

M(11) – 6 OCTOBER 2020

Ordinary Council Meeting

Minutes

The next **Ordinary Meeting** of the **Alpine Shire Council** was on **6 October 2020** and commenced at **4:00pm**.

PRESENT

COUNCILLORS

Cr Peter Roper - Mayor

Cr Sarah Nicholas – Deputy Mayor

Cr John Forsyth

Cr Tony Keeble

Cr Kitty Knappstein

Cr Ron Janas

Cr Daryl Pearce

OFFICERS

Charlie Bird – Chief Executive Officer

Will Jeremy – Director Assets

Nathalie Cooke – Director Corporate

APOLOGIES

Nil

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1. Recording and livestreaming of Council meetings

The CEO read the following statement:

All council meetings are filmed with both video and audio being recorded.

This meeting is being held online and audio and video is focused on Councillors and Council Officers.

In accordance with Alpine Shire Council Governance Rules (2020) adopted on 25 August 2020, Question Time, Notices of Motion, General Business and Reports by Delegates will not be presented during the election period.

The reasoning behind recording council meetings is of course to hold us more accountable and improve transparency of council's decision making to our community.

The full meeting is being streamed live on Council's YouTube channel which is "Alpine Shire Council" and will also be available on the YouTube channel shortly after this meeting.

2. Acknowledgement of traditional custodians, and recognition of all people

The CEO read the following statement:

The Alpine Shire Council acknowledges the traditional owners of the land we are now on.

We also acknowledge those people who have contributed to the rich fabric of our community and strive to make wise decisions that will improve the quality of life for all.

3. Confirmation of minutes

3.1 ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – M(10) – 1 SEPTEMBER 2020

Cr Keeble

Cr Janas

That the minutes of Ordinary Council Meeting M(10) held on 1 September 2020 as circulated be confirmed.

Carried

4. Apologies

Nil

5. Obituaries / congratulations

In accordance with Alpine Shire Council Governance Rules (2020) obituaries / congratulations will not be held during the election period.

6. Declarations by Councillors of conflict of interest

Nil

7. Public questions

In accordance with Alpine Shire Council Governance Rules (2020), question time will not be held during the election period.

8. Presentation of reports by officers

8.1 DIRECTOR CORPORATE – NATHALIE COOKE

8.1.1 Alpine Shire Council Annual Report 2019/20

File Number: 900.01

Election Period Statement

The recommendation is not a prohibited decision as defined by s69(2) or s69(3) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, nor is it a decision that could be reasonably deferred, or should not be made in accordance with Council's Election Period Policy.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the report is to present Council's 2019/20 Annual Report to Council.

Cr Forsyth

Cr Pearce

That consideration of the Alpine Shire Council Annual Report 2019/20 be deferred to a Special Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 20 October 2020, due to a delay in receiving auditor's reports from the Victorian Auditor General's Office.

Carried

Background

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* Council's annual report must contain the following:

131 Annual report—contents

(2) An annual report must contain the following, in respect of the financial year reported on—

- a. (a) a report of operations of the Council;*
- b. (b) an audited performance statement;*
- c. (c) audited financial statements;*
- d. (d) a copy of the auditor's report on the performance statement, prepared under section 132;*
- e. (e) a copy of the auditor's report on the financial statements under Part 3 of the Audit Act 1994;*

On 9 April 2020, Local Government Victoria issued Bulletin 26/2020, which gave all Councils an extension on submitting their 2019/20 Annual Reports to the Minister for Local Government, from 30 September 2020, to 30 November 2020. Councils must consider the Annual Report at a meeting open to the public within one month of submitting the report to the Minister.

Officers have prepared all the necessary detail, and the financial statements and performance statement have been audited by Council's external auditors. Due to the extension given to all Councils, there has been a delay in receiving final approval from the Victorian Auditor General's Office (the auditor), and the associated auditor's reports as required by Sections 131(2)(d) and (e) of the Local Government Act 1989. It is expected that the auditor's reports will be available in time for a Special Council meeting to be held on 20 October 2020.

ISSUES

Performance Report

This section of the Annual Report provides an overview of progress of the strategic themes outlined in the 2017-2021 Council Plan (review 2019). This is the third year of reporting against this Council Plan.

Bushfires in January 2020, and COVID-19 restrictions introduced during March 2020 had the biggest impact on Council's operations during 2019/20. A summary of key achievements during 2019/20 include:

A high performing organisation

- Being highly responsive as an organisation to dealing with bushfire and COVID-19 responses.
- Provision of rate and fee relief for businesses and properties affected by the January 2020 bushfires, made possible through funding from the Victorian Government.
- Commencement of detailed work on the implementation of the Local Government Act 2020.
- Hosting the "Fight On" concert performed by Katy Perry in March 2020 in support of bushfire affected communities and emergency services personnel.

A responsible and sustainable organisation

- Joint development of the Business Systems Transformation project with Indigo and Towong Shire Councils, with phase one implementation due in 2020/21.
- Completion of the Better Approvals Project to provide an improved process for business customers needing to obtain multiple permits to commence or grow their business.

Incredible places for our community and visitors

- Delivery of \$6.0m of capital works projects in 2019/20 through challenges associated with bushfires and COVID-19 restrictions.
- Expansion of the Myrtleford Indoor Sports Stadium (\$2.6m) and upgrade of the Mount Beauty Skate Park (\$0.27m).

Infrastructure and open space that our community is proud of

- Delivery of maintenance programs during the year through challenges associated with bushfires and COVID-19 restrictions.

- Completion of the Oaks Lawn Precinct at Pioneer Park Bright, in time to host the Katy Perry concert in March 2020.

Highly utilised and well managed community facilities

- Adaptation of services due to COVID-19 restrictions, including introducing “click and collect” services at library branches.
- Food organics and garden organics community survey will be utilised to help inform a transition to increased recycling streams in the future.

A well planned and safe community

- Progressing a planning scheme amendment to support Mount Buffalo activation.
- Continuation of service delivery across environmental health, building, planning and local laws services while complying with COVID-19 restrictions.

A thriving and connected community

- Adoption of the Myrtleford Resilience Plan and action plan.
- Delivery of Maternal and Child Health services through bushfires and COVID-19 restrictions, with only a slight drop in participation compared to the previous year.
- Delivery of a busy event program during 2019, before bushfires and COVID-19 impacted on the delivery of events in 2020.

Challenges in 2019/20

Delivery of Council’s capital works program and service delivery was impacted by the January 2020 bushfires, and COVID-19 restrictions introduced in March 2020. Council transitioned quickly to continue to provide services and complete capital works in line with government restrictions.

Governance Report

This section of the Annual Report contains required statutory information including:

- Council's role and administrative details;
- How Council obtains best value for ratepayers;
- Council documents available for public inspection;
- Council's compliance with relevant Act; and
- An overview of grants and funding provided by Council.

Financial Statements

The Financial Statements show Council's financial performance, financial position and cash flows against the previous year.

In summary, Council ended the 2019/20 year with a surplus of \$7.9m, which was \$2.1m higher than the \$5.8m surplus projected in the 2019/20 Annual Budget (the Budget).

The higher result was primarily due to the receipt of \$3.4m in Bushfire Recovery funds; higher than expected Victorian Grants Commission funding by \$0.3m; lower than anticipated road, drainage and tree maintenance expenditure by \$0.3m; and

unanticipated receipt of \$0.2m additional funding to support remediation of flood damage.

This was in part offset by the pass through of \$1.1m of Bushfire Recovery funds as rebated rates, fees and rents, and capital grants being \$1.2m lower than anticipated.

It is noted that the financial impact of COVID-19 was minimal as the majority of staff stood down from closed services were redeployed, and the impact on Council revenue streams was not material.

1. Income

Altogether Council received \$34.0m in income which was \$3.0m favourable to the Budget projection of \$31.0m. Key variances to budget were as follows:

1.1 Grants - operating

Council received total operating grant income of \$8.7m which was \$4.0m favourable to budget, primarily due to the receipt of \$3.4m in Bushfire Recovery and Relief funding, higher than expected Victorian Grants Commission funding of \$0.2m, and unanticipated additional funding to support remediation of flood damage.

1.2 Grants - capital

Council received total capital grant income of \$3.1m which was \$1.2m less than anticipated, primarily due to deferral of income for the Buckland Bridge project to 2020/21. Although the project grant has been received, under new accounting standards it cannot be recognised as income until it is spent in 2020/21. The project timeline has been extended due to delays in authority approvals as a result of summer bushfires, COVID-19 and a native title claim affecting the land on which the bridge is proposed to be build.

1.3 Other income

Council received \$1.0m in other income which was \$0.2m higher than budgeted, primarily due \$0.1m of unbudgeted volunteer contributions to the organisation and unbudgeted insurance claim income.

2. Expenses

Overall expenses were \$26.0m which was \$0.8m higher than Budget. Key areas of variance are as follows:

2.1 Employee costs

Employee costs were \$8.2m, \$0.3m lower than budgeted at \$8.5m, primarily due to the impact of vacant positions.

2.2 Materials and services

Materials and services were \$10.9m, \$0.2m higher than the budgeted \$10.7m. Primary reasons for the increase versus budget included:

- The reclassification of \$1.3m in capital expenses as operating expenditure;
- \$0.3m expenditure on alternative resources to support employee vacancies;

- \$0.2m in unanticipated Bushfire Recovery related expenses including destination marketing and support for community resilience.

These increases were in part offset by:

- \$0.3m lower than budgeted road, drainage and tree maintenance expenditure due to reduced dependency on external contractors, bushfires and COVID-19 impacts on the completion of work and some delays in procuring materials;
- An error in the budget as a result of internal charges of \$0.3m not being eliminated;
- Lower than budgeted business systems costs of \$0.2m;
- \$0.2m lower than anticipated visitor information centre, pool and tourism costs due to the impact of the bushfires and COVID-19; and
- Carried forward cost of Land Development Strategy expenditure of \$0.1m.

2.3 Other expenses

Other expenses were higher than anticipated by \$1.1m due to \$1.1m of grant funded Bushfire Relief funding being passed on directly to the community.

Performance Statement

The Performance Statement provides an overview of Council progress against key performance indicators. The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) provides the basis for these indicators to enable a uniform Performance Statement across all Victorian councils.

A number of performance indicators were impacted due to the 2020 bushfires and COVID-19 restrictions. Notably participation in the Maternal and Child Health service dropped from 85% to 74%, and participation by Aboriginal children dropped from 79% to 59%. Utilisation of aquatic facilities also dropped somewhat from 2.4 to 2.2 visits per capita.

Other significant changes included an improvement in the proportion of critical and major non-compliance notifications relating to food safety which were followed up, from 83% to 96% following engagement of an additional Environmental Health Officer in July 2019.

Satisfaction with Council Decisions reduced somewhat compared to the previous year from 59 to 56, and satisfaction with sealed local roads dropped from 64 to 61.

Generally the financial indicators show that Council is financially sustainable and that services are being delivered within expected parameters.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Annual Report must be submitted to the Minister by 30 September each year as required by Section 133 of the *Local Government Act 1989*. Public notice must then be given that the Report has been prepared and can be inspected at the Council office and on the Council's website. The Report must then be considered at a meeting of the Council as soon as practicable after the Council has sent the Annual Report to the Minister as required by Section 134 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

It is noted that from next year onwards the development of an Annual Report, Financial Statements and Performance Statements will be governed by the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The recommendation is in accordance with the following Strategic Objective of the Council Plan 2017-2021:

- A responsible and sustainable organisation

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Annual Report containing audited Financial Statements and Performance Statement for the year ended 30 June 2020 show that Council is financially sustainable and that Council services are being delivered within expected parameters. The 2020 bushfires impacted on financials primarily through receipt and expenditure of related grant funding. COVID-19 had minimal financial impact as a number of staff stood down from closed facilities were redeployed elsewhere.

CONSULTATION

The Audit Committee Charter states that the Committee is required to review the Annual Financial Report and consider whether it is complete, consistent with information known to Audit Committee members and reflects appropriate accounting principles. The Audit Committee was presented with the in principle Financial Statements and Performance Statement, and received a briefing from Council's auditors following their review of these documents.

CONCLUSION

Council ended the 2019/20 year with a surplus of \$7.9 million, which was higher than that predicted in the 2019/20 Annual Budget. The higher surplus result is largely attributed to the receipt of Bushfire Recovery related grants. There was reduced take-up of selected services during the bushfire season and COVID-19 restrictions, impacting on selected performance indicators.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Under Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the following officers declare that they have no interests to disclose in providing this report.

- Director Corporate
- Manager Corporate
- Accountant
- Governance Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

8.1.1 Alpine Shire Council Annual Report 2019/20

9. Assembly of Councillors

In accordance with Alpine Shire Council Governance Rules (2020) no Reports by Delegates is to be tabled during the election period.

10. General business

In accordance with Alpine Shire Council Governance Rules (2020) general business will not be held during the election period.

11. Motions for which notice has previously been given

In accordance with Alpine Shire Council Governance Rules (2020) no Notices of Motion is to be received during the election period.

12. Reception and reading of petitions

In accordance with Alpine Shire Council Governance Rules (2020), no Reception and reading of petitions is to be received during the election period.

13. Documents for sealing

Election Period Statement

The recommendation is not a prohibited decision as defined by s69(2) or s69(3) or the *Local Government Act 2020*, nor is it a decision that could be reasonably deferred, or should not be made in accordance with Council's Election Period Policy.

Cr Knappstein

Cr Pearce

That the following documents be signed and sealed.

- 1. Section 173 Agreement – Denis Leo Piazza and Sandra Anne Piazza. 14 Whalleys Lane, Myrtleford being Crown Allotment 7 Section G Township and Parish of Myrtleford, Volume 9902 Folio 624, and Lot 2 on Title Plan 818072B, Volume 10687 Folio 477. Condition 3 of Planning Permit No. 2018.199.2 for a two lot re-subdivision at 14 Whalleys Lane, Myrtleford. The Agreement ensures that the use or development of a dwelling, or other accommodation buildings does not occur on proposed Lot 2 on Plan of Subdivision 833465H which is currently zoned 'Farming'.*
- 2. Section 173 Agreement – Velomoto Pty Ltd. CA 2 SEC 5 & CA 1C SEC 5 Parish of Porepunkah. Condition 11 of Planning Permit 2019.35.1 for Use and Development of the land for Group Accommodation, Function Centre, Dwelling, other associated Buildings and Works, Bicycle Facility Waiver (Change Rooms) and Sale and Consumption of Liquor (On Premises License) at 441 Back Porepunkah Road, Bright. The Agreement acknowledges that the site is adjacent to an existing plantation and that the area will be subject to noise, dust, and other amenity impacts over the lifetime of the plantation.*
- 3. Section 173 Agreement – Joshua Mark Watson & Nicole Carmel King Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision 845675Q Volume 07594 Folio 042. Planning Permit 2018.104.1 for a two lot subdivision at 1 Mummery Road, Myrtleford. The Agreement amends Clause 5 of the existing Section 173 Agreement to include a copy of the endorsed building and effluent plan to ensure the bushfire management measures required to be implemented and maintained should a dwelling be constructed on the land without a planning permit remain clear.*
- 4. Section 173 Agreement – Nicola Danielle Letts & Matthew James Vaughan Crown Allotment 13 Section L Parish of Bright Volume 06695 Folio 872. Condition 10 of Planning Permit 2019.133.1 for Use and Development of Land for a Dwelling and Pig Farm at 47 Shepherds Lane, Wandiligong. The Agreement provides for Farm Plan implementation.*

5. *Section 173 Agreement – Brian Joseph Jones and Maria Luisa Dos Santos Batalha. Plan of Consolidation 375713F, Great Alpine Road, Smoko. Volume 11580 Folio 463. Condition 11 of Planning Permit 2015.58.4 for Use and Buildings and Works for a Dwelling and a Restaurant; Creation of Access to a Road Zone Category 1. Buildings and Works for an Agricultural (Machinery) Shed, Detached Solar Panels that Primarily Services the Land, Primary Produce Sales and Rural Industry. The Agreement determines the use of the Whole Farm Plan in accordance with the permit condition.*

6. *Section 173 Agreement – Mary Frances Solosy. Lot 12 on Plan of Subdivision 617039 Volume 11087 Folio 353 Conditions 27, 28, 30 and 45 of Planning Permit 2017.54.2.1 for a three lot subdivision at 1-5 The Track, Bright. The Agreement provides for the implementation of Bushfire Mitigation measure and ground level compliance on Lot 3.*

Carried

There being no further business the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 4.10p.m.

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Chairperson