

# AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME



## Minutes of a Meeting of Council held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2023 commencing at 11:00am.

### PRESENT:

**Chairman:** N. Juby  
**Councillors:** E. Williamson, D. Cocks, P. Shaw, G. Annan, C. Sherrard.  
**Staff:** B. Wilson, A. Daniel, D. Klee, J. Dyer.  
**Visitor:** M. Daniel, P. Hardy (DOC).

### 1. APOLOGIES:

G. Dickey, M. Barker, T. Clark, B. Barnes, D Klee (lateness).

It was moved;  
**that apologies be accepted.**

**Annan/Shaw – CARRIED**

### 2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

Nil.

### 3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF 10<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2023:

It was moved;  
**that the minutes of the previous meeting of the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2023 be accepted as true and correct records.**

**Cocks/Annan – CARRIED**

### 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Councillor Annan enquired as to whether there had been any further progress regarding the concept of an MOU between adjacent regions. The Chairman replied that there had been no further discussion on this topic with his fellow chairs.

Brief discussion about the Governance Review with it noted that Council had not yet been approached by Northland Fish and Game regarding any potential amalgamation.

Councillor Annan requested an update on the sterile trout programme. Dr Daniel replied that he would be producing a report on the programme this year but to date there had been no evidence that the sterile releases had been successful. Catch rates were generally lower for sterile fish, and there was no evidence of extended longevity or greater size.

Dr Daniel updated the meeting on the golden clam incursion, informing Councillors that clams had recently been found in Lake Maraetai.

## 5. COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

### **Inward correspondence**

A letter was tabled from Owen Baigent, Nelson/Marlborough F&G Chair raising the concept of a non-resident game licence and a comparative increase in the full season game licence.

A letter was tabled from Sia Aston, Deputy Director General Public Affairs about conduct and integrity in the public section with the General Election approaching. Mr Wilson stated that he had written to Councillors and staff reminding them of their obligations regarding the General Election.

### **Outward correspondence to NZ Council**

The email from the Chairman to Corina Jordan (CE NZ Council) and Bernie Barnes (NZ Chair) was tabled. No reply had been received.

It was moved;

**that the correspondence be accepted.**

**Annan/Shaw – CARRIED**

## 6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BI-MONTHLY REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

Mr Wilson provided an update on the Environment Court Hearing for Healthy Rivers. Fish and Game would be represented by our lawyer throughout the six weeks of the Hearing with expert evidence given on F&G's behalf by David Klee, Dr Adam Daniel, Dr Adam Canning (Queensland University) and Helen Marr (Kahu Environmental).

Dr Daniel provided an update on the access issue with the Waione Stream emphasising that there was no public access to these waters.

Councillor Williamson recommended that there should be considerable publicity on Facebook and other media once it was decided to ballot the Murray Young Wetland.

Mr Wilson provided an update on the Genesis Energy issue. He was optimistic of a positive resolution by the end of the year.

Mr Dyer's report on wildlife refuges was discussed.

It was moved;

**that Mr Dyer's recommendations on the status of historical wildlife refuges be supported.**

**Annan/Sherrard – CARRIED**

It was moved;

**that the Chief Executive's Bimonthly Report and Financial Statements be accepted.**

**Annan/Cocks – CARRIED**

M. Daniel left the meeting at 11.40 am.

**7. NZ COUNCIL UPDATE:**

Councillor Barnes couldn't attend the meeting due to a conflict with a rescheduled NZ Council meeting. NZ Council had recently changed the date for their August meeting, which was originally scheduled to be a one day Zoom meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August but was changed to a two-day meeting in Wellington (18 & 19 August).

**8. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT POLICY:**

The draft Performance Management Policy prepared by NZ Council staff was tabled.

Councillors agreed that NZ Council could not make personnel policies that are binding on the regions. The draft policy refers to "Clause 26G of the Conservation Act"; however, this clause only applies to NZ Council staff. Regional Fish and Game Councils are covered by an identical paragraph in Clause 26T.

The draft policy states that it is designed to meet the requirements of Clause 26G. Both Clause 26G & 26T state that the personnel policy should follow as close as possible the provisions of section 73 and section 74 of the Public Service Act. However, the draft policy doesn't come close to covering the minimum requirements of either section.

Concern was also expressed that a formal 6 monthly performance management review structure was not necessary given the small number of Auckland/Waikato staff.

It was moved;

**That the concerns of Council with the draft Performance Management Review be conveyed to NZ Council.**

**Cocks/Williamson – CARRIED**

**9. 2023/24 CONFIRMATION OF BUDGET AND OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN:**

Mr Wilson reminded Councillors that they had already reviewed the budget and OWP at the March 2023 meeting.

The Chair informed Councillors of his concern over the increase in levy for the 2023/24 year due to a predicted large increase in fish licence sales. He noted that the prediction was based on fish licence sales as of January 2023, with a multiplier applied based on the percentage increase in sales that had occurred the previous season from January 2022 onwards. However, January 2022 was also when much of the Auckland/Waikato region came out of Covid lockdown and thus sales for January onwards were far higher

than usual (and coming off a period of unusually low early season sales due to the lockdown).

It was moved:

**That NZ Council be asked to reconsider their levy calculations for 2023/24 as it was clear that the licence sales estimate for 2022/23 were far too optimistic.**

**Cocks/Williamson – CARRIED**

It was also agreed that the NZ Council be asked for a copy of the Licencing Working Committee terms of reference.

It was moved;

**that Council approves the 2023/24 Operational Work Plan and Budget for \$947,234.**

**Cocks/Annan – CARRIED**

The meeting rose for lunch at 12:20pm and resumed at 1:00pm.

#### **10. DUCK STRATEGY:**

Councillor Williamson presented his views on a Duck Strategy for the Auckland/Waikato Region. He emphasised that:

- We need a target for the duck population.
- That the number of licences sold was determined by the duck population.
- That loss of habitat was not a major factor in the decline of the duck population.
- That an 8-week season would result in over harvest and thus a rapidly declining duck population.
- That a 2-week season was ideal as it would result in reduced harvest and thus an increasing duck population.
- That a 4-week season was the balance point.
- That previous regression analysis of the duck population had been grossly misleading.

Councillor Williamson recommended that the season length be reduced to 2 weeks.

In reply, Councillors Sherrard and Annan stressed that the decline in game licences had occurred in the early 1980's during a period of massive habitat loss which had unfortunately continued. However, licence sales during the Fish and Game era had been comparatively stable.

Mr Klee observed that Councillor Williamson theories had been previously discussed by Council who had requested a peer review from external experts, which was not favourable. Mr Klee also emphasised that population harvest was just one factor in determining season length. Hunter expectations also had to be considered with most hunters opposed to a 2-week season. He also noted that staff didn't support an 8-week season due to the potential impact on breeding as shown by the mallard productivity study.

#### **11. PAPER CLAIM TAG REPLACEMENT:**

The Franklin Acclimatisation Society requested that Council considers their proposal “*that paper tags should have an expiry date*”.

Mr Dyer’s report on this proposal was discussed. Mr Wilson emphasised that it was the act of marking-up that was critical under the legislation and whether a maimai had a valid tag attached was somewhat irrelevant in determining maimai disputes. There had been documented cases where individuals had maliciously removed tags from maimai before the game season commenced.

Councillor Cocks strongly recommended that all licence holders are reminded that they should take photos or a video (time dated) when they markup.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Franklin Acclimatisation Society summarising the current legal issues with markup.

#### **12. AGE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR MARK-UP:**

Councillors discussed the Franklin Acclimatisation Society request “*that 16-year-olds should be able to mark-up a maimai*”. Mr Dyer’s report was tabled. It was agreed that junior hunters could mark-up a maimai by purchasing an adult licence.

It was moved;

**that regulations regarding mark-up are not changed but that it is publicised that junior hunters can purchase adult licences for marking up maimai.**

**Cock/Shaw – CARRIED**

#### **13. OSH REPORT:**

Dr Daniel gave a brief presentation of the current uncertainties regarding Maritime NZ certification of Fish & Game vessels, and especially who had liability for any accident. A legal opinion was currently being obtained by NZ Council.

It was moved;

**that the OSH report for August 2023 is accepted.**

**Shaw/Cocks – CARRIED**

#### **14. GENERAL BUSINESS:**

Nil

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 2:25pm.

The next meeting of Council is scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> October 2023.