

Minutes of Adjourned May meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Mtek Building, Monaghan on Monday 20th May, 2013 at 10.00 a.m.

Chair: Cllr H. McElvaney, Mayor.

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

Mr. D. Fallon, County Manager, Mr. P. Clifford and Mr. D. Treanor, Directors of Service, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Ms. N. Woods, SEO Housing, D. Hurley, Senior Executive Planner, C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator, L. Brannigan, Asst Staff Officer.

Apologies: Mr. A. King, Director of Services

At the outset the Mayor proposed a vote of sympathy with the wife, Geraldine, and family of the late Macartan McCormack, Corracloughan, Castleblayney, a former member of Monaghan County Council from 1974 to 1991. Cllr Coyle seconded the proposal and stated that the late Mr. McCormack had been actively involved in a range of organisations in the county as well as being employed as a teacher in St. Macartan's College for many years. A number of Councillors joined in the vote of sympathy and paid tribute to the former member.

Cllr Treanor proposed, Cllr Coyle seconded that the sympathy of the Council be also extended to Ms. Bernie McElvaney, Planning Section on the death of her father and to Joseph Maguire, Environment Section on the death of his father-in-law, Mr. Francis McElvaney, Drumguill, Threemilehouse, RIP.

Mr. D. Fallon, County Manager, associated himself and the staff with both votes of sympathy.

A minutes silence was held as a mark of respect. Subsequently, the Mayor adjourned the meeting for five minutes as a mark of respect on the death of the former Member, Macartan McCormack.

On resumption the Members continued with the agenda for the May Council meeting.

7. To receive recommendations from Standing Orders and Procedures Committee meeting held on 18th April.

The members agreed to approve the recommendations from the Standing Orders and Procedures Committee meeting held don 18th April, 2013.

8. To consider motion from the Housing Strategic Policy Committee

The Members considered the motion from the Housing Strategic Policy Committee in relation to the Disabled Persons Grants Scheme Allocations for 2013.

On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr O'Hanlon it was agreed that Monaghan County Council write to the Minister for Housing, Ms. Jan O'Sullivan, T.D., requesting additional funding for this scheme and all members pursue this request with their relevant parties.

On the proposal of Cllr Connolly, seconded by Cllr S. Treanor it was agreed that Monaghan County Council write to the Minister for Finance asking that a committee be established to ensure Value For Money be achieved in relation to grant aid to Disabled Persons and thereby ensuring that people fit for discharge from hospital are fit to reside in their own home.

On the proposal of Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr O'Hanlon it was agreed that this Council calls on the Minister of Environment, Mr. Phil Hogan, T.D., to ensure that legislation is put in place to ensure that all newly constructed two storey dwellings must have a ground floor bedroom with en-suite facilities.

9. Proposed Eirgrid 440kv Interconnector;

The Meetings Administrator advised that EirGrid had confirmed that officials from the company would meet with the full Council on 4th June, 2013 at 11.00 a.m.

Cllr Bannigan advised the meeting that EirGrid are holding public consultation meetings commencing on Tuesday 21st May in Cremartin Community Centre, followed by meetings in Aughnamullen and Corduff Community Centres later in the week. He urged all members of the public to attend these meetings and register their objections. Cllr Keelan concurred with Cllr Bannigan's comments and appealed to the public to have their say at these meetings.

10. To receive reports from Members attending Conferences

The Members noted the reports from Cllrs Bannigan, Conlon, Keelan, Maxwell, McElvaney, McKenna, McNally, McPhillips, Murray, O'Brien and O'Hanlon in relation to their attendance at the following conferences –

- Disputes between Neighbours and Law: Training Seminar for Councillors, Limerick
- Economic Recovery, Horse and Jockey, Tipperary.
- Time and Priority Management for Councillors, Bunratty, Co. Clare.
- LAMA Annual Conference, Gorey, Co. Wexford.
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse Seminar, Rosscarbery, Co. Cork
- A New Future for Local Government in Ireland, NCC., Dublin.
- ACCC Local Government Reform, Waterford.
- Local Government and Job Creation, Bunclody, Co. Wexford
- A Decade of Commemorations, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.
- Clare Roots Society – Gathering the Scattering, Ennis, Co. Clare.
- The Economy and Entrepreneurship, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
- National Tourism Conference, Leighlinbridge, Co. Carlow.
- Freedom of Information, Limerick.

11. Business submitted by County Manager:

A5 Road Project:

Mr. D. Fallon, County Manager referred to the recent Court decision in Northern Ireland in relation to the failure to prepare and EIS for the planning application. He advised the Members that he had attended a recent meeting in Omagh District Council offices in relation to this project. The Secretariat has written to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Department of Rural Development in Northern Ireland in relation to progressing the project. The DRD Road Service N.I. is preparing the necessary documentation for the EIS which will take up to one year to finalise.

In relation to the southern elements of the route, the NRA is in charge of progressing these sections of road. Monaghan and Donegal County Council are liaising in relation to the design but there is no decision on the standard of the road.

On the proposal of Cllr P. McNally, seconded by Cllr. S. Coyle it was agreed that this Council lends its backing to the Action for A5 in their attempts to have work started on the roadway.

Ulster Canal project:

The County Manager stated that himself and a number of members attended a very successful conference in Clones last week in relation to the Ulster Canal project. Mr. P. Clifford Director of Service also attended a recent Inter Agency Group meeting. The core issue is the delivery of funding for the project. The Northern Ireland Minister for Culture will attend the next Inter Agency Group meeting in Clones of the Joint North/South Committee in September.

Cllr P. Treanor expressed his disappointment at the response of Minister Deenihan and the officials regarding funding for the project. He was fearful that local Councils may be given responsibility for funding the project which would be totally unacceptable

On the proposal of Cllr S. Coyle, seconded by Cllr. P. Treanor it was agreed that Monaghan County Council seek an immediate meeting with the Minister for Arts, Sports and Tourism, Jimmy Deenihan, T.D., to impress the urgency of funding for the Ulster Canal project, and invite representatives of Clones Town Council and Clones Regeneration Partnership, to join the delegation.

On the proposal of Cllr C. McPhillips, seconded by Cllr. S. Coyle it was agreed that further to Cllr Coyle's proposal that Monaghan's 3 TD's and our MEP's for the North West and Northern Ireland be invited to attend also any meeting arranged with Minister Jimmy Deenihan.

On the proposal of Cllr O. Bannigan, seconded by Cllr. C. McPhillips it was agreed that this Council calls on Minister Deenihan to include the Ulster Canal project as part of any future infrastructure stimulus package.

Market House:

Mr. Fallon advised the Members that the Market House has been registered as a venue for the hosting of Civil Marriage ceremonies.

12. Matters arising out of minutes of Council meeting held on 2nd April, 2013.

Matters arising out of the minutes were responded to by the relevant officials.

On the proposal of Cllr S. Conlon, seconded by Cllr. H. McElvaney it was agreed that we seek an update from HSE Dublin North East regarding the role of local G.P.'s, and status of negotiations, in their participation in the proposed Primary Care Unit in Monaghan Town.

On the proposal of Cllr S. Conlon, seconded by Cllr. A. Murray it was agreed that this Council implores Muintir na Tire and An Garda Siochana of the urgency and necessity in broadening the Community Text Alert Scheme to include communication to similar schemes with our neighbouring northern counties.

15. Notices of Motion:

(i) Cllr Conlon proposed, Cllr Carthy seconded

That this Council calls on the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan to instruct all local authorities not to include the nominal amount of additional income social welfare recipients receive from JobBridge, and similar internship schemes, as 'reckonable income' for the purpose of determining weekly rent for local authority tenants who participate on these schemes.

In proposing the motion Cllr Conlon stated that whilst there has been some benefits to be achieved by participating in the JobBridge scheme there are many flaws with the scheme. Many participants are not working within the conditions of contract that they signed up to. Cllr Carthy seconded the motion.

The Mayor put the motion to the meeting. A vote by show of hands resulted in 12 for 5 against. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

(ii) Cllr Carthy proposed, Cllr B. McKenna seconded

That Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for Finance to directly intervene to prevent AIB and EBS banks from increasing their variable interest rates for a third time in a year, recognizing that such a move will cause significant financial difficulties for many mortgage holders who are already struggling to keep their family home.

The Mayor put the motion to the meeting. A vote by show of hands resulted in a unanimous vote in favour of the motion. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

(iii) Cllr Coyle proposed, Cllr McNally seconded

That Monaghan Council calls on the Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD, An Taoiseach Enda Kenna TD and the Fine Gael/Labour government to immediately reverse and restore Farm Assist payment amounts, eligibility rules and qualifying criteria to pre-budget 2013 levels and conditions. This is in view of the great hardships currently endured by low-income farming families due to the atrocious weather of recent months and the consequent exorbitant animal feed/fodder costs.

The Mayor put the motion to the meeting. A vote by show of hands resulted in a unanimous vote in favour of the motion. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

Notices of Urgent Business submitted at May Meeting:

1. Submitted by Sinn Féin Councillors Bennett, Carthy, Conlon, Crowe, Keelan, McKenna, P. Treanor.

That Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for Health and the government to reverse the further restrictions on medical card entitlements which were introduced in April noting that the removal of home improvement loan costs and the exclusion of the firth €50 per week travel expenses will impact heavily on many Monaghan families who desperately need medical cards and/or GP visit cards but will now be denied same.

Cllr Carthy proposed, Cllr McKenna seconded

The Mayor put the motion to the meeting. A vote by show of hands resulted in a unanimous vote in favour of the motion. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

2. Submitted by Cllrs Bannigan, McPhillips, Murray, Maxwell, Carville, McElvaney.

That this Council calls on the Government to include funding for the repair and up-grade of Local and Regional Roads in any Economic Stimulus Package.

Cllr Bannigan proposed, Cllr Murray seconded

The Mayor put the motion to the meeting. A vote by show of hands resulted in a unanimous vote in favour of the motion. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

3. Submitted by Cllrs McNally, Gallagher, Coyle, O'Hanlon, O'Brien.

That this Council views, with grave concern, a recently published report in the Irish Independent on Friday the 3rd of May, headed "Job Creation & the IDA" which show Monaghan with only 3 jobs created by the IDA in 2012 among the five lowest in the country while counties such as Carlow with a much less population had 116 jobs provided. We seek an urgent meeting with both the IDA and Minister for Jobs, Richard Bruton.

Cllr McNally proposed, Cllr Carthy seconded

The Mayor put the motion to the meeting. A vote by show of hands resulted in a unanimous vote in favour of the motion. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

The Mayor advised the Members that he had, that morning, received a further notice of urgent business in the names of Cllrs Connolly and S. Treanor and he asked the members if they wished to take the motion in relation to staffing levels at Teagasc. A vote by show of hands on whether the urgent business motion should be taken resulted in 4 for 12 against. The Mayor ruled that, in accordance with Standing Order 14.2, as the necessary one half of the members had not voted in favour of taking the notice of urgent business that it could not be discussed.

Civic Reception:

The Mayor brought the members attention to the upcoming Geel visit on 12th and 13th June and requested that a date and time be agreed for a Civic Reception for the visitors. A time of 1.00pm on 13th June was proposed by Cllr McKenna and seconded by Cllr Bannigan.

Vote of Congratulations:

Cllr Conlon put forward the following Motion from the Sinn Féin members:

That Monaghan County Council congratulate the committee, sponsors and participants in the success of the 6th Annual Blackwater 10km Run n' Walk held yesterday at Rossmore Park where over 1,100 people registered and participated in this recreational event that has become the county's largest annually held mass participation event.

The Mayor put the motion to the meeting. A vote by show of hands resulted in a unanimous vote in favour of the motion. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

The Mayor proposed a vote of sympathy to Drew Hurley on the death of his father, Michael. A minutes silence was held as a mark of respect.

The meeting then concluded.