

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE NEW ENGLAND TABLELANDS (NOXIOUS PLANTS) COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE WALCHA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON TUESDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2020 COMMENCING AT 8:36AM.

PRESENT: Councillor M. Dusting - Chairperson, Councillor S. Kermode and Armidale Regional Council Administrator Viv May by video link.

IN ATTENDANCE: General Manager, Mr John Duggan, Senior Biosecurity Officer, Mr James Browning

APOLOGIES:

Nil

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Administrator May declared an interest in item 1.1.1 of the Closed Committee Meeting and the subsequent resolution in open Council.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 25 AUGUST 2020.

37/20 RESOLVED on the motion of Councillors May and Kermode that the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the New England Tablelands (Noxious Plants) County Council held on 25 August, copies of which have been distributed to all members, are taken as read and confirmed a true record.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 25 AUGUST 2020.

The General Manager advised that NEWA has declined Associate Membership of NEJO as there was a fee of \$8,500 in accordance with resolution 32/20.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chair advised of the following:

Firstly, I would like to thank Councillors for the opportunity to represent Council as Chairman for the past twelve months and I would also like to thank Cr Scott Kermode as the deputy Chair and the other Councillors for their valued contributions to the activities of Council over this period.

Councillors will note that the Annual Report is included with this agenda. Once again we have achieved an excellent financial result whilst meeting the objectives of our organisation.

By now the advertising period for the proposal to include Glen Innes Severn Council as part of the County has closed. I expect in the near future, we will see a proclamation establishing the "New England County Council."

The Local Government conference has now been moved to an online event to be held on 23 November 2020. The GM and I will be online for the motions debate and decisions.

The next Regional Weed Committee AGM is to be held on Tuesday 17 November 2020 in Armidale. Cr Kermode has been elected as the Local Land Services representative and may also be elected as Chair of the committee.

We have been advised that associate membership of NEJO requires a contribution of \$8,500. Following the resolution of our recent meeting we have respectfully declined membership.

We have also submitted a further grant application to the “Established Pest Animals and Weeds Management Pipeline Program - Advancing Pest Animal and Weed Control Solutions” program. The project which will further research and develop the practical application of drones in weed control and demonstrate “proof of concept” with the objective to increase the uptake and accessibility of spray drones by farmers and land managers. The requested grant is approximately \$1.2Million.

We are now getting very busy. The rainfall we have received has dramatically improved pastures and weed growth. It is a very different circumstance to this time last year.

As this is the last scheduled meeting for the 2020 Calendar year, I would like to take the opportunity to wish all Councillors, staff and our communities a safe and joyous Christmas and a happy new year.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON, AND DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON (ITEM 7.1)

The General Manager, Mr J Duggan acting as Returning Officer then called for nominations for the position of Chairperson. On receiving only one nomination that being from Councillor M. Dusting, the Returning Officer, declared Councillor Dusting elected Chairperson for the ensuing twelve month period unopposed.

The Returning Officer then called for nominations for the position of Deputy Chairperson. On receiving only one nomination that being from Councillor S. Kermode, the Returning Officer declared Councillor Kermode elected Deputy Chairperson for the ensuing twelve month period unopposed.

2. COMMITTEES AND DELEGATES (ITEM 7.2)

38/20 RESOLVED on the motion of Councillors May and Kermode:

That the Chairperson of the New England Tablelands (Noxious Plants) County Council be Council’s delegate to:

- Local Government NSW,
- Northern Tableland Local Land Services Regional Weed Committee.

3. MEETING TIMES (ITEM 7.3.1)

39/20 RESOLVED on the motion of Councillors Kermode and May:

That Council adopt the following meeting dates for 2021;

16 February 2021	2 nd Quarterly Review. Councillors Tour.
20 April 2021	3 rd Quarterly Budget Review. Draft Annual Operational Plan 2021/22
15 June 2021	Adopt Annual Operational Plan and Budget 21/22 and update 4 Year Delivery Program and 10 Year Financial Plan Adopt Business Activity Strategic Plan 2020- 2030
24 August 2021	4 th Quarterly Budget Review. Refer Accounts to Audit. Pecuniary Interests Returns
19 October 2021	1st Quarterly Budget Review. Adopt Financial Statements. Election of Chairperson and Review Delegations. Payment of Expenses Policy Review. Annual Report adopted

4. PAYMENT OF EXPENSES AND PROVISION OF FACILITIES FOR CHAIRPERSON, COUNCILLORS AND STAFF (ITEM 7.3.2)

40/20 RESOLVED on the motion of Councillors May and Kermode:

That Council, in accordance with Section 252 of the Local Government Act 1993, adopt the Policy for Payment of Expenses and the Provision of Facilities for Chairpersons, Councillors and Staff, as attached to the report.

5. INTERNAL REPORTING POLICY – PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES ACT 1994 (ITEM 7.3.3)

41/20 RESOLVED on the motion of Councillors Kermode and May:

That Council adopt Internal Reporting Policy No: 07/20, as attached to the Report.

6. ANNUAL REPORT (ITEM 7.3.4)

42/20 RESOLVED on the motion of Councillors Dusting and May:

1. That the Annual Report for the financial year ending 30 June 2020 be received and adopted.
2. That a copy of Council's Annual Report 2019-20 be forwarded to constituent member Councils and Glen Innes Severn Council.

7. NEW ENGLAND WEEDS AUTHORITY WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (ITEM 7.3.5)

43/20 RESOLVED on the motion of Councillors Kermode and May:

1. That Council reaffirm the New England Weeds Authority Work Health and Safety Management System incorporating Council's Work Health and Safety Policy as attached to the report.
2. That Council reaffirm the New England Weeds Authority Emergency Plan as attached to the report.

8. FINANCIAL REPORTS 2019/20 (ITEM 7.4.1)

44/20 RESOLVED on the motion of Councillors Kermode and May:

That the Financial Statements and Auditor's Report for the financial year ending 30 June 2020 be received and adopted.

9. INVESTED FUNDS REPORT AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2020 (ITEM 7.4.2)

45/20 RESOLVED on the motion of Councillors May and Kermode:

1. That the report indicating Council's Fund Management position be received and noted.
2. That the Certificate of the Responsible Accounting Officer be noted and the report adopted.

10. SEPTEMBER QUARTERLY BUDGET REVIEW (ITEM 7.4.3)

46/20 RESOLVED on the motion of Councillors Kermode and May:

That Council adopt the September 2020 Quarterly Budget Review.

11. 2020/2021 WEEDS ACTION PROGRAM (ITEM 7.5.1)

47/20 RESOLVED on the motion of Councillors Kermode and May:

That the report on the 2020/2021 Weeds Action Program be received and noted.

PROCEDURAL MOTION:

47/20 RESOLVED on the motion of Councillors Dusting and Kermode:

That in accordance with the provisions of Section 10 of the Local Government Act, 1993, that the matter of the proposed land for a new operations centre be discussed in confidential matters in Committee of the Whole for the reason that it relates to information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business

NOTE: Administrator May left the meeting and did not participate in this item.

12. PROPOSED PURCHASE OF LAND FOR NEW OPERATIONS CENTRE (ITEM 1.1.1)

48/20 RESOLVED on the motion of Councillors Dusting and Kermode:

That the General Manager be authorised to sign the contract on behalf of the New England Weeds Authority as attached.

PROCEDURAL MOTION:

49/20 RESOLVED on the motion of Councillors Dusting and Kermode:

That Council return to the Council meeting

Upon returning to the normal meeting:

50/20 RESOLVED on the motion of Councillors Kermode and Dusting:

That the General Manager be authorised to sign the contract on behalf of the New England Weeds Authority as attached.

NOTE: Administrator May returned to the meeting and was advised of the outcome of the closed committee.

11. MATTERS OF URGENCY

There were no matters of urgency.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 16 February 2021 at 8.30 am in Armidale.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.22 AM.