



MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

Held on

Tuesday, 21 June 2022

at

11:00am

in

NEWA Meeting Room, Rusden Street

PRESENT: Councillor Tim Bower, Councillor Lara Gresham, Councillor Scott Kermode, Councillor Margaret O'Connor, Councillor Paul Packham and Councillor Dorothy Robinson

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Tim Weeks (General Manager)

**ORDINARY MEETING OF NEW ENGLAND COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD IN COUNCILS OFFICES ON TUESDAY 21 JUNE 2022 AT 11:00am**

Ordinary Meeting of Council commencing at 11am on Tuesday 21st June 2022

1.0 STATEMENT IN RELATION TO RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Cr. Kermode advised that the Meeting was *not* being live-streamed, however, a video recording of the meeting will be available on the County Council's website.

2.0 PRESENT: Councillor Tim Bower, Councillor Lara Gresham, Councillor Scott Kermode, Councillor Margaret O'Connor (from 11:32am), Councillor Paul Packham and Councillor Dorothy Robinson

3.0 APOLOGIES

Nil

4.0 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Nil

5.0 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 29 MARCH 2022

14/22 RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council Held on 29 March 2022, should be prepared as *two* separate sets of Minutes; being a Special Meeting and an Ordinary Meeting of Council and submitted for adoption at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council.

Moved Cr. Kermode

Seconded: Cr. Packham

The Motion on being put to the vote was CARRIED unanimously.

6.0 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY (CLOSED) MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 4 MAY 2022

15/22 RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Council Held on 4 May 2022, should be revised and submitted for adoption at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council.

Moved Cr. Kermode

Seconded: Cr. Packham

7.0 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

To begin, I would like to welcome the four new New England Weeds Authority councillors and welcome back Councillor O'Conner.

The last few months have presented some challenges and without doubt there are more to come. The departure of the three longest serving staff members is very disappointing. The loss of around 40 years of combined experience will leave a hole in the organisation which cannot be filled in the short or medium term. It is sad to realize that they may be lost forever to the "weeds" community. Also, sadly we appear to have seen the last spray season from our longest serving sprayer Peter Doyle. Once again, the experience and knowledge lost will take a long time to replace.

As most of you will no doubt be aware, Inverell has decided against continuing the MOU with NEWA for this past year. This is possibly understandable and whilst it is a blow, it may well be a cloud with a silver lining.

In the current circumstances, a return to a simpler, more focussed organisation will probably be a blessing. It is easy for councils to drift away from their core business by taking on too much or projects which distract them from their original defined role.

Going by the weather of late, the spray season should be pretty much done for 2021/2022, so inspections are no doubt in full swing. I feel that this is the best part as it allows for much more interaction with the community we serve.

8.0 MOVED

It was moved that the Chairman's Report be received and noted.

Moved Cr. Gresham

Seconded: Cr. Robinson

The Motion on being put to the vote was CARRIED unanimously.

9.0 GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

As we approach the end of the 2021-2022 financial year, NEWA's performance in delivering our WAP targets and in meeting our member-council obligations have exceed expectations. To date we have completed 106% of our WAP target inspections and we are on target for 110% of on-ground inspections to be completed by the year end. This will be our second year of exceeding our inspection targets.

**ORDINARY MEETING OF NEW ENGLAND COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD IN COUNCILS OFFICES ON TUESDAY 21 JUNE 2022 AT 11:00am**

Our obligations to our member councils have been substantially met and special projects have been completed on-target (weather permitting).

NEWA has also been successful in securing new projects, including roadside spraying of the New England Highway on behalf of Transport for NSW valued at \$100,000pa and most recently the securing of a \$200,000 project to protect the Murray-Darling Basin and the Dumaresq River from known infestation of Water Lettuce and removal of Cat's Claw Creeper along a 165km riparian zone.

Operationally we have completed the upgrading of our IT infrastructure, in preparation of the move to our new office and depot facility. The upgrading of our (Chartis) mapping software now enables greater flexibility in the field and compliant reporting of weed infestation locations and remedial spraying activity (not previously possible).

The rebuilding of NEWA's workforce, in accordance with the Authority's Resourcing Strategy, has seen the appointment of a new Chief Financial Officer and the engagement of Roberts & Morrow, Chartered Accounts to provide temporary financial support. We are currently recruiting for a Project Officer/Biosecurity Officer, Finance and Administration Officer and a Spray Team Leader,

Cultural change can be difficult as every organisation has found; and the period since Christmas has been a difficult one for NEWA. However, the results have greatly benefited the Weeds Authority with new enthusiasm and commitment, which ensures the Authority is now well positioned for a bright future.

**10.0 NEW ENGLAND WEEDS AUTHORITY OPERATIONAL PLAN AND
ANNUAL BUDGET 2022-23**

16/22 RESOLVED

- a) That the adoption of the draft New England Weeds Authority's Annual Operational Plan for 2022-2023 be *deferred*, and not be endorsed for placement on public exhibition, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993.
- b) That an Extraordinary Meeting of Council be held on *28 June 2022 at 1:00pm* to consider the 2022-2023 Annual Operational Plan and Budget for adoption.

11.0 AUDIT OFFICE OF NSW – AUDIT FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2022

17/22 RESOLVED

That the Report on the Audit Process of Council's financial Statements for the Year ending 30 June 2022 be received and noted.

Moved Cr. Gresham

Seconded: Cr. Robinson

The Motion on being put to the vote was CARRIED unanimously.

12.0 INVESTED FUNDS REPORT

18/22 RESOLVED:

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

Moved Cr. Packham

Seconded: Cr. Kermode

The Motion on being put to the vote was CARRIED unanimously.

13.0 DECEMBER QUARTERLY BUDGET REVIEW

19/22 RESOLVED

That Council adopt the December 2021 Quarterly Budget Review and approve the proposed Budget variations.

Moved Cr. Packham

Seconded: Cr. Kermode

The Motion on being put to the vote was CARRIED unanimously.

14.0 WEED CONTROL MATTERS – WEEDS ACTION PLAN

20/22 RESOLVED

That the Report on the 2021-2022 Weeds Action Program and spray works to 31 May 2022, be received and noted.

Moved Cr. Gresham

Seconded: Cr. Robinson

The Motion on being put to the vote was CARRIED unanimously.

15.0 MATTERS OF URGENCY/ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair advised that the 3rd person he referred to in his report, as having *left* the Council, was a Biosecurity Officer, currently on Long Service Leave and undertaking secondary employment. The Chair advised that in a recent discussion regarding the officer's intended future-plans with NEWA, he was advised that the Officer concerned did not intend returning to work, as he wished to pursue his present trade career.

16.0 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on **Wednesday 24 August 2022 at 11:00am.**