

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF ELECTORS

MINUTES INDEX – 21 FEBRUARY 2013

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unconfirmed minutes

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Electors, held in the Council Chambers on Thursday, 21 February 2013 commencing at 5.30pm

The Shire President opened the Meeting at 5.30pm and welcomed those in attendance

1. Attendance, Apologies and Leave of Absence

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| President | - Cr B J Moore |
| Councillors | - S Hodson - D Mackman - A Pratico - P M Scallan - A Wilson |
| In Attendance | - T P Clynch, CEO - S Carstairs, Executive Manager Corporate Services - T M Lockley, Executive Assistant |
| Apologies | - Cr Williams - Cr Simpson |

2. Electors Present

J Moore, M Southwell, JA Reynolds, E Wallace, J Barry, J Boyle, J Spaul, M Thomas, W Moyes

3. Confirmation of Minutes

Attachment 1

A Motion is required to confirm the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Electors held 2 February 2012.

Moved Cr Scallan, Seconded Cr Hodson

E.01/0213 That the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Electors held 2 February 2012 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Carried

4. Annual Report & Annual Financial Report

A Motion is required to receive the Annual Report & Annual Financial Statements for the 2011/12 year as presented.

Moved Cr Hodson, Seconded Cr Pratico

E.02/0213 That the Annual Report & Annual Financial Statements for the 2011/12 year as presented be received.

Carried

5. General Business Regarding the Financial Statements

Nil

6. General Business

M Southwell

Why wasn't this meeting well advertised, it wasn't in the Insight, and only on the Shire's notice boards. Why wasn't it? If it was advertised would we get a better turnout to the meeting.

President's response – I don't think there would be a difference in turnout, there are more here than any other AGM of Electors in surrounding Shires.

CEO's response – It was advertised in the local paper, and yes it should have been in the Insight, but we hadn't determined the date it would have hit the streets. Statutory advertising was carried out, but yes we could have done more.

When setting up this meeting, Councillors have no more rights than the electors here, is that right?

President's response – Yes.

Then if you are one of us, why do you set the meeting up with Councillors on one side and us on this side? Wouldn't it be more congenial and better representative of the community to have the Councillors and the electors sit together, with perhaps just the presiding member seated at the front?

President's response - We can take that on board, it has never been done that way in the 6 meetings I have attended as President, it was just protocol. I guess it would be easier to see the Councillors if they are in the audience.

CEO's response – It is a meeting that is under the authority of the Local Government Act, and Councillors would sit as if at a normal meeting. Councillors can change this if they like. It has always been set this way, and if the meeting was held in Chambers it would have been set out the same as if it had been an ordinary meeting of Council. If held in the Chambers the layout of the room wouldn't allow much flexibility in setting it up any differently.

JA Reynolds

This meeting should have been at 6.30pm, lots of people work and getting here at 5.30pm is impossible, people like to have tea before the meeting. They are not here because of the time.

M Southwell

When full Council considered the proposals from the Special Meeting of Electors about Zinnecker's House, they were dismissed as coming from a noisy minority, do you consider those people who attended a nuisance?

President's response - No, I did not consider people a nuisance at that meeting or any other meeting, but I did consider the handful of people that came to the Zinnecker's meeting to be in the minority.

JA Reynolds

In relation to that special electors meeting, the motion wasn't even discussed by Council, and nobody put it up, to ask Mr Clynych to disclose who he got his information from.

President's response - Any motion that comes to Council is considered. That motion did not receive a mover and seconder so the motion lapsed. I cannot force people, if there is no mover and seconder, then there is no motion to consider.

So you didn't have a mover?

Presidents response – No, so there was no motion to consider.

So you are saying that the ratepayers are ignored?

President's response - No, I am saying that the motion simply lapses.

Southwell

In a properly constituted meeting of electors, the motions are forwarded to Council for consideration. Do you accept that this is a slap in the face to the electors, that no Councillor showed any consideration in not moving the motion? You can vote it down, but at least give the motion the opportunity to be debated. Do you feel you have treated people with disrespect and contempt because you did not move the motion?

President's response - No, I do not see it as a mark of disrespect or contempt.

E Wallace

I am concerned yet again, at the lack of adequate publicity for this meeting tonight. I brought this up at the last meeting but nothing has changed. Neither of the local newspapers had any publicity about this meeting, either this week or last week. If there was any prior to this I did not see it. If there was, why is this not also advertised near to the event?

CEO's response – It was advertised in the local paper the week of the 6 February. It is advertised in advance so people have the opportunity to hand in questions prior to the meeting.

But that was two weeks ago, what if people don't get the paper?

CEO's response - We believe more people read the notice boards than the local paper.

The AGM notices were on the 2 notice boards – on Hampton Street and the Shire office door, on coloured paper, but when I checked the boards at 2.30pm this afternoon they had disappeared. Why were they removed prior to the meeting?

CEO's response – I don't know, I will check into that, they usually have a removal date on the bottom which should have been tomorrow morning.

This AGM was not advertised on the Council website where other Council meeting agendas and minutes are recorded. I brought this up last year. The minutes from last year's meeting are also not on the website. Why is the information of this meeting, plus the minutes from the last meeting not available for the public on this site?

CEO's response – I do not have an explanation I am sorry.

President's response – I did say we would look into it last year, my apologies for that not happening.

The 'What's On' from the Visitors Centre did not have any information about this meeting. This was a suggestion made last year because it goes to about 500 people in our Shire. That was obviously ignored. Why was it not used?

CEO's response – The 'What's On' is a tourist marketing email, they have provided their email address and asked to receive it. We have not used it for standard Council notices, we have a small database that has not been taken up well from the public. The "What's On" is mainly events and tourist issues, and is prepared by the Visitors Centre.

President's response – We should consider having Council meeting dates put onto the 'What's On'.

This AGM was not advertised on the e-board. I understood that this line of communication was meant to be used to keep members of the community informed of all types of meetings and any other important information. I got information about the fires, but not a thing about this meeting. Why?

CEO's response – I am not sure why.

The Council newsletter, the Insight, was sent out prior to this meeting and had no notice regarding the meeting, although this was an ideal way to publicise the event. Why was it not used?

Presidents response - The CEO already answered that question earlier. The points you have raised about communication will be followed up.

Will there publicity in the newspapers near to the event next year?

CEO's response – Yes.

Will minutes of this meeting be put on the Council website so the public can check them while it is fresh in their minds?

CEO's response – Yes, they will be put on as unconfirmed within the next month.

Will the 'What's On' of the Visitors Centre be used to publicise this meeting next year?

President's response – Yes, I think that is a good idea.

Will the e-board be used to publicise this meeting next year?

President's response – Council has been looking at an automated system, if we move into that arena, it will be possible to send out messages for these things.

If the timing is right, will the Insight newsletter be used to publicise this event next year?

President's response – Yes.

J Barry

Some ratepayers do not receive ABC (radio), nor have a mobile phone, could Council tell me what strategies they have in place, about broadcasting emergencies to ratepayers in the future?

President's response – In an emergency we are governed by an incident controller, in the case of the recent fires, DFES. They are responsible for sending messages and advising people via their website. The Shire, and other local Shires, are looking at a system called 'Whisper', which with the cooperation of ratepayers, has the capacity to shoot out messages from the Shire. In the case of emergencies we hold public meetings, but we do not control them.

If councillors could look at the Shire of Yarra Range website, it is excellent. When I called the Shire office for information, the girl said she didn't have any information about the fire. The trouble with our Shire's website is that it is too wordy and has no pictures. Maybe even at the public meeting we could have had a map, or a power point presentation so we could see exactly where they were talking about. People came to that meeting for information, and left not knowing anything.

President's response – It wasn't too good from our side either. At a recent meeting, with local MP's Terry Redman and Robyn McSweeney, we said something needed to be done, all the DFES website had was a google map with an icon of a flame on it. There should have been a better map. This will be addressed when we meet with other government agencies.

As a Councillor, you should have a bit of clout at these meetings.

President's response – I don't know if we have a lot of clout, DFES handles these emergencies and then hands them to DEC. We have no say, we become the facilitator.

CEO's response – Up until 3.30pm on Wednesday we were kept out of the loop by DFES, we struggled to get any information and it was only after that we knew what was going on. We did put a link to DFES alert updates on the Shire's webpage. DFES have made it clear that we are not to give advice for fires, only to provide the link. When we spoke with DEC we suggested that the public meeting could have been better set up, people wanted to see maps etc.

The meeting was a total waste of time, the hill west of me was aglow with fire. Just because we live in the CBD we cannot assume we are safe. They need to be more proactive.

President's response – On Thursday morning an incident support meeting was held at the Shire, this started late as the 'incident controller' did not arrive. No action was permitted to be taken until the incident controller gave directions. There was public meeting held after this at the Recreation Centre, but was of little use to Bridgetown residents as the fire had headed to Greenbushes by that time.

The Shire website has an LEMC committee and states the purpose of this committee is to review and maintain the Community Emergency Management Arrangements, to review and maintain the Community Evacuation Plan, to review and maintain the Community Emergency Recovery Plan including documenting processes for the planning and management of recovery after a major disaster. When is the next meeting, who sits on this committee and what qualifications do they have?

President's response – I am the Chairperson of that committee, and it also included Cr Wilson, Police, the Shire's Community Emergency Services Manager, Chris Sousa, a hospital representative, Red Cross, St Johns, Bush Fire, Fire and Rescue and DCP. Out of that we look at various aspects that have been picked up from previous incidents. The Shire plays the biggest part after the emergency, things people need, if they have been displaced, lost/injured stock. We also hold a SIMEX (simulated emergency) every year, last year it was a pool gas leak simulation. We meet throughout the year in order to get together to exchange contact details and touch base so we know who we are.

This stuff should be on the website so people know who they are. Why is there no disaster emergency information on website?

CEO's response – We do have emergency management arrangements but they are seen more as working documents.

Other websites have all that kind of information, you should have a look. We want pictures, maps and things that show where the fire is, and when we are scared I don't want to have to squirrel through the lengthily worded documents.

President's response - we will look to put the recovery plan on the website.

CEO's response – One of the big issues is that we believe DFES did not function well in providing information to the community, if they want to take control, they have to have the right information out there. They got better later in the incident, but early on the communication was really ordinary. DFES have instructed us not to put competing information on the website in an emergency.

So you can't have their stuff on the site?

CEO's response – We can provide a link to their site.

JA Reynolds

This is the third time our town has been threatened, can some type of warning sign be adopted? This has been suggested in several reports, that there should be some

sort of warning for cars at back of IGA in case of a flood. We should have something in place.

President's response- We are looking at putting some sort of emergency warning in place, probably not for floods. DFES will not support recommissioning the siren at the fire station. DFES phone/text warnings for whatever reason only went to Telstra phones, the Government is working at correcting that on that their system. In Greenbushes there were 20 police officers and cars going around streets with lights, sirens and a door to door system, they flooded the area, making people aware. I don't think we can beat that type of action taken at the time.

Moved M Southwell, Seconded JA Reynolds

E.03/0213 That Council amend its policies so that all future AGM of Electors Meetings be advertised in the local papers, on the website, the Shire boards, the Insight newsletter if dates correspond, and also to include the Balingup-Greenbushes publications.

Carried

W Moyes

I was surprised to hear Cr Moscarda stepped down, the majority of townspeople are very uncomfortable with an uneven number of councillors. Will there be a special election?

President's response – Yes, Cr Moscarda resigned at the last Council meeting and there will be an item at next the next Council Meeting. The legislation states that if a Councillor resigns after the 3rd week of January in the same year as a local government election, we can request the deferral of filling the vacancy to the next ordinary elections. However, there will be a motion asking Councillors if they wish to fill that position prior to the October election.

CEO's response - It will be a late item as we are awaiting a quote from the electoral commission to hold an extraordinary election. This will enable Council to make an informed decision on postal versus in-person election.

Moved W Moyes, Seconded M Southwell

E.04/0213 That Council hold an Extraordinary Election as soon as possible to fill the vacant Councillor position.

Carried

J Boyle

If the local authorities are not permitted to cross the boundaries of information, and if DFES is going to be that inefficient in putting the information out there, wouldn't it be better if what people are hearing from the Shire is the right information, even if the Shire gives information that is not official but at least correct? It is the same as trying to ask about the weather or the wind. People are just not aware and many farmers were frustrated with the interface. Can there be feedback to locals from the official meetings. As a town we somehow need that information, just to say that things are okay.

President's response – When you go to these meetings, all the community want to know is where the fire is, is it coming my way. When DEC controlled the fire we knew, we had maps. DFES didn't provide anything, they said just be aware and stay safe. The information provided to this town in the 2009 fire was better than the information provided this time. There is a big difference in the positives and the negatives. Hopefully we will be able to get over the big headedness of these people and ensure that they communicate better.

Cr Scallan – The information for those in the high elevated fire area was quite good, however those in the low elevated area was not. The information for people on the fringes could have been better.

J Barry

Maybe we just need an agenda. I would like to see the Shire take an initial strong stance and say this is how it will run, this is what will happen.

President's response – I defer to the authorities, they are there to listen to, I am no expert when it comes to fires.

W Moyes

In respect to the median strip planned for Roe Street from Bunbury Street to Farmers Lane, if this is extended to Steere Street, will the protected box trees be removed to obtain the high level of safety you are looking for? Is the removal of these trees imminent?

President's response – We are not removing any box trees without the consultation of the community first.

CEO's response – The initial plan proposed the retention of the box trees. During the initial consultation period there were several verbal questions from parents of children at St Brigids asking why Council wouldn't consider removing the trees as the plan for parking was not seen by those people as being the ideal solution as it did not create the safest environment for the children. The only part of the Roe Street upgrade plan that has been endorsed by Council at this stage is the section from Dean Street to Farmers Lane. Council hasn't endorsed the section outside of St Brigids – Farmers Lane to Steere Street. We will consider the removal of the trees via a community consultation as the trees are important to Bridgetown. We will have a plan with the trees and a plan without.

Could council have left the median strip until more community consultation was received? People will still be doing u turns and the work has not commenced. There should have been a higher degree of consultation. I did not receive one phone call.

CEO's response – There was an extremely high level of public consultation for this project. We wrote to adjoining landowners, wrote to both schools, I briefed the School Council of the Bridgetown Primary School and offered the same to St Brigids School, plans were put on display at the Shire foyer, the schools inserted information on the plan and the opportunity to view the displayed plans in both of the school newsletters and a feature article was included in the Insight newsletter.

The genesis of the plan, including proposals such as the median strip was based on a safety assessment carried out by the Main Roads Department and the Council's

Road Wise Committee. It was considered very important to have the children only crossing one lane of traffic at a time.

J Boyle

In respect to the works that have been undertaken on Bunbury Street, it is a great job, but now there is less road and people are parking on the roadside and that happens to be a blind hill. Something needs to happen to remind people that is a dangerous road.

President's response – I will raise that with the Executive Manager Works & Services.

W Moyes

Why did Councillors vote against the Officers Recommendation? Council should always support what the Shire Officer recommends.

President's response - You were a Councillor once, you know how that happens. Sometimes you agree and sometimes you don't.

Moved M Southwell, Seconded W Moyes

E.05/0213 That in order to restore proper and legal governance over the Yornup Hall, to remove the appearance of favouritism and provide accountability for funds raised by the renting of this hall, Council removes the authority for and disbands the Yornup Hall Management Committee, and henceforth manages the Yornup Hall the same way it manages every other hall in the Shire.

Carried

President's response – There is an item coming to next the Council Meeting about the management of Yornup Hall.

J Spaul

Is the beautiful pavement you have done in Bunbury Street finished or delayed? At the end there is a very high kerb of gravel, you cannot get off the kerb without going down the very high kerb or off a driveway? Then you have to be on the road, and then you can't get back on it.

CEO's response – No, it is not finished, it is seen as a two stage process, and the reason it has stopped where it has is that extra works will be undertaken at that section, so the kerb line will change. Bunbury street was stage one, it will be finished off next year and formalise parking with nibs to stop people parking on the corners. There will be a continuation of the footpath from Roe Street to Dean Street.

Where are you going to put the crossing?

CEO's response – It is probably best if you come and see me and I will show you on the plan.

On the lovely paving on Hampton Street, there is a lovely place where you can drive off but cannot get back onto the footpath in front of the Freemasons Hotel. What is going to happen about this?

CEO's response – *That crossing point has been an issue for a long time, there are funds in the current budget to do some nibs, and extend the footpath out. We are not keen to put the crossing at the bottom of Steere Street, but perhaps have it parallel to the hall. We are still having discussions with Main Roads to see where the best place is.*

You have done beautifully with the path down by the repertory theatre, but from the tea house to Bunbury Street, it is awful. If I get knocked off who do I sue?

CEO's response - *Main Roads is preparing a design for the northern entrance to Bridgetown, including Hampton Street up to Nelson Street and Bunbury Street. Unfortunately preparation of that plan seems to be a low priority for that department however we didn't want to do works on a new path only to find when Main roads completes the plan that the pathway needs to be relocated. There are also some issues associated with drainage in this area. It has taken a long time to get the plan from Main Roads but we will continue to ask for this to be done.*

Moved W Moyes, Seconded M Southwell

E.06/0213 That Council consider working with the Bridgetown Heritage Association to establish a lease/agreement for Zinnecker's house in order to have it refurbished.

Carried

Moved W Moyes, Seconded M Southwell

E.07/0213 That Council amend its policies in relation to Ward Meetings in order to have a minimum of two each year to improve communication.

Carried

JA Reynolds

Can all the Councillors be at those meetings?

President's response – *Attendance at a Ward Meeting by Councillors is not compulsory – they are a matter of good will between Councillors and the electors of that ward.*

7. Closure

The Shire President closed the Meeting 6.56pm

8. List of Attachments

| Attachment | Item No. | Details |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | 3 | Minutes of the AGM of Electors held 2 February 2012 |

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| Minutes checked and authorised by CEO T P Clynch |  | 27.2.13 |
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CERTIFICATION OF MINUTES

As Presiding Member, I certify that the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Electors held 21 February 2013 were confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting at the Annual Meeting of Electors held on 20.....

..... (Date).....

unconfirmed minutes