



SHIRE OF MANJIMUP: ANNUAL MEETING OF ELECTORS 2023-24

Minutes of the 2023-24 Annual Meeting of Electors held Tuesday, 16 January 2024 in the JC Rose Room, corner Rose and Brockman Streets, Manjimup commencing at 6.00pm.

1. Attendance / Meeting Opening

Councillors

Cr Donelle Buegge (Shire President and Meeting Chairperson)

Cr Steven Miolin (Deputy Shire President)

Cr Paul Omodei

Electors

Colin Crombie

Keith Liddelow

Robyn Bowles

Kathy Dawson

Alan Lloyd

Mary Nixon

Staff

Benjamin (Ben) Rose

Greg Lockwood

Gail Ipsen Cutts

Gaye Burridge

Apologies

Cr Murray Ventris

Shire President Cr Buegge opened the meeting at 6.00pm and acknowledged the Traditional Custodians.

2. Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Moved: K Dawson

Seconded: K Liddelow

“That the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Electors held on 12 January 2023 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.”

CARRIED: Unanimous

3. Receipt of the Annual Report for Year Ended 30 June 2023

The Chairperson invited Mr Greg Lockwood, Director Business, to give an overview of the Annual Report.

The Shire of Manjimup ended the 2022/23 financial year with a surplus of \$7,926,507. This surplus contained a significant carry forward into the 2023/24 financial year of \$7,659,291 leaving an actual un-budgeted carry forward of \$267,216.

The surplus is similar to the previous year, mainly due to ongoing issues of trying to complete capital projects in a tough contractor and material supply market. The carry forward is also heavily influenced by the advance payment of the General Purpose and Road Financial Assistance Grant of \$4.8m.

The 2022/23 Annual Financial accounts were again audited by Moore Australia in conjunction with the Office of Auditor General. The Shire received an unqualified audit opinion, meaning the Auditor supported the financial report position and it has been produced in accordance with the Local Government Act and Australian Accounting Standards.

The Management Letter from the auditors contained two minor areas to address, one being any general journals carried out by the Director of Business must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer (not other finance staff) and that credit card reconciliations must be completed and signed off in a more timely manner. Both of these issues have been rectified.

The Shire of Manjimup Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2023 was tabled with copies available to attendees.

Moved: A. Lloyd

Seconded: M Nixon

“Confirm receipt of the Shire of Manjimup Annual Report for the 2022 – 2023 financial year.”

CARRIED: Unanimous

4. Response to Questions With Notice

Questions from Mr Keith Liddelow

Question 1

What percentage of debt did the Council have in relation to rate revenue and commitments to repayments of loans, etc as at the end of June 2023?

Response 1

The response given at the Annual Electors meeting on 16 January 2024 was 5.97%, this figure was incorrect as it did not include interest.

Below is the correct response to the question:

| | |
|--|------------------|
| <u>Repayment of Loans (inc Interest)</u> | <u>\$841,855</u> |
| Rates Revenue as at 30 June 2023 | \$10,543,946 |

= 7.98%

This amended response has been relayed to Mr Liddelow

Question 2

Did they pluck the figure (6.9% rate rise) out of the air?

Response 2

The General Rate Revenue figure (resulting in a percentage increase) budgeted each year is not 'plucked out of the air'. Each year, as part of the Annual Budget preparation process, Councillors undertake a series of budget workshops (facilitated by staff) considering matters such as:

- Strategic Community Plan
- Corporate Business Plan
- Long Term Financial Plan
- Workforce Plan
- Capital Works Plan
- Asset Management Plans
- Plant Replacement Program
- Fees and Charges
- Land revaluations by LandGate/State Government (GRV and UV)
- Audit and Review recommendations (e.g. OAG Audit, FMSR, Regulation 17 Review)
- WALGA economic forecasting specific for local governments in WA (e.g. Local Government Cost Index, Wage Price Index, Consumer Price Index etc)
- Community requests
- Preceding Council resolutions for specific budget actions (e.g. projects, tasks, initiatives).

Question 3

Upstairs redevelopment of Council building in Brockman Street - My question is how much did the Council borrow and at what interest rate and for how long?

Response 3

As part of the initial budget to redevelop of the upstairs of 5 Brockman Street, grant revenue was anticipated. A grant application was lodged, however, was unsuccessful, so \$150,000 of unspent loan funds being redirected to the project as part of the 2021/22 Budget process. That \$150,000 was residual from another project on Brockman Street, money was moved between projects. It wasn't a new loan taken out, it was an existing loan, it wasn't expended on one project and it was shifted to another and repurposed. The interest rate for the loan is 1.25% and the final payment is scheduled for 6 March 2030, or retired earlier should the property be sold.

Question 4

I understand the tenants in the upstairs development 5D Brockman Street are paying no lease fees?

Response 4

As per Council minute 28327, 17 December 2020, 5D Brockman Street was leased to Easy Peel Pty Ltd trading as Gatsby's Skyline. The lease commencement date was identified to be when the Occupancy Permit for the proposal (under the *Building*

Act 2011), was achieved, which September 2022. As per the Council resolution, lease fees for the first year are to be waived, with year two being 50% of the proposed lease fee (market valuation). Gatsby's Skyline have been issued the 50% lease fees from September 2023 onwards, as per the Council resolution.

Questions from Mr Colin Crombie

Question 1

What is the current situation with the generator at Windy Harbour?

Response 1

The new Kubota generator was installed 10 January 2024 and the hire generator was returned the following day. Purchase, transport and installation of the new generator was \$18,646 (GST exclusive). Commissioning costs (electrician) are yet to be finalised, although likely to be minimal. Due to other priorities, costs incurred for interim power generation at Windy Harbour were \$49,900.

Question 2

Date of generator breakdown at Windy Harbour?

Response 2

1 August 2022 (estimate).

Question 3

Date of hire of unit and date returned?

Response 3

Hire of generator began on 1 August 2022 and was returned 11 January 2024

Question 4

Where is the Hire Payment coming from?

Response 4

The expenditure was allocated to the Diesel Generation account within the Windy Harbour general operations account. The expenditure was offset by savings within the Windy Harbour operational budget, from Municipal funding.

Question 5

Date of purchase of new generator and where is the payment coming from?

Response 5

The new generator was purchased on 13 December 2023 and installed 10 January 2024. The new generator was funded from the Windy Harbour Management Reserve as per Council resolution 28841, 28 July 2022.

5. Pubic Question Time – Questions Without Notice

Mr Keith Liddelow

Question 1

I am not satisfied with the answer (to my second question on notice) because when I asked for that percentage and it was explained by the then Chief Executive Officer

that the debt would alter because the unexpended grants that they had, being about \$1.3 million).

Response 1

Through the year, the ratio will change every single day. The ratio that I've mentioned, the 5.97%, that is calculated as of close of business on 30 June 2023. You are quite correct, during the year loan funds will be expended and that will change one element of the ratio calculation, and as rate revenue comes in (versus what is budgeted) that will also affect the ratio calculation as well. That percentage, as you have identified, that number will change. However, as of the 30 June 2023, the figure was 5.97%.

Mr Colin Crombie**Question 1**

Has the Shire carried out what they originally were to do regarding the installation of the lift and kitchen in 5D Brockman Street, Gatsby's Skyline? Is Council expecting them to pay the lease fees when those items have not been installed?

Response 1

There is a degree of conjecture with regard to the lessee and lessor as to who is responsible for what elements within the building. We are going through a process of reviewing responsibilities. There is a lot of information written in Lease documents and there is a variety of information through letters and emails - all the information needs to be read in concert to determine which party is responsible for what building element. I understand from the tenant that the lift, the kitchen and a variety of other matters are to be installed and I am trying to get to the bottom of that as quickly as possible.

Question 2

It has been suggested that the Council has offered Fonty's free access to the rubbish tip to cut out hire charge. That is not correct?

Response 2

Fonty's have a contra (i.e. net transaction accounting) accounting arrangement with the Shire. Those who may work in finance or accounting will understand that there are always two transactions (per party) in this sort of accounting arrangement. We don't always exchange money, however we recognise each other's expenditure (transaction 1) and income (transaction 2). We raise an invoice for them for our rubbish and they raise an invoice for our hire. Instead of Fonty's paying money, the amount we owe them, and they owe us, is contra. If they owe us more than they pay us, the difference is invoiced. It is just cutting out the cash transaction, however, all the transactions are occurring. There is nothing free. Fonty's have had this accounting arrangement for several decades. What we owe them and what they owe is exactly the same. - if we didn't account for the funds appropriately, the Office of Auditor General and ATO would come down on us like a tonne of bricks.

Ms Mary Nixon**Question 1**

What was the commercial lease for 5D Brockman Street (Gatsby's) set at?

Response 1

It is based on a market rental valuation, I believe, at around \$32,000 per annum.

Kathy Dawson**Question 1**

There needs to be better communication with the people of Windy Harbour.

Response 1

Acknowledged.

Ms Mary Nixon**Question 1**

In the original plan there was a swimming pool in the Gallery Motel, I don't think it's in yet, is it coming?

Response 1

It is, the ground works are there, the plumbing is there and the formation is there.

Question 2

When are they are going to be hiring out rooms? Do you have any idea of commencement date. It would be good to know if they are available for when people come down here.

Response 2

We would have to enquire about that.

Question 3

I am very concerned about the road, the safety of the road and trucks and cars that coming to Manjimup. I would like to see the Manjimup Shire work positively with the new rail feasibility study with the idea of bringing it to Manjimup for both freight and passenger. I think we have to look 30 – 40 years hence, not just in our own life time.

Response 3a

There is a public meeting on 14 February 2024 in the Town Hall, being hosted by the group conducting a rail feasibility study.

Response 3b

The meeting on 14 February is on the topic of tourism rail, rather than commuter or freight rail. There are two rail feasibility studies occurring presently - one is freight rail and the other is tourism rail.

The freight rail reactivation feasibility study scope is from Greenbushes to Kemerton, and is being coordinated by Talison, the State Government and Arc Infrastructure (who lease the rail reserve).

The second topic is around tourism rail. The Balingup Rail Group, under the banner of the Balingup Progress Association, are investigating the feasibility of tourism rail in and around the Blackwood Catchment area.

Mr Alan Lloyd

Question 1

I wanted to know if there were any new economic developments that weren't listed previously (i.e. St Hilda's in Pemberton, avocado production, kiwi fruit production).

Response 1

The response really depends on how wide the scope of the question is, however, some examples are:

- Planning and development of the Trail Bike Hub.
- The gallery Hotel development.
- The large Strawberry Farm in Northcliffe.
- The Collier Street and Rea Park recreation precinct development.
- Tennis Club development (although not directly a Shire project).
- The Pemberton community hub co-location project.
- Working with the South West Development Commission looking at 'lazy land', particularly focused on housing options.

Question 2

Are there any plans to extend the Closed Circuit TV (CCTV) monitoring around town?

Response 2a

There are no present plans to expand the network of CCTV. Funding for development of CCTV is typically through the Federal and/or State Government, and the Shire has received considerable funding for this in recent years. If we did want to expand the network, it would probably have to be own-source funded. We are not suggesting that it can't or shouldn't be done, just that there are probably other more pressing priorities.

Response 2b

We have covered the real 'hotspots' required, but this all comes with ongoing maintenance costs. The Shire has a maintenance agreement of about \$25,000 per year just to check and make sure they are all working properly. In addition to that, replacement camera costs are from \$2,000 to \$5,000 depending on whether it is a 'number plate reader' or other types like 'motion detectors' or 'zoom' types. There is a lot of technology there that is quite expensive to maintain. It is a cost to ratepayers to maintain, however it does provide outcomes for people feeling safe in their community. The police have a live feed to the Police Station and use the cameras regularly.

Ms Mary Nixon

Question 1

Is the CCTV of value (when we have break ins in the town centre) with solving those sorts of things?

Response 1

There have been numerous occasions where there have been positive outcomes, however, the footage can only be released to WA Police and is not for general public availability.

Mr Colin Crombie

Question 1

What is the position regarding supermarket trolleys left around town? When I raised the issue previously, I was advised that Council rings the store and advises them of the whereabouts of the trolleys.

Response 1

Yes, that is still happening.

Mr Keith Liddelow

Question 1

When there were contentious issues, historically, and some people become real agitators, if you sat down with those people and explained the issue you can bring the people along with you.

Response 1

Agreed, the Shire President advised she met with leaseholders of Donnelly River, Broke Inlet and Gardner and that is exactly what was discussed. The more information we can give people, the less angst people feel and the more people understand the decisions we are making. The more information we can get out to people is important. You are never successful unless you bring people with you. It is important that we bring the community along on the ride with us.

6. General Business

Ms Mary Nixon

We need good public transport that is not competing with freight. I would like to put a motion that Council look at this - that we don't just sit here and say in 20 years it should have come through all the way. The amount of money being invested in agriculture in the area will justify the expense of removing freight from the road.

I would like to put forward the following motion to go to Council:

“That the Manjimup Shire Council make every effort to improve the safety of our community and the longevity of our environment by committing to working with the State Government to bring the proposed south west railway to Manjimup for both freight and passenger transport.”

The proposed motion underwent discussion amongst the electors present, and the following motion was moved and seconded:

MOVED: M Nixon

SECONDED: A Lloyd

“That the Manjimup Shire Council make every effort to improve the safety of our community and the longevity of our environment by committing to working with the State Government to bring the proposed south west railway to Manjimup Shire for both freight and passenger transport.”

CARRIED: UNANIMOUS

7. Meeting Closure

The Shire President thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.01pm.