

Minutes of Adjourned June Council Meeting held in the Mtek Building, Knockaconny, Armagh Road, Monaghan on Monday 18th June, 2012 following the Annual Meeting.

Chair: Cllr H. McElvaney, Mayor.

Present: Cllrs. Bannigan, Carthy, Carville, Conlon, Connolly, Coyle, Gallagher, Keelan, Maxwell, McElvaney, B. McKenna, McPhillips, Murray, O'Brien, O'Hanlon, P. Treanor and S. Treanor.

Mr. D. Fallon, A/County Manager, Mr. P. Clifford, Mr. A. King, Mr. D. Treanor, Directors of Service, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Ms. R. McManus, SEO, Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner, Mr. J. McGrath, Senior Engineer, Ms. R. Moore and Mr. O. Mulligan, Assistant Engineers and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

At the outset the Mayor acknowledged the refurbishment work that had been recently undertaken on the Council Chamber. He complimented John McEntegart and his staff as well as the Council staff involved with the work.

Cllr Maxwell informed the Members that the Monaghan United Football Club had taken the decision that morning to withdraw from the League of Ireland. He expressed his disappointment at the decision and assured the Club of his support, as did Cllrs Gallagher, Conlon and the Mayor.

1. Part VIII Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations 2001

(iv) To consider granting permission for the realignment of approx 2.5km of the existing N2 between Gortmoney and Emyvale.

The members considered the Director's Report dated 11th June which had been circulated.

Mr. J. McGrath, Senior Engineer, Roads gave a detailed presentation to the Council in relation to this phase of the realignment of the N2 between Gortmoney and Emyvale and responded to queries from the elected members.

On the proposal of Cllr Conlon, seconded by Cllr Maxwell, it was agreed that the Council approve the realignment of approx 2.5km of the existing N2 between Gortmoney and Emyvale to include 2.5km of new single carriageway consisting of easement, alignment, improvement and overlay of the N2 National Primary Road, road drainage, watercourse crossings and all ancillary works. (Ref 12/8008) to comply with the Manager's Report dated 11th June 2012 and in accordance with Part VIII of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations 2001.

On the proposal of Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Conlon it was agreed that the Council write to the Minister for Transport seeking to ensure that the goodwill payment paid to land owners on the earlier phases of this scheme is paid to landowners subjected to a land-take as a result of this phase (N2 Gortmoney – Emyvale)

2. To fix date for the following meetings:

(i) Tourism Sub-Committee meeting:

It was agreed that a meeting of the Tourism sub-Committee would be held on Monday 25th June at 3.30 pm.

(ii) Corporate Policy Group meeting:

It was agreed that a meeting of the Corporate Policy Group would be held on Friday 29th June at 10.00 am in the Conference Room, The Glen, Monaghan.

3. To receive Presentations as follows:

Presentation on the Ulster Canal Project by Mr. Nigel Russell, Director of Technical Services, Waterways Ireland.

The Mayor welcomed Mr. Nigel Russell, Director of Technical Services Waterways Ireland to the meeting and invited him to address the members.

Mr. Russell thanked the members for the invitation. He then updated the Council in relation to the current status of the Ulster Canal project. Mr. Russell stated that it is proposed, as far as possible, to follow the original route of the canal which ran from Upper Lough Erne to Lough Neagh. He then presented the members with a computerised projection of what the refurbished canal might look like in the future.

Mr. Russell then responded to queries from the members about the project and the current status of the planning application. He stated that Cavan County Council had granted permission for the section of the development in their jurisdiction. He was aware that the planners in Northern Ireland were waiting on various groups there to come back to them and that they had been in contact with their counterparts in Monaghan County Council.

Mr. A. Hughes, Senior Planner stated that, as this is a trans-boundary planning application, the Council are prohibited from determining it until such time as the Northern Ireland authorities came back to them. Further information in relation to the planning application had been lodged with the Council's planning section in April and as soon as they get a submission from the Northern Ireland planning service the application will be determined.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Russell for his presentation and wished the project every success.

Presentation from Andy Pollak, Director and Ruth Taillon, Deputy Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies – Setting up a Border Development Zone and the benefits for County Monaghan.

The Mayor welcomed Andy Pollak, Director and Ruth Taillon, Deputy Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies and invited them to address the meeting

Mr. Pollak thanked the Council for the opportunity to address the members. He referred to the Study carried out for Centre for Cross Border Studies and published in March 2012, by two internationally eminent economists, Dr John Bradley (Ireland) and Professor Michael Best (USA). The Study found a number of threats and internal weaknesses in the economy of the Irish border region, North and South, but also some opportunities and internal strengths which he outlined to the meeting. According to the authors of the report, *“if regions such as the Irish border region are to prosper, other than by depending on transfers from more developed regions, then they must build on and strengthen their productive base. And the existing productive base – good, bad, or indifferent – is where you must start”*.

Mr. Pollak referred to a speech last November by former IDA head Padraic White, where he stated that *“the immediately adjoining border areas have common economic threats, but also have a strong common interest in maximising their joint strengths and the district Council and County Councils in this ‘Border Development Zone’ can drive economic development by co-operation and sharing successful ideas”*. Mr. White identified four key sources of indigenous enterprise and growth:

- SME enterprise in goods and services with export potential;
- Tourism and recreation
- Agriculture, food and fish processing;
- Low carbon initiatives, energy saving and renewable energy

Mr. Pollak referred to Mr. White’s conclusion where he stated that *“local authorities in the border zone have the power to drive economic development more than they or others suspect if they pro-actively use the powers, funds and leadership role they have in their territories. With a coherent strategic border plan, capitalising on their existing cross-border networks and initiatives they can make substantial progress themselves in identified growth areas. With such a plan they can be persuasive in winning support from their Governments and from the EU and its funds”*.

Mr. Pollak advised the Council that the Centre for Cross Border Studies and the International Centre for Local and Regional Development have applied to the EU INTERREG programme to undertake scoping studies in Padraic White’s four key sectors, leading to an action conference bringing together border region local authorities, business and community leaders to take up Padraic White’s challenge of moving towards a Border Development Zone. They are confident that they will receive INTERREG funding in the autumn. He invited the Council to form working groups, around the four key areas outlined by Padraic White, to support and feed into the scoping studies which will be undertaken next year with a view to starting the process of moving towards a Cross Border Development Zone.

Following the presentation Mr. Pollak and Ms. Taillon responded to queries from the Members. The Mayor thanked them both for a very informative presentation.

4. Business submitted by the County Manager:

Mr. D. Fallon, A/County Manager referred to the recommendations from the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 15th June in relation to the request for sponsorship from Concra Wood Golf Club. The recommendations were as follows:

- that the Council allocate a contribution of €10,000 towards the Concra Wood Golf Club Euro Pro Golf Classic
- the resolution of all outstanding issues between Monaghan County Council, Castleblayney and Concra Wood Golf Clubs.

Cllrs O'Brien and Carville indicated that they would not be partaking in the decision as they are shareholders of the Concra Wood Golf Club.

A number of members spoke in favour of supporting the request for sponsorship.

On the proposal of Cllr Crowe, seconded by Cllr Coyle it was agreed that the recommendations from the Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 15 June, 2012 be adopted.

Cllrs Carville and O'Brien abstained from the vote.

Urgent Business:

The Mayor stated that he had received two notices of urgent business as follows:

(i) Notice in the names of Cllrs O'Hanlon, Coyle and Gallagher

That Monaghan County Council suspends all business with Lagan until Lagan Brick enter Labour Court discussions to resolve the dispute with former employees at Lagan Brick Kingscourt and that Monaghan County Council receive a presentation from the former employees at the July 2012 meeting

(ii) Notice in the names of Cllr Connolly and S. Treanor

That Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government to extend the date for registration of septic tanks particularly in view of the fact that arrangements for County Council's are not fully in place.

The Members unanimously agreed to deal with both motions of urgent business:

(i) *Cllr O’Hanlon proposed, Cllr Carthy seconded*

That Monaghan County Council suspends all business with Lagan until Lagan Brick enter Labour Court discussions to resolve the dispute with former employees at Lagan Brick Kingscourt and that Monaghan County Council receive a presentation from the former employees at the July 2012 meeting.

In proposing the motion, Cllr O’Hanlon stated that he had attended a meeting with Lagan Brick employees the previous week along with representatives from Cavan and Meath County Councils. The employees had requested that a motion be brought before the County Councils calling for all contracts with the Lagan Group to be suspended until the management entered Labour Court negotiations with the Lagan Brick employees. He stated that these employees were let go shortly before Christmas and had been picketing the plant in Kingscourt for the last six months. Cllr Carthy seconded the motion. He referred to an earlier motion he submitted requesting that no public contracts were awarded to the Lagan Group until the dispute is resolved. He stated that legislation is required that would allow local authorities latitude to take into account circumstances as the track record of companies and the nature of their industrial relations record when tenders are being awarded. A number of members joined in the debate and expressed their support for the motion.

Mr. D. Fallon, A/County Manager advised that a contract had been awarded to Lagan Asphalt for the re-surfacing of streets in Carrickmacross town. The contract is a valid contract with a valid contractor. If the Council were to suspend this contract/works, it would face a claim for disruption. He stated that he had no difficulty with the motion being adopted but he wanted to make it clear that the provision in the motion regarding the suspension of contracts could not be carried out.

The Mayor then put Cllr O’Hanlon’s motion to the meeting and it was adopted unanimously. It was also agreed that a copy of the motion be forwarded to the Lagan Group for its information.

(ii) *Cllr Connolly proposed, Cllr S. Treanor seconded*

That Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government to extend the date for registration of septic tanks particularly in view of the fact that arrangements for County Council’s are not fully in place.

In proposing the motion Cllr Connolly referred to the announcement earlier this year in relation to the registration of septic tank systems. He stated that the Minister for the Environment had initially announced a €50 charge on the registration process which would be reduced to €5 if the fee was paid before the end of June. He further stated that the Department’s handling of the matter had been unsatisfactory - it is now mid June and no plans have been put in place to allow for the payment of this charge and he was calling on the Minister to extend the registration date for a further period of six months. Cllr S. Treanor seconded the proposal.

Cllr McPhillips referred to an article in that day's Irish Times which stated that the € fee would be available for three months from the date when the registration process commenced. The report also outlined that there would be visual-only inspections and that the IFA had welcomed this.

Mr. Fallon, A/County Manager stated that the County Council had received no official notification on the registration system as yet but he believed that the Minister could deliver a briefing to the City and County Managers' Association when he met them later that week. He stated that the inspection system to be introduced would be risk based and that not every septic tank would be inspected. The onus would be on people to ensure that their septic tanks were working properly.

The Mayor put Cllr Connolly's motion to the meeting and it was agreed unanimously.

The meeting then concluded.