

NORTHLAND FISH & GAME COUNCIL
UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF A MEETING
HELD AT THE NORTHLAND FISH & GAME OFFICE
NELL PLACE, WHANGAREI
7.00PM FRIDAY 17 February 2023

PRESENT:

Chairman: Phil Durham

Councillors: Cameron Shanks, Peter Allen, Mark Bell, Russell Daniels, John Skeates,
John McEntee

Staff: Craig Deal (Manager)
Rachael Quin (Finance Officer / Administrator)

**Member of
The Public:** Rudi Hoetjes

The Chairman welcomed the councillors, the new councillor John McEntee, and the member of the public. The Conflict-of-Interest register was circulated around the table for all councillors to sign and declare any conflicts.

APOLOGIES: Darryl Reardon, Corina Jordan

It was moved: *That these apologies are accepted.*

Cameron Shanks / Mark Bell **CARRIED**

It was moved: *That the member of the public has speaking rights at the council meeting.*

Cameron Shanks / Russell Daniels **CARRIED**

Previous Minutes

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 9th December 2022 are confirmed as true and correct.

Russell Daniels / John Skeates **CARRIED**

Matters Arising

Rudi Hoetjes let the council know he spoke on their behalf at the funeral of ex Councillor Kris Batelaan.

Managers' Report

1.1 Trend Counts

Surveys were conducted in January and a detailed report was circulated to the councillors for their information. The manager advised that the lower overall number of paradise shelduck than the previous year was not of concern due to:

- the 2023 total still falls comfortably within normal annual variation
- the high rainfall and abundance of food has seen the ducks more dispersed than previous years.

It was also noted that there appeared to be declining numbers of paradise shelduck in the Far North district – this is attributed to land use change from pasture to horticulture.

1171 Angler Notice

The manager asked if anglers are to be consulted regarding the regulation change. The councillors decided to uphold the previous meeting resolution to leave all river fisheries open year-round from the coming season, as it was considered to affect a very small number of anglers.

1226.1 Underwood Wetland

The manager informed the council of progress, recent slip damage and remedial work needed on leaking culvert pipes in the stage two bund wall. The council was informed that the paper road had been inundated once the bund wall was completed. The council had previously decided not to seek stopping of the paper road due to cost. The manager advised of the legal risk and potential mitigations. Rudi Hoetjes stated other examples of unformed paper roads without access which had not been closed and were developed in some way. He offered to present the Fish & Game case in court if need be.

Action – The chairman to informally consult with Kaipara District Council.

The manager informed the council that the contractor had cut and cleared an extension to the public walking track as a section of it was going to be under water as the wetland filled up. The contractor has inadvertently cut across a corner of the neighbouring Scenic Reserve managed by Department of Conservation (DOC). The DOC district manager has reported this to Kaipara District Council as resource consent had not been sought for the vegetation clearance. The issue of the unconsented track work was described as occurring while the project manager was not present. Rudi took responsibility and explained his personal circumstances for being absent. Liability was discussed and understood that councillors are not personally liable, but the council is. The chairman offered to approach Sue Reid from Department of Conservation so see if a resolution could be reached.

The council supported the managers proposal of siting four temporary stands balloted for 2023 opening weekend only (two hunters per stand). All hunting would be on a casual basis after opening weekend.

Action: Manager to ballot up to four stands and stake the locations. A brief must be provided to successful applicants prior to opening weekend to ensure cooperation and safety.

1421 District and Regional Councils, Iwi

Rudi Hoetjes suggested Underwood Wetland Stage 3 for Navigator projects funding by Kaipara Moana Remediation.

Cr Allen highlighted the risks of dealing with botulism clean-up and asked that Northland Fish & Game check their Health and Safety contamination procedure.

Action: Check Health & Safety documentation.

1821 Annual OWP / Budget 2022/23

It was agreed there is not enough existing interest to justify a fishing competition for 2023.

Field Officers' Reports

The Council reviewed the Field Officers' reports. The manager informed the council that staff would be checking on the condition of wetlands since Cyclone Gabrielle.

The moult survey data was circulated. The chairman noted the high quality of Field Officer Graham Gallagher's Moulting Survey report.

NZ Game Bird Habitat Trust Nomination Form

Rudi Hoetjes nomination for appointment to the Game Bird Habitat Trust was endorsed by the council.

It was moved: To support the nomination of Rudi Hoetjes to the NZGBHT

Mark Bell / John Skeates CARRIED

Action: The manager submits the nomination form via NZ Council.

Auditors Management Letter

BDO auditors thanked the staff for their assistance during the 2022 audit.

Rudi Hoetjes commented on the audit finding (3.1 Sale of Vehicle) regarding a difference in market value and realised sale value, explaining the \$3000 was offset by furniture donation and remuneration.

It was moved: That the Auditors Management letter and report be received.

Russell Daniels / John McEntee CARRIED

Draft Budget 2023-2024 & CF Application

The draft budget 2023-2024 and contestable funding application with appendix of changes was circulated to the councillors.

It was moved: That the Budget 2023-2024 be approved.

Cameron Shanks / Mark Bell CARRIED

It was moved: That the CF Bids 2023-2024 be approved.

Mark Bell / Cameron Shanks

CARRIED

Ballot Policy

The amended Wetland Stands Ballot Policy and Procedures was discussed.

It was moved: **That the Wetland Stands Ballot Policy and Procedures be adopted.**

Cameron Shanks / John McEntee

CARRIED

Health and Safety Report

Northland Fish & Game is required to give a Health & Safety report at each council meeting detailing:

- The implementation and adherence to Health & Safety policy/manual
- Any new issues or hazards that have arisen and how these have been addressed
- Progress with any ongoing issues
- Outcomes of audits and reviews required in the Health & Safety manual
- Any near misses or injuries

An incident at Underwood wetland was reported involving clearing a culvert blockage whereby Rudi Hoetjes entered the water to clear the blockage and as a result received a skin graze. The manager reported that the incident did not require medical attention. The incident was discussed at the next health and safety meeting with the outcome of a new policy introduced.

It was moved: **That the Health and Safety Report is received.**

Peter Allen / Russell Daniels

CARRIED

Executive Limitations Report

It was noted that the manager brought to the attention of the council the liability regarding paper road inundation and unconsented track clearance across Scenic Reserve.

It was moved: **That the Executive Limitations Report is received.**

John Skeates / John McEntee

CARRIED

Financial Reports

The financial report ending 31 December 2022 and the National Fish and Game Licence Sales report YTD to 31 January 2023 were circulated to the councillors.

It was moved: **That the Financial Report to the 31 December 2022 is adopted.**

Cameron Shanks / Russell Daniels

CARRIED

Governance Councillor Performance Review Evaluations Forms

Governance Policy 11.3.2 states that "The Council shall every 12 months carry out a review of its performance" The Council's Performance Evaluation Review is on an annual basis which will be held at the first meeting of each calendar year.

Personal evaluations forms were collected by the Chairman. The Chairman will contact any councillors who had not returned their forms. He will collate all the results and convey them at the next council meeting.

Correspondence

It was moved: **That the correspondence schedule be received.**

Peter Allen / Russell Daniels

CARRIED

General Business

Lead Shot in 0.410 Shotguns

The council did not wish to pursue a continued indefinite exemption of lead shot in 0.410 shotguns and supported a phasing out period. Feedback from councillors was forwarded by the manager to the NZ Council to report to the Minister of Conservation.

Meeting Date Change

The councillors agreed that the council meeting scheduled for 23rd June be brought forward to 9th June in order to respond to the licence fee proposal by the 12th June deadline.

Request to Re-purpose Budget

The national Fish and Game website upgrade is underway, and a mapping system has been developed. In order to adopt the program alongside all other regions, the manager requested the required \$2500 be reallocated from Works and Management to Website Updates and Maintenance.

It was moved: **That \$2500 be reallocated from 1220 Works and Management to 1423 Fish and Game Website Updates and Maintenance.**

John Skeates / Peter Allen

CARRIED

CEO Visit

Due to the recent weather event, the visit by the Fish and Game CEO, Corina Jordan was postponed. It was decided the manager will call a short notice meeting to accommodate the upcoming visit by CEO Corina Jordan.

Action: The manager will contact Corina regarding dates and contact councillors.

8.45pm Councillor John Skeates left the meeting

Trout Release at Kai Iwi Lakes

As Northland Fish and Game Council wishes to pursue an application to release trout back into Kai Iwi Lakes, the manager provided several options for consideration. A memorandum was circulated to the councillors outlining the options and the perceived risks and benefits. Also circulated to the councillors was the Official Information Act response from DOC. The options are;

Option 1: Submit an application to release trout in lakes Waikare and Taharoa to KDC without consultation or engagement with any other stakeholders. The application would be based on the fact that Taharoa Domain Co-Governance Committee did not have the authority to make the decision to cease trout stocking and that the DLG population appears to be declining in the absence of trout.

Option 2: Share research findings from DOC with Te Roroa and highlight concern that DLG are declining without trout in the lakes. State that Northland Fish and Game Council intends to apply to KDC to re-establish the trout fishery in lakes Waikare and Taharoa. If approval is given then NFGC will look to collaborate with the other organisations on how to re-establish the fishery (release rates, sizes, monitoring)

Option 3: Approach Te Roroa with the data from DOC OIA to show that DLG are declining in Lake Waikare. State that NFGC would like to collaborate on a research project that will take a baseline state of DLG, koura and gambusia and then gradually reintroduce trout whilst monitoring the other populations. Apply to the Research Fund to fund the work.

The council considered the options and proposed to approach the Kaipara District Council for release of trout into Lakes Waikare and Taharoa with a view to collaborate with the Taharoa Governance Committee (TGC) in monitoring gambusia and galaxid populations. This ensures the best possibility that a fishery is retained and research is undertaken to understand the ecosystem.

It was moved: *That the Northland Fish and Game Council apply to Kaipara District Council to release trout in Waikare and Taharoa Lakes.*

Cameron Shanks / Russell Daniels

CARRIED

Action: Cr Allen works with the manager to submit the application.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.35pm.



Phil Durham
Chairman