3	Acquisition Agreement for Properties	The public conduct of the proceedings would be likely to result in disclosure of information, the withholding of which is necessary to enable council to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities s7(2)(h) and the withholding of which is necessary to enable council to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations) s7(2)(i).
10.4	Reappointment of Northland Inc. Director	The public conduct of the proceedings would be likely to result in disclosure of information, the withholding of which is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons s7(2)(a).

3. That the Independent Audit and Risk Advisor be permitted to stay during business with the public excluded.

Open Meeting

Moved (Smart/Blaikie)

That the council resumes in open meeting.

Carried

Secretarial Note: Having resumed open meeting the council confirmed the resolutions pertaining to Confidential Item 10.4: Reappointment of Northland Inc. Director.

Reappointment of Northland Inc. Director (Item 10.4)

ID: A1314367

Report from Dave Tams, Group Manager, Corporate Excellence

Moved (Bain/Macdonald)

1. That the report 'Reappointment of Northland Inc. Director' by Dave Tams, Group Manager, Corporate Excellence and dated 11 May 2020, be received.
2. That the current Director of Northland Inc, Sarah Petersen, be reappointed for a term of one year, until 30 June 2021.
3. That the operational funding of \$18,000 be reinstated to cover this position.

Carried

Conclusion

The meeting concluded at 12.39pm.