

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME



Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton
on Saturday 15th March 2025 commencing at 11:00am.

PRESENT:

Chairman: N. Juby
Councillors: E. Williamson, D. Cocks, G. Annan, T. Clark, S. Smith, O. Kent, P. Dell (Online), A. Brown, G. Dickey, A. Sapich
Staff: D. Klee, A. Daniel,

1. APOLOGIES:

C. Sherrard, M. Barker, D. Lelievre, B. Jarvi-Child, C. Robertson.

It was moved;
that apologies be accepted.

Smith/Annan – CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

Nil.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF 15th February 2025:

It was moved;
that the minutes of the previous meetings of the 15th February 2025 be accepted as true and correct records.

Cocks/Smith – CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The Chair indicated that the proposed letter to NZC had not been sent and there may be further details required dependent on the outcome of the upcoming budget meeting. He advised that it would be prudent to wait until after the April NZC meeting before planning on what information needs to be sent.

The Chair asked whether there had been any update on Mr Banisters bequest. Dr Daniel indicated that he had not received any further updates since the last meeting but would follow this up.

5. **COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:**

Nil.

6. **STANDING ORDERS**

The CE informed the council that Councillor Dell had slipped a disk in his back but could attend the meeting virtually if the council accepted the updated standing orders that facilitated such. The council reviewed the updated standing orders which facilitate online meeting attendance and requested the following addition. *“No person may record the meeting without the approval of the chair and notification of the council”.*

It was moved;

That the revised standing orders dated March 2025 be adopted subject to above amendment.

Dickey/Sappich – CARRIED

7. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S BI-MONTHLY REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:**

7.1 Bi-monthly Chief Executives Report

Trout Tagging Project: Councillor Annan asked if there had been any progress with the tagging study being conducted by Ollie Bassett. Dr Daniel said that he had conducted a training day with Ollie and he had subsequently tagged 35 trout in the Whakapapa Catchment to date. The Chair asked whether temperature measurements were being taken at the time of tagging and Dr Dnaiel confirmed that this was being done to ensure that temperature could be factored into any future recovery analysis.

MPDC Consent: Councillor Smith sought an update regarding the MPDC comprehensive WWTP consent. The C.E. explained that he and staff have had several further meetings with consultants. The process has been complicated by the newly proposed national WWTP standards which are purely concentration based. The consultants in this case have taken the interpretation that total loads are therefore not of concern and improvements in non-toxicants such as TN, TP and TSS are not required. We do not believe that this is what the legislation suggests, however there is a lack of clarity in terms of how this legislation will be implemented and our RM staff are working with national office to provide a submission on the standards which are currently open for public submission.

Tag Returns: The Chair suggested that there are several potential explanations for higher tag returns for fish caught earlier in the season that may not be related to temperature related mortality at the time of first capture. For example, fish caught early in the season may simply have a greater chance of being recaptured due to being subjected to more angler days. Dr Daniel agreed and said this would be considered during future analysis.

Prosecution Budget: The CE updated the council on various prosecutions being undertaken and highlighted that the council is likely to exceed its budget this year. This is due to delays

in processing some of the prosecutions due to their complexity. The CE also explained that there had been a concerted effort to increase ranger presence in the past 12 months which had led to increased detections of non-compliance. He is currently undertaking staff training in conjunction with our national compliance coordinator so that this region can begin to internalize more of its prosecution costs. Council raised the prospect of having a joint regional legal team to run prosecutions nationally. The CE indicated that he would raise this at the next managers' meeting. Councillors also directed the CE to publicize successful prosecutions in our magazine, newsletters and online.

It was moved;

that the Chief Executive's Bimonthly Report and Financial Statements be accepted.

Annan/Cocks – CARRIED

8. 2025/26 DRAFT BUDGET AND OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN:

The Chair raised concerns around the current uncertainties with the budgeting process for this year. The change process to a Zero-Based system was extremely poorly handled due to NZC ad-hoc decision making, a lack of sound policy underpinning the process, NZC ignoring provisions in the Act, various legal opinions and their own standing orders. There was no consultation with the regions and the decision to move to a ZZB process was done without prior consultation with the NZC CEO or CFO. As a result, and unsurprisingly, the change process was unable to be implemented, with various deadlines missed by NZC staff and budget templates not being made available to regions. This created a large amount of uncertainty in the organization and we now move into a budgeting process without any framework for how NZC will make budgeting decisions at its April meeting. The Chair expressed that this was a clear example of the complete breakdown of governance at NZC.

The CE took councillors through the draft budget and highlighted changes. He re-evaluated projects according to the organisational strategy and our regional priorities and went through the entire budget line by line evaluating potential outcomes and looking for cost savings and efficiencies. He pointed out that Auckland/Waikato were the only region that made the requested 3% budget saving last year and did not seek a budget increase through contestable funding. Our budget in 2023/24 was \$947,234 which compares to the proposed budget of \$938,949 for 25/26. This demonstrates the financial sustainability of the region, ensuring we live well within our means despite operating in a hyper-inflation environment where external costs have increased significantly over this period. Almost all of the budget increases relate to fixed overheads, which are unavoidable and unable to be funded through restricted reserves.

Council rose for lunch at 12.45pm and resumed at 1.13pm

It was moved;

that the draft operational work plan and 2025/26 budget applications be accepted.

Cocks/Annan – CARRIED

9. OSH UPDATE:

The March 2025 OSH report was tabled.

It was moved;

that the OSH report for March 2025 is accepted.

Cocks/Smith – CARRIED

10. LATE AGENDA ITEM REGARDING CONTRACTORS ON COUNCIL OWNED WETLANDS

Council discussed the issue of ensuring contractors comply with relevant H&S and consent requirements when working on council lands. The following recommendations were tabled by the C.E.

- Staff develop a list of approved contractors and work with them to ensure they are aware of all the requirements of consents and H&S provisions and ensure the checklist is being followed.
- All contractors working on F&G land must be approved in writing by staff at least 15 days prior to works commencing.
- No invoices relating to wetland works to be paid unless contractors have been through the appropriate staff approval process and received an order number.

It was moved;

That council adopt the new contractor protocols proposed by the C.E.

Cocks/Annan – CARRIED

11. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Councillor Williamson gave a detailed update of the latest NZC meeting, citing concerns around the poor governance and leadership currently being practiced by NZC which has manifested in the extremely high staff turnover rate and recent resignation of the NZC CEO.

Councillor Williamson informed council that he could not attend the NZC budget meeting in April. The Council expressed concern, given the lack of certainty around the entire budgeting process this year there could be a large amount of risk associated with not sending an NZC representative to the meeting. Councillor Williamson resigned as the NZC representative for the Auckland/Waikato Region.

The CE called for nominations for an NZC Councillor.

Councilor Cocks nominated Nigel Juby for the role, seconded by Euan Williamson.

There being no further nominations Councillor Juby was declared the Auckland/Waikato representative to NZC.

The meeting closed at 3.05pm