

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME



Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton
on Saturday 24th February 2024 commencing at 11:03am.

PRESENT:

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

1. APOLOGIES:

T. Clark

It was moved;

that apologies be accepted.

Annan/Sherrard – CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

Nil.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF 9th December 2023:

It was noted that the date of the meeting in the proposed amendments tabled by Councillor Barnes was incorrect and should refer to the meeting of 14th October 2023. This was an error in transcribing from the original tabled amendments.

It was moved;

That the minutes of the previous meeting of 9th December 2023 meeting as amended be accepted as true and correct records:

Dickey/Barnes – CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Nil.

5. INWARDS COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Councillor Barnes reported that he had recused himself from the discussion by the NZ Council regarding the recent letter sent by the Chair regarding Auckland/Waikato's budgeted licence sales for the 2023/24 year. Council will be informed in due course of NZ Council's decision.

Councillor Barker joined the meeting at 11:03am.

A letter was tabled by the Chair of the NZ Council, Mr Barrie Barnes, regarding Base Funding for 2024/25. The NZ Council had recommended that all regions make savings of 3% for the 2024/25 budget.

Councillor Barnes stated that all Government Departments have been asked to take a cut, so the Minister of Hunting and Fishing had asked whether Fish & Game could do likewise.

Councillor Cocks and Williamson joined the meeting at 11:21am.

Councillor Dickey stated that Fish & Game should be considering an increase in the licence fee as costs were increasing.

Councillor Barnes replied that Fish & Game would need good reasons why the licence fees should increase other than just cost of living.

Councillor Cocks emphasised that the licence fee needs to increase on a regular basis to maintain services that had been affected by the recent floods and the Covid years.

Councillor Barker pointed out that increasing licence sales was crucial and would compensate for static licence prices.

The Chair emphasised that some southern regions believed that licence sales were already too high, and that affordability was a factor.

Mr Wilson recommended that Council does not submit a contestable funding bid for the 2024-25 budget. Councillors agreed that a contestable funding bid was not required.

It was agreed to adjoin this issue until the next council meeting.

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

Mr Klee updated the meeting on recent botulism outbreaks in the region. A contractor was currently removing large numbers of dead carp from the Maramarua River in the Whangamarino Wetland. Mr Klee had convened a meeting of the Botulism Response Group and reviewed recent data on oxygen levels in these waters but no reason for the deaths were readily apparent.

Several botulism outbreaks had been reported from private ponds and in the Te Aroha Wetland. Botulism outbreaks on WWTP's were generally under control.

The Chair asked staff whether it would be worthwhile purchasing an eDNA machine, similar to the one owned by Wellington Fish & Game. Dr Daniel replied that they were probably not worth the expense as it was relatively cheap to get samples processed.

Financial Statements

The proposed purchase of a defibrillator was discussed.

It was moved;

that a defibrillator be purchased and made available at working bees on Council's wetlands.

Annan/Cocks – CARRIED

It was moved;

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

Annan/Cocks – CARRIED

7. PIGGOT WETLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN:

The draft Piggott Wetland Management Plan produced by the Piggott Wetland Society was tabled.

Councillor Cocks suggested the following amendments:

- The mowing of tracks in the wetland should not be carried out during the waterfowl breeding season.
- The use of live capture traps, poison and leg hold traps should be prohibited.
- Any use of firearms outside of the game season should only occur with prior authorisation of the manager.

The Chair believed that there should be a greater emphasis on pest control and suggested that paragraph 14 be amended with "may be controlled" changed to "should be controlled".

It was agreed that Councillor Cocks would meet with the Society to discuss the proposed amendments.

Councillor Dickey expressed his support for the Society's efforts in updating their Management Plan.

It was agreed that the updated plan would be tabled at the next meeting of Council.

8. FISH AND GAME ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY:

The Organisational Strategy adopted by the NZ Council for the period 2023 to 2028 was tabled.

The Chair reported that he had requested that the NZ Council amend the Strategy so that it included habitat restoration. The Chair had also advised that the Strategy should include a section on income and especially ways to increase revenue.

The Chair suggested that section 4.5 of the Strategy be amended to state that Fish & Game will “*Advocate for, protect and enhance freshwater fish and game bird habitats*”. And that a new section was required on revenue streams.

It was moved;

that Council adopts the Strategy with the proposed amendments.

Annan/Sherrard – CARRIED

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

9. DRAFT POLICIES FOR REGIONAL CONSULTATION:

The following draft policies produced by the NZ Council were tabled for review:

- Anti-bullying Policy.
- Drug and Alcohol Policy.
- Governance Code of Conduct.

General discussion with it noted that Council already had an Anti-bullying Policy that had been adopted after consultation with staff.

It was moved;

that the draft Code of Conduct should include a collective responsibility clause.

Cocks/Annan – CARRIED

10. OSH UPDATE:

It was moved;

that the OSH report is accepted.

Annan/Cocks – CARRIED

11. LAND AND WATER HABITAT TRUST:

The Trustees for the Land and Water Habitat Trust sought the support of Council for the dissolving of the Trust. Justification for dissolving the Trust was that:

- The Trust wasn't receiving any income other than interest.
- Overhead expenses of the Trust were significant.

- The Auditor-General had recently ruled that the Trust's accounts should be fully consolidated with Councils' accounts.

It was moved;

that Council agrees to the dissolving of the Land and Water Habitat Trust and gratefully accepts the donation of the Trust's assets, with funds transferred into a restricted reserve for the purpose of maintenance of Council's wetlands.

Dickey/Williamson – CARRIED

The Chair informed the meeting of Councillor Cocks efforts in obtaining a donation towards the purchase of a tractor.

It was moved;

that Council records it's appreciation for the funding efforts of Councillor Cocks.

Williamson/Sherrard – CARRIED

12. NORTH ISLAND CHAIRS MEETING:

The Chair introduced his proposal to host a meeting of the North Island Chairs and possibly councillors, in Hamilton.

The meeting would discuss what individual regions do that other regions can learn from. It could also include a tour of Council's wetlands.

There was general support for the concept of a meeting of the North Island Councils with several Councillors noting their interest in attending.

The Chair passed on an invitation by the Southland Council for Councillors to visit Southland in June and be hosted on gamebird hunts. Councillor Williamson expressed his interest.

13. CE SUCCESSION:

Dr Daniel and Messrs Klee, Dyer and Hardy left the meeting.

It was moved:

that Council moves into public excluded meeting:

Cocks/Dickey – CARRIED

The meeting moved into committee at 1:26pm.

Reason Under the Official Information Act 1982	Section	Plain English Reason	When report can be released
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.	Once the person to whom the information relates consents to its disclosure.

It was moved;

that Council moves out of public excluded meeting.

Cocks/Dickey – CARRIED

The meeting moved out of committee at 2:39pm.

Mr Klee rejoined the meeting.

14. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Councillor Dickey recommended that Council writes to the new Minister of Hunting and Fishing requesting his support for the retraction of the ban on lead shot for .410 shotguns.

Councillor Barnes emphasised that Council would need a professional and well-prepared argument to overturn the ban.

Mr Klee agreed that data on the use of .410's and how much shot they actually put into the environment compared to other sources such as Canadian geese hunting, was required. In this regard, Mr Dyer suggested that the parents of junior hunters be surveyed to ascertain actual usage of .410 shotguns.

Councillor Barker noted that some EU countries had recently revoked their ban on lead for some ammunition types.

It was moved;

that Council prepare a report on .410 use for NZ Council.

Dickey/Cocks – CARRIED

It was agreed that the other Fish & Game regions should be consulted to understand their views and maybe make a combined effort to get the ban on lead shot for .410's reversed

Councillor Dickey suggested that Council meetings start at 10.00am rather than 11.00am.

Councillor Williamson expressed his opposition due to the distance that he had to travel to attend council meetings. Councillor Dickey withdrew his recommendation.

The Chair provided an update on the work of the Future Finance Group.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 2:42pm.

The next meeting of Council is scheduled for 27th April 2024.

UNCONFIRMED