

Please note: These minutes are yet to be confirmed as a true record of proceedings

CITY OF BUSSELTON

MINUTES FOR THE GENERAL MEETING OF ELECTORS HELD ON 2 DECEMBER 2019

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MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING OF ELECTORS HELD IN THE UNDALUP ROOM, CITY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, SOUTHERN DRIVE, BUSSELTON, ON 2 DECEMBER 2019 AT 5.30PM.

1. DECLARATION OF OPENING/ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS/DISCLAIMER

2. ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES & LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Presiding Member:

Cr Grant Henley Mayor

Members:

Cr Kelly Hick Deputy Mayor
Cr Ross Paine
Cr Kate Cox
Cr Phill Cronin
Cr Jo Barrett-Lennard

Officers

Mr Mike Archer, Chief Executive Officer
Mr Oliver Darby, Director Engineering and Works Services
Mrs Naomi Searle, Director community and Commercial Services
Mr Paul Needham, Director Planning and Development Services
Ms Sarah Pierson, Manager Governance and Corporate Services
Mrs Emma Heys, Governance Coordinator

Apologies:

Cr Paul Carter
Cr Lyndon Miles
Cr Sue Riccelli

Approved Leave of Absence:

Nil

Media:

“Busselton-Dunsborough Mail”

Public:

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3. CONFIRMATION AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES3.1 Minutes of the General Electors Meeting held 3 December 2018**RESOLUTION****C1912/240**

Moved Councillor G Henley, seconded Deputy Mayor K Hick

That the Minutes of the General Electors Meeting held 3 December 2018 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

CARRIED**4. ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019**4.1 Mayors Presentation

The Mayor presented an overview of the City's achievements in the 2018/2019 financial year.

4.2 Receive the 2018-2019 Annual Report**RESOLUTION****C1912/241**

Moved Councillor J Barrett-Lennard, seconded Deputy Mayor K Hick

That the City of Busselton Annual Report for 2018-2019 be received by the meeting of Electors.

CARRIED4.3 Receive the 2018-2019 Financial Report**RESOLUTION****C1912/242**

Moved Mr Ian Stubbs, seconded Mr Kevin Strapp

That the City of Busselton Financial Report for 2018-2019 be received by the meeting of Electors.

CARRIED

The Mayor asked Electors if they had any questions regarding the 2018-2019 Financial Report.

Mr Ian Stubbs**Question:**

Mr Stubbs asked the City to explain in layman's terms, the qualification in the Audit Report that states that the City's current ratio and operating ratio do not currently comply with the required standards.

Response:

The Director Finance and Corporate Services, Mr Tony Nottle stated that City's current ratio does not include the restricted assets and a large number of reserves which are removed from the ratio calculations. The City's current ratio and operating surplus ratio are not therefore a true reflection of the City's liquidity and current situation. The City has very healthy reserves. The Office of the Auditor General has verbally acknowledged this and the City has made a submission to the Department regarding the use and the calculation methods of these ratios in Local Government.

Mrs Joy Bussell**Question:**

Mrs Bussell asked how much has the City paid to subsidise Jetstar?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - The City has not yet paid anything.

Question:

Mrs Bussell asked, how much will the City be paying Jetstar to subsidise?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - The commercial contract with Jetstar consisted of two parts: the sharing of capital costs associated with establishment of a new route; and the underwriting component. The City will share the capital costs, which includes needed infrastructure and the City will participate in the underwriting of the service, which involves thresholds, average pricing and break even points.

Mr Kevin Strapp**Question:**

Are we able to see how much this is costing the ratepayers?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley – The contract with Jetstar is commercial in confidence.

Question:

Mr Stubbs stated that in the budget, costs of administration, human resources, etc are allocated across multiple areas, with the exception of the Airport. Please explain why the City does not allocate any such costs to the Airport?

Response:

Chief Executive Officer, Mr Mike Archer - Those costs are shown on page 46 of the budget. Those costs are directly allocated to the Airport and not proportioned across.

Question:

Mr Stubbs requested that a comprehensive response be provided to his question in the minutes. Mayor Grant Henley agreed.

Additional Response provided post meeting:

The costs associated with the airport are applied to the Airport Operations section (341) of the budget. This includes Public Works Overheads (PWO), plant charges and plant depreciation allocations. Other costs that are applied across the remainder of the budget such as wages, administration, electricity, water, insurance, security costs etc. are actually directly costed to the airport. Other allocations associated with the airport operations are also distributed across the Building/Facilities Maintenance section (522) of the budget. These are the specific costs of the buildings component of the airport.

The reason for direct costing into the Airport Operations section of the budget is to determine at the end of the financial year the net profit, which is then transferred to the Airport Infrastructure Renewal Reserve. The costs from section 522 are also included in the final year end calculation.

Mrs Elizabeth Stevens

Question:

How long does the Jetstar subsidy run for? And what will the City receive for this?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley – The contract with Jetstar is for 3 years and there is no commitment upon the City to contribute beyond this point. The City can expect to receive a 1st Flyer into the Airport; and hopes to expand additional services; it will bring in additional tourists and provide a local economy boost.

Ms Carolyn Mills

Question:

Is there any budget allocation for families who require affordable housing?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - The provision of affordable housing is the remit of the State Government. The City has long standing partnerships with local groups to assist in this area. There is no budget allocation for affordable housing in the City's budget. The City currently waives a substantial amount of rates for Not-For-Profit groups that helps to assist in this area.

Mr Kevin Strapp

Question:

How much is the Shire of Augusta Margaret River contributing toward the Airport, especially considering the use of Margaret River in the Airport's name?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - The Shire of Augusta Margaret River is contributing \$25,000 per year for 5 years. The use of Margaret River in the Airport's name was a requirement from the State Government, and was not requested by the Shire of Augusta Margaret River.

Question:

Are we going to have more rate increases while we subsidise Jetstar?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley – The Council has not factored any rate rises that directly relate to the subsidy amount.

Director, Community and Commercial Services, Mrs Naomi Searle - The contract with Jetstar is being funded from City reserves, State Government grants and contributions from other local governments and tourism associations.

Midge Avery

Question:

Was a Cost Benefit Analysis undertaken for the Airport?

Response:

Mrs Naomi Searle - A Cost Benefit Analysis was undertaken as part of the Business Case for the Airport. This is a Treasury document and confidential in nature.

Mr Kevin Strapp

Question:

Were any subsidies provided to the Hotel and Brewery Development on the Foreshore?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - There were no subsidies provided to the Hotel and Brewery Developments, with the exception of incentives within the leasing programs, including concessions during build periods and reduction in leasing fees in the first years of operation. The City has not contributed any funds to these developments. The City has allocated \$150,000 towards the construction of car parking and other essential services at the Foreshore.

Mr Ian Stubbs

Question:

What would the City's total rate revenue growth without the rate increase be this financial year?

Response:

Mr Mike Archer and Mr Tony Nottle - Approx. \$400,000 in budgeted interim rates.

Response:

Mr Stubbs stated his view that the correct figure is \$1,000,000, that the City would receive in rate revenue growth without a rate increase.

Question:

How much extra revenue will the City receive this financial year from the increase in fees and charges?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley – The increases were very modest and 0% in some cases.

Response:

Mr Stubbs stated the amount he believed the City would receive this financial year from the increase in fees and charges is \$500,000.

Question:

In regards to the 0.50% (\$240,000) rate increase for footpaths and cycle ways – I have been advised there are no new specific projects/works that this rate increase is allocated for. I have been advised it will be used to accelerate existing projects and bring forward projects.

Mr Mayor, while we have a very difficult financial climate, why are you bringing forward projects and accelerating projects at a cost to the rate payer?

Response:

Mr Oliver Darby – The City has 20 to 30 years of footpath works based on allocated funding so it is just about reducing the time taken for this to be delivered. Outside of this, the City is receiving requests from the community for a large number of additional footpaths, so we trying to meet the community's expectations.

Mayor Grant Henley - One of the reasons the City adopted the increase was due to changes in the *Road Traffic Act 1974*, which now makes riding on the footpath legal for every person and not just those under 14. In response we need to reconstruct or modify a lot of our existing footpath network. We also get a large number of requests from the community about footpaths and safety in areas where there is increased road traffic. We have accelerated the program over the next 5 years to bring works forward.

Question:

Ian Stubbs - In regards to the 0.50% rate increase in road funding upgrades – I have been advised this is also not allocated to specific projects and will be used to accelerate the existing roads program. Why are you bring forward projects when the financial climate is hard for the community?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - The road network has received additional funding for rural roads, for roads that are in substandard conditions 7/8/9; this was a strategic direction 7/8 years to establish a rural roads funding strategy to address the conditions of these roads. The City needs to be able to match funding to regional roads group and federal government roads funding programme.

Question:

Ian Stubbs - At the end of this financial year there is going to be \$447,000 in asset road reserves, why not use that?

Response:

Mr Oliver Darby - The City is using some of those funds already.

Question:

Mr Ian Stubbs - At the end of last financial year, the City had a carry-over of \$5.4million in projects, equalling 69 projects last year that couldn't be carried out that were on the budget and programmed, and all but 15 of those projects related to Engineering and Works Services. The previous financial year \$3.65million was carried over of uncompleted works, some not even started.

This demonstrates that the programme on the budget is unachievable and it is time for the everyone to look at that and instead of increasing projects, prune back on that program to something that is manageable. Why accelerate works programs, when it is clear the executive cannot complete them? Why doesn't the council reduce the existing program to a level that is capable of being completed in the FY and remove some of the burden you are placing on the rate payers?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley – The works budget for the year is prepared by the engineering department based on their capacity and third party capacity to complete works. There are lots of reasons for carry overs, including weather, environmental clearances and other approvals. Reasons for works not being completed on time are recorded through the committees and communicated to the council.

Question:

Mr Ian Stubbs - I now move to the 0.4% increase for community owned halls and buildings. Why the increase when there is \$1.7m in the building asset renewal reserve and most of the buildings have their own building reserve funds.

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - Most of the buildings have very small asset maintenance reserves. Our asset management planning suggest that \$2m per year for asset maintenance is required, so having a reserve of only \$1.7m is very thin in regard to the work that needs to be done on those buildings.

Mr Mike Archer - 0.4% is spread across all categories of Building Reserves.

Question:

Mr Ian Stubbs – There is a 0.3% increase in finance and borrowing costs – to raise about \$140,000. There is a total \$368,000 of loan repayments that will not need to go on next years' budget. Could you not have absorbed the \$140k into the current year's budget and used the 368,000 next year to offset the 140,000, without hitting the rate payer?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - We could have but we have loan borrowings associated with the LTFP for other projects, some of the projects will come on and some will come off the Councils budget through the year.

Question:

Mr Ian Stubbs - Next year without that \$368,000, will we see a rate reduction?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - I don't know, we may have further borrowings for other projects within the City.

Question:

Mr Ian Stubbs - Moving on to the 0.3% increase for the maintenance for new assets, such as parks, drainage and roads that the City takes control of, raising \$140,000. The reason I was given is that the rating income comes on stream well after the city actually receives the asset. Why hit the rate payer with a 0.3% increase when you are already receiving income from rating these new subdivision?

Response:

Mr Tony Nottle - The City covers the maintenance costs before the full rates income comes on stream.

Question:

Mr Ian Stubbs – 0.15% increase factored in to cover general growth, to raise \$70,000. The reason I was given is that this is used to meet the communities expectations, the back log of asset management and additional responsibilities for receiving new assets from developers. After \$1m in rate incomes from natural growth and \$500,000 in fees and charges, why are you hitting the ratepayer with another 0.5% increase?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley – to balance the budget with the projects that are budgeted.

Mr Vern Bussell**Question:**

Where is the city at with the promise made 18 months ago to make a fresh application for the upgrading of the Ford Road crossing?

Response:

Mr Oliver Darby – We are currently preparing the documents for the application including flora and fauna surveys for the submission, and anticipate being ready to submit the application before the end of the financial year.

Question:

Will the establishment of a new cinema complex as part of the Target/Mitchell Park upgrade result in the closing of the long standing picture theatre on Albert Street?

Response:

Mr Paul Needham - Not on the basis of the communications I have had with either the owner and operator of the existing cinema, or on the basis of conversations with the proponents of the development. Also not on the basis of multiple enquiries over many years from operators who agree that Busselton is underserved in terms of cinema floor space. I would further add, that in terms of our assessment of planning applications, that type of direct competition consideration would not be part of our assessment.

Question:

Does Council intend to proceed with their unpopular proposal to build a traffic roundabout at Victoria Square?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - No. There are no plans.

Mr Bill Stevens**Question:**

Is there a program in place for coastal erosion?

Response:

Mr Oliver Darby - Yes we have an ongoing program for coastal protection noting we have 80km in coastline. We have received \$280,000 in grants, we have a capital works program and a large operational maintenance works.

Question:

Can someone from the Council speak to us about what we think are the problem areas?

Response:

Mr Oliver Darby - Yes, you are welcome to discuss that with us further.

Mr Rob Griffith

Question:

I am very concerned about the condition of the Vasse River. The Vasse diversion drain was built to divert the water coming through the town, so all you have to do is build a bung where the Vasse River joins the drain at a height so that during winter the water can come down the Vasse River, through the floodgate at the bottom and out to sea. When water comes down hard, it will go over the groyne and out to sea. Could Council please investigate this?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - I think there has been a lot of investigation done by the Department of Water and the Vasse Ministerial Taskforce and all of those groups and I don't believe they have provided too much that is going to have an instant solution.

Question:

Can the Council please investigate building concrete platforms on the groynes at Port Geographe?

Response:

Mr Oliver Darby - The groynes don't belong to the City, and the rocks move so it would be unsafe. We have responded to you previously on this.

Mayor Grant Henley - If you were to put a concrete platform on there with the Department of Transport permission you would also need to put a fence around it, as you would be creating a platform and inviting people to get up and then you would have to cover every area where there is good fishing and you might end up with concrete ramps the whole way along. Council will look in to it though.

Mr Kevin Strapp

Question

Will the City consider the use of fountain aeration in the Vasse River as the first management tool?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - There is an item on the agenda for the 11 December meeting proposing such a measure.

Ms Elizabeth Stevens

Question:

Eastern Link – where in the budget or other place, where I can find the exact cost of that project. If you can't supply now, can this be emailed to me?

Response:

Mr Oliver Darby – It is not in these budget papers, but I will email it to you.

Mayor Grant Henley – we will include it in the minutes.

Additional Response provided post meeting:

Stage 1 (second north-south road into the Busselton City Centre between Rosemary Drive and Cammilleri Street via a new bridge across Vasse River) - \$5,123,493 (exclusive of GST)

Stage 2 Option 1 (southern extension of Stage 1, duplicating Causeway Road from Rosemary Drive to Molloy Street, with a "roundabout" design for the Causeway Road/Strelly Street intersection) – \$2,286,283.53 (exclusive of GST) – note this is subject to funding being obtained.

Question:

Eastern Link, will that be finished in time for Christmas traffic ?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - No.

Question:

Will Council consider putting very large attractive signage at the layman road entrance on the main highway to encourage people to go that way and reduce the traffic going into queen street?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - We do use the variable message boards immediately prior to those turn offs and main roads also do this.

Question:

The amount of building going on down at the beach front now, that is fantastic, but it is getting cluttered. I'm very concerned about parking. What is the Council doing about parking in that area?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - The hotel site is currently the gravel overflow carpark (behind Railway House) and there will be a formalisation of a car park at the back of that lot, approximately 40 bays. Also some of the tennis club site will be used for parking when the tennis club leave in January, resulting in a net increase in parking. Signal Park will continue to be used as an over flow parking area. We will never build enough carparking bays on the foreshore for the amount of people that come in peak seasons and instead encourage use of the parking in town and walking.

Mr Rob Griffith**Question:**

Would Council consider giving Jetty passes to ratepayers for entry with no charge to ensure someone is on the jetty at all times?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - The implications of this would need to be considered in relation to funding for the jetty. Would this include a pass for residents also or just ratepayers?

Response:

Mr Rob Griffith - Just ratepayers.

Question:

Will Council consider re-establishing the Busselton Tourist Bureau? Does Council control the caves? Tourist Bureau started here in Busselton and I think the Council should initiate proceeding to re-establish the Busselton tourist bureau.

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - The Tourism Association has a lease with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions for the caves.

Mr Barry Grimmond

Question:

The railway line from the tourist office joining up at the other line causes people to fall over, fall off bikes. Can we have the lines filled in where there is a crossover?

Response:

Mr Oliver Darby – I will look into this and provide a response.

Question:

With regards to the ever increasing vacant shops in town, can the Council consider using window stickers, similar to what is used at Hobsons's currently?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - We can look into that.

Mr Stuart Anderson

Question:

Due to the nasty incidents at the Skate Park, would the Council consider employing security staff or community liaison officers to monitor the area?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - I don't believe staff would have appropriate powers to do this as well as the police. We do have increased CCTV in that area that is available to the police 24/7 as well as staff at the youth centre to provide a place for people to go.

Ms Midge Avery

Question:

Following the promise by Councillors for more transparency in council decisions, can we please advise rate payers of the number of submitters (development application) for projects over a certain amount of money (\$1million) so residents and the press have a clearer idea of what is going on?

Response:

Mayor Grant Henley - The number of submissions the City receives on consultations for any projects or development that go out are collated and the number of submissions are generally included in the council report.

Additional Response provided post meeting:

Submissions received by the City in relation to projects or development are available for the public to view and make comment on through the City's online public consultation platform, Your Say Busselton:

<https://yoursay.busselton.wa.gov.au/development-applications>

5. GENERAL BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED**5.1 Questions from Electors at the Meeting**

A variety of questions were asked by Electors at Item 4.3 in the meeting as minuted above.

5.2 Motions from Electors

Mr Vern Bussell put the following motion.

That the City of Busselton conduct a thorough survey of the Busselton community to decide the community's preference for the location of the proposed new Busselton entertainment centre and that the location options include the Brown Street Council owned future parking site near the historic Butter Factory Museum.

Mr Ian Stubbs put an amendment to the motion which was agreed to by the mover Mr Vern Bussell with the amended substantive motion then put.

MOTION

C1912/243 Moved Mr Vern Bussell, seconded Mr Neville Wheatley

That the City of Busselton conduct a thorough survey of the Busselton community to ascertain if the community wants a performing arts centre; whether they are prepared to pay the construction costs for it and pay the costs to operate it. And to decide the community's preference for the location of the proposed new Busselton entertainment centre and that the location options include the Brown Street Council owned future parking site near the historic Butter Factory Museum.

CARRIED

At this point in the meeting, Director Community and Commercial Services Director, Mrs Naomi Searle advised Electors that a link to the Economic Impact and Demand Assessment Report for the BEACH would be circulated with the minutes of the meeting for Electors information.

The Economic Impact Assessment report which will inform the development of an operating budget can be found here:

https://www.busselton.wa.gov.au/files/sharedassets/public/ecm/ceo_gov/council_supp/busselton_entertainment_arts_and_culture_hub_economic_assessment.pdf

Mr Rob Griffiths put the following motion.

MOTION

C1912/244 Moved Mr Rob Griffiths, seconded Mr Stuart Anderson

That this Council initiate proceedings to re-establish the Busselton Tourist Bureau. This needs to come from the Council level.

CARRIED

Mr Vern Bussell put the following motion.

MOTION

C1912/245 Moved Mr Vern Bussell, seconded Mrs Margaret Strong

I move that the City of Busselton take the necessary steps to request that the WA Bureau of Metrology establish an office weather station in the Busselton CBD.

CARRIED

2. CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.

THESE MINUTES CONSISTING OF PAGES 1 TO 14 WERE CONFIRMED AS A TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD ON ~~WEDNESDAY, 29 JANUARY 2020~~ **MONDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2021.**

DATE: 8/2/2021 PRESIDING MEMBER: 