



Torres Strait Island
REGIONAL COUNCIL

MINUTES

COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

TUESDAY 17TH MAY 2011

Please find attached Minutes of the above meeting held on Tuesday 17th May 2011 at 1.00pm – 5.10pm at the *Ugarie Nona Community Hall, Badu Island.*

**Torres Strait Island Regional Council (TSIRC)
Special Meeting
Held at the *Ugarie Nona Community Hall*, Badu Island
Tuesday 17th May**

DAY 1 - TUESDAY 17TH MAY 2011

- Present:** Cr. Fred Gela, Mayor
Cr. Torenzo Elisala, Division 2 – Dauan
Cr. Keith Fell, Division 4 – Mabuiag Island
Cr. Wayne Guivarra, Division 5 – Badu Island
Cr. David Bosun, Division 6 – Kubin
Cr. Nancy Pearson, Division 8- Hammond
Cr. Walter Mackie, Division 9 - Iama
Cr. Phillemon Mosby, Division 11 – Poruma Island
Cr. Florianna Bero, Division 13 – Ugar
Cr. Ron Day – Division 15 – Mer Island
Mr. John Scarce, Chief Executive Officer
Mr. Anthony Bird, Executive Manager Corporate & Finance
Mr. Chris McLaughlin, Chief Legal Officer
Mrs Tania Sailor, Executive Secretary.
- Observers:** Nil
- Apologies:** Cr. Donald Banu, Division 1 – Boigu Island
Cr. Ron Enosa, Division 3 – Saibai Island
Cr. Toshie Kris, Division 7 – St. Pauls
Cr. Willie Lui, Division 10 - Warraber
Cr. John Mosby, Division 12 – Yorke
Cr. Kenny Bedford, Deputy Mayor, Division 14 - Erub
Ms Dania Ahwang, Deputy CEO
Mr. David Abednego, Executive Officer
Mr. Patrick McGuire, Executive Manager Engineering Services
Mr. Lloyd Sunderland, Executive Manager
Mr. Noel Peters, Executive Manager, Human Resources
Ms Jess James, PR & Media Officer
- Deputations:** Nil
- 1.00pm:** Meeting opened in prayer by Cr. Mackie.

ONE MINUTE SILENCE

There was a minute silence to pay respect to families who have lost their loved ones recently.

BUDGET

- Mayor clarified to members that at this stage there has been no confirmation as yet of receiving more dollars in the New Financial Year, which is why Councillors are not going to be looking at adopting the budget yet, but we will discuss thoroughly as we go through the presentation by Executive Manager Corporate.
- Executive Manager Corporate & Finance:
 - Advised Council have not been provided as yet with further information from the State Government on what we may or may not be getting, we have to wait in anticipation and watch the Treasury on June 17 – Delivery Budget Speech, and see if there is anything in there for us.
 - Power Point presentation will look at:
 - Information discussions of where the Budget is at in terms of consolidation, since the budget meeting in Cairns where Councillors broke into little groups and discussed the budget individually.
 - a number of resolution that needs to come to Council to review and endorse to help further refine where the budget currently is at.
 - Working towards resolution of Council if we don't get the additional funds for those services or they not revenue neutral then basically we won't be budgeting for them and we won't be allocating funds for those services in the next Financial Year.
 - Biggest Claim this Council's ever put in and achieved is the NDRRA Flood Damage Funding of \$10M - fully functional service moving forward.
 - If we don't get the additional funding \$9M in recurrent costs from the State Government as well as an additional \$2.4M for Community Police and we don't get any sort of future depreciation funding than basically what the Council's currently sitting at is a \$32M deficit. \$20M of that \$32M deficit is depreciation (something which Council is not really funded to manage) and that's another discussion that needs to be done with the State Government in moving forward.
- CEO clarified:
 - directly applied through Department of Infrastructure & Planning(DIP) for \$8.8M.
 - That application has been presented to the Cabinet Review Budget Committee – various ministers have requested further information of which Executive Manager Corporate & Finance has provided to them. It is sitting in that budget review for consideration with them.
 - The \$2.4M is an application which the Queensland Police Service has made through the Cabinet Budget Review processes as well.
 - In discussions with QPS, if they are successful in their budget application for the \$2.4M, they will give that to Department of Infrastructure & Planning for TSIRC to have a funding agreement with DIP for that \$2.4M.
 - The budget figures shown for Yorke, Warraber and Mer - discussions need to take place with the three (3) communities, just to try and trim a little bit of money off that budget.
 - If we were guaranteed that \$11.24M, that would be the budget up there that we would presenting to Council on the 29th or 30th June to

adopt and we would work with those other communities to see whether we could save a bit to bring down that deficit. But through natural transition of staff through making better purchasing decision we could save that \$600,000 throughout the year so there's no need to go back and re-work it.

- If we do not get the \$2.4M for Community Police in accordance with previous Council's resolution:
 - we don't the Community Police - all that is gone which can be easily done and we bring forward that budget at the 30th June for Council to pass
 - it would be a little bit different if we don't get the \$8.8M then we will not be passing the budget of the 30th June because our budget would show nearly a \$12M deficit
 - we would really need to go back and think on how we were going to cut \$12M out of the budget .
- Budget can be reviewed anytime during the year.
- Badu Division has a surplus of \$356,000
- Badu has been very generous helping out some of those other divisions that have been in deficit at the moment but we still need to balance the budget across the whole of Torres Strait.
- We can and we always have the ability to rework our budgets at anytime to take advantage.
- If we can make other savings in those other divisions yes Badu could tap into that \$356,000 and do some things, but at the end of the day the Council needs to be conscious of what our consolidated position is at the end of the Financial Year.
- In having a look through, and just for everyone's information within the Amalgamation from previous Badu Island Council till today its virtually been a \$2M turnaround for Badu, which resulted in them making some very very hard decision and they've shown up in the budgeting process.
- The division of Badu should be commended - that's even with losing all of the enterprises which was putting specific liquor money into Badu.

RESOLUTION

➤ PLANT POOL HIRE RATES

Moved Cr. Bosun, Seconded Cr. P. Mosby that Council accepts the Plant Pool Hire Rate Charges as presented at the Budget Meeting in Cairns.

Motion Carried

- *It was noted that these charges can be reviewed anytime at a Budget or Council Meeting.*

It was resolved that Council break for lunch at 1.50pm, resumed 2.15pm.

➤ **LIBRARY OPEN TIMES**

- Funding 20hrs (State) and 20hrs (TSIRC) – gives 40hrs per fortnight.
- Resolution from Council whether:
 - Linking the Librarian and Councillor's Secretary's position is an idea to move forward with.
 - Internet access was to be provided free of charge because of Council going into a cashless society – it be difficult for Council to handle small amounts of money, and;
 - Library open times are 4 hrs per day – whether it be in the one period or split over two periods.
- 4hrs per day for the Library open times.
- Poruma – looking at after hours working with Indigenous Knowledge Centre (IKC)
- Office Staff

Lay on Table

1. *It was noted that rather than adopting the Library operating times now that it be "Lay on Table" whilst engaging in discussions with each community on what they would support in relation to their most suitable operating hours.*
2. *Further that the feedback on the Community's suitable operating times be sent to the Executive Manager for Communities to administer those hours.*

➤ **DIVISIONAL OFFICERS**

- Maintain the Divisional Managers
- Look at the Multi-skilled Administration Officers - provide capacity building where ever necessary
- Councillors Secretary is .5 - need to engage in discussions on how to amalgamate those positions as well.
- Look at Casual Staff Labour Pool

➤ **OPERATIONS OF RESORTS & ACCOMMODATION CENTRES**

- Divisional office:
 - As discussed in Cairns, Divisional Office to maintain the resorts & accommodation bookings and do the reception area.
 - to arrange courtesy transport from airport or seaport for resort or accommodation guests
 - Divisional Manager to oversee the cleaning and the services at the accommodation centres.
 - The Divisional Managers will be responsible for:
 - the resorts,
 - the multi-skilled Officers; and
 - the Cleaners.
 - Look at strengthening the operations of those resorts and accommodation centres, and making the Divisional Managers more accountable for their performance.

- It was noted:
 - employing a Manager to look after each resorts and accommodation Centre would significantly affect the cost based of that which would increase prices even more to make sure those business were sort of revenue neutral.
 - based on good business principles in making ends meet with the resorts and accommodation centres one need to look at:
 - the traffic – the amount of people going through at any given time
 - what is the peak of the season - how many rooms do you really need to accommodate that season?
 - Some communities make some money, some don't because they don't have that traffic to make ends meet.
 - At the end of the day, Councillors need to consider if you are going to create a position with a salary package that cost \$50,000, that will close the gap but will open another within the services you provided to communities, because that money has to come from somewhere.
 - Mayor requested Chief Legal Officer to note and liaise with Cr. Fell as per his queries in re-engaging in discussions specifically for Mabuag Island on Divestment of Enterprises, similar to discussions scheduled by CEO & Mayor with Cr. P. Mosby on the Poruma Resort.
 - As per Cr. Elisala's queries Executive Manager Corporate & Finance advised this is something that needs to be discussed with the mechanic on an individual basis to see what their sort of aspirations are or their career path
- **CASUAL LABOUR POOL**
- Casual Staff to assist Divisional Managers at times when staff are sick or on annual leave, cultural leave etc and provides a general back up to proposed staffing levels.
 - Looking at obtaining a list of 10 – 20 people – that way you can start at the top of the list and keep working through because if you get a good response and obtain a bigger list the better the opportunities for us to actually get someone in to backfill staff.
 - Mayor noted that when it comes to advertising for Causal Labour Pool, and because it is something new to Council in the Torres Straits, we really need to go into depth in terms of how we actually clarify that because people might apply and might think the best person will get the job.
 - It was noted that people applying for Casual Labour Pool:
 - Will get a letter to say they are casual worker for the Council, and what their rates of pay would be etc for the sorts of jobs they perform.
 - If one of the multi-skilled Admin officers have called in sick for the day, the Divisional Manager will have the authority to be able to go through the list of causal to see who is available for the day, mark it off and bring them in and put in a timesheet for them.
 - Once the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) is ratified the Casual Pool Labour is classed as a level 2 employee and will be paid at that level if they employed in that position, and because they are causal they do not get holiday pay, sick pay etc.

- CEO:
 - the whole point about the Casual Labour Pool is that the services have been delivered, not for the Divisional Manager to put somebody on because they can.
 - The Divisional Manager do not have the ability to put someone on if there is no need for it, they will be disciplined if that happens.
 - A lot of education and awareness needs to be given to a lot of people in relation to this issue, but the whole idea is so that services delivery still happens in the community without any complaints arising.

- **POWERCARDS & PHONECARDS**
 - It was noted that:
 - Mabuig's decision is for IBIS to sell power cards/phone cards
 - IBIS to provide the sale of power cards and phone cards.
 - This will reduce the amount of responsibility that the Divisional Manager or Multi-Skilled staff or any administration arm do at our Council Office.
 - In the past simple answer in relation to why IBIS most probably did away with that responsibility in the past for the two communities is it carried out that responsibility for is they lack security in the past in terms of monitoring
 - A lot of freights that was coming into our community was on pallets, but now always it comes in containers and those containers are locked its opened by the Store Managers, so they way the things are done now are different and its going to be a better services to our people anyway.
 - Contingency plan is that for any reason IBIS cannot sell power card Council would do it for that period of time.

RESOLUTION

Moved Cr. Fell, Seconded Cr. Guivarra that IBIS provides the sale of power cards and phone cards, and further as a contingency plan where IBIS cannot sell the power cards and phone cards Council will provide for that period of time.

Motion Carried

- **GAS PETROL AND DIESEL SALES**
 - Charged at cost plus a mark up base on overheads.

- **POST OFFICE**
 - Post office function will go to the Multi-skilled Administration Officer in (Reception at Council)

It was noted that Cr. Pearson left the room at 4.00pm – 4.05pm

➤ **RENT**

- Rent payments will still initially be handled by Council
- Council's longer term view is that it will go to the Department of Communities – this will be a significant reduction in the workload for the front counter.

➤ **ANIMAL REGISTRATION**

- Will still be managed at the Council Reception.

It was noted to follow up on the progress of education for the animal management and payment of registrations, if there has been any difference since then.

➤ **RENT ARREARS**

- Arrears Rental Collection Strategy for Council - steps have been undertaken to date for those rental arrears, wasn't just rental arrears, also looked at all the debtors who had a debt to the Council greater than \$10,000 – have already begun discussions with those individual and businesses.
- Steps taken
 1. 1st Reminder Notice is sent out advising how much they is still outstanding and to contact the Council to discuss it.
 2. 2nd Reminder Notice is sent out which is a slightly stronger letter advising they have not responded to our first letter and to please contacted us to discuss the issue.
 3. If Council still does not get any response from them and they do not contact us, then Finance then hands over the matter to the Chief Legal Officer for the recovery process.
- Executive Manager Corporate & Finance advised:
 - whatever's easiest for the debtor we need to talk to them and enter into a payment arrangement plan depending on the circumstances but need to discuss this with that individual to ascertain their circumstances and work with them to have the debt paid off as quickly as possible.
 - Generally speaking looking at having the debt and/or all new sort of money that comes on to that debt extinguish within a period of 6-12 months.

It was noted that:

- Cr. Mackie left the room at 4.05pm – 4.10pm
- Cr. Bosun left the room at 4.05pm – 4.15pm

➤ **FAXING/PHOTOCOPYING**

- To be provided free if less than 10 sheets
- If its greater than 10 sheets we'd be looking at \$1 a sheet
- look at providing free of charge small yield transactions to the community.
- *It was noted that the issue on the operating times for office was resolved in Cairns.*

As per Cr. Pearson's query on information going out to communities, It was noted that once Council have completed what has been resolved, what has not been resolved and what is yet to be resolved:

- (1) form the basis of discussions with Councillors in terms of accessing some ideas and using our PR as well in devising some sort of communication regional strategy in relation to disseminating information.
- (2) Look at engagement of Councillors through Community Forum Process, RIBS, Strait Talk, Public Notices and the Website(once its up and running).

➤ **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

- 480 work hours across the TSIRC.
- 32 hrs per site per week
- 2 staff engaged in Garbage Collection for 2 days only – 16 hrs per person at each site)
- Reduction in services for some areas – there were some decisions where garbage was collected 3 times a week or not at all
- It was noted that:
 - TSRA was the last resort to apply for Submission for funding for the 7 Garbage trucks because every toher doors that Council knocked on did not have the money.
 - Received response directly from the TSRA General Manager that the submission was unsuccessful.
 - Informed by General Manager that the decision was not made by the Board as it is an administrative decision, and not the Board.
 - Mayor and CEO aware the medium replacement vehicle does not exist
 - The submission would have been a one-off funding, and the Mayor felt disrespected and offended because Torres Shire Council access subdivision money when development subdivision underneath the MIP Program was non-existent.
 - TSIRC was told that no funding will be accessed for Subdivision under the MIP arrangement.
 - TSRA and TSC has a joint partnership between them in terms of bank rolling a subdivision on Horn Island.
 - The subdivision for Injinoo was a one off grant and got reimbursed at the end.
 - However, for a decision to be made considering all bases as a one-off TSIRC should have been give the same type of respect
 - Without the 7 Garbage trucks some communities will continuously going to be in the same predicament they are in until we can retract the necessary \$'s from State.
 - *CEO to follow up on opportunities for licensing training for people in communities who do not have licenses to drive garbage trucks so that they can take up the positions.*
 - *Mayor happy to sit in TSRA Board Meeting if invited and would also welcome TSRA to sit in on TSIRC Council Meeting.*

It was resolved that the Council break for Afternoon Tea at 4.40 – 5.10pm.

It was noted Cr. Bosun left the meeting during afternoon tea.

➤ **REGIONAL PLANT POOL**

- look at moving to a full Regional Plan Pool.
- putting a base level plant in each and every division and moving that plan around on an "as needs" basis.
- Plants will be based in the division but its not the divisions to actually own.
- Once the plants are moved between divisions, its items location would change in the Asset Register.
- Need to have the flexibility to in the Regional Plant Pool to be able to move that around and make it profitable(which is in access of 1500hrs in any given year)
- Once the plant utilizes 1500hrs it starts paying for itself and in 2 -3 yrs time a brand new plant would be purchased.
- The whole reason of moving the plants around is that it is utilized to reach 1000 -1500hrs of work but on an "as needs" basis.
- The Plant pool is to be a generator of funds and those funds will provide the replacement for that plant – so if it is not in the plan pool it doesn't get replaced
- Looking at building up those plants in each and every division and utilizing things like hire rates to generate income for them.
- The bigger and heavier will start move around to improve the hours and utilization.
- Will plan to move operators around with the plant – one machine, one very skilled operator.

Executive Manager Corporate & Finance – will request a report to be done on that type of machine as per Cr. Fell's comments, whether it can be fixed and that is economic to fix and if its not look at some other means of getting that piece of plant up in divisions.

➤ **UGAR ISSUES**

- No heavy machinery at Ugar such as a backhoe.
- Sewerage issues – needs to be pumped and dumped appropriately.
- Backhoe based at Masig can be move to Ugar at any time if it needs it for normal progress works.
- Have been doing research for quite some time for the most suited machined for Ugar 9something to dig and has 4 in 1 buckets but it needs to have the operations inside the cab for Health & Safety reasons. Manager Procurement is still trying to find it.
- Request to have it moved have not been formally
- made Manager Procurement is looking xecutive Manager Corporate & Finance – will request a report to be done on that type of machine as per Cr. Fell's comments, whether it can be fixed and that is economic to fix and if its not look at some other means of getting that piece of plant up in divisions.

Mayor:

- look at designing work program to satisfy both Ugar and Masig.
- In terms of urgent situations if there is a death in the community, need to plan for this as well.
- Liaise in discussions with Cr. Bero and Ugar Divisional Manager regarding awareness as to where the requests were made to regarding the movement of the Backhoe from Masig to Ugar. Further in relations to urgent situations such as death in the Community of Ugar Mayor will liaise if requested with Fred White in getting Seaswift into Ugar to assist with the delivery of the backhoe.
- Have information available of a list of all the plants in each community at the next Council meeting.

MEETING CLOSED

5.20pm Special Meeting Closed


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Cr. Fred Gela
Mayor


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Mr John Scarce
Chief Executive Officer