

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME



Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game Office, 156 Brymer
Road, RD9, Hamilton.
on Wednesday the 22nd May 2025 commencing at 6.10pm

PRESENT:

Chairman: N. Juby
Councillor's present in person: D. Cocks, G. Annan, S. Smith G. Dickey
Councillor's present online: E. Williamson, O. Kent, P. Dell, A. Brown, A. Sapich
Staff: D. Klee, D. Lelievre, B. Jarvis-Child, A. Daniel(online)
Members of the Public: C. Sherrard

1. APOLOGIES:

M. Barker (to join late)

It was moved;
that apologies be accepted.

Smith/Cocks – CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

Nil.

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

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

Cocks/Smith – CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Nil

5. INCOMING COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Two letters from the Minister of Hunting and Fishing James Meagre. The Chair highlighted the handwritten note at the bottom of the letter informing the council that he would ask DOC to address the Whakapapa Access Issue.

6. OUTGOING COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

Letter sent by the Chair to NZ Council outlining 2025/26 budget application. It was noted that despite coming in under budget last year, our general reserves had fallen beneath the 20% threshold and therefore required topping up. This was due to the overestimation of licence sales targets during COVID recovery years, the spending of dedicated reserves on a national project and the levying of regional reserves to facilitate budget increases in other regions and National Office/NZ Council. Council noted that the levying of anything other than licence sales in the current year is contrary to the Act and legal opinions presented to NZC. The C.E. noted that the Auckland/Waikato levy had doubled over the past 2 years and both he, the previous CE, and CFO, had repeatedly informed NZC that their reserves were marginal and could drop beneath the 20% threshold. It was noted that Nelson/Marlborough had the same issue.

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

7.1 Bi-monthly Chief Executives Report

Trend Counts. Councillor Dickey asked whether the trend count report would include the Manukau Harbour as he had noted a lot of Swan and Geese on it whilst out fishing. Mr Jarvis-Child replied that he had recently received data from Auckland airport which will be included. The C.E. explained that we cannot count this harbour during trend flights due to flying restrictions. He had also received a request to cull a large number of swan last week, by the airport. He expressed disappointment that the business case to purchase a hovercraft to conduct non-lethal hazing activities around the airport had been declined by their board. He noted that populations in Northland and North Auckland had witnessed significant declines, and that this area constituted a sub-regional population. Swan are mobile species that move large distances and Swan numbers on the Manukau show large fluctuations seasonally. A meeting is scheduled with the Airport to develop a long-term management plan for swan on the Manukau.

Easement on Stone Jug Road Property.

The Chair asked whether we were entirely satisfied with the final wording on easement. Mr Daniel indicated that there had been a lot of dialogue over a long period of consultation with mana whenua and the district council to land the current wording. There are provisions to close public access for short durations if a Rahui is placed on the area. The access provisions will sit on the title in perpetuity, unless the river changes course and no longer flows through the property.

Taumarunui Prosecution

Councillor Annan requested an update on the prosecution against multiple defendants in Taumarunui. The CE explained that given that there were some risks involved in continuing with the prosecution and the evidence we would be relying upon, he decided to accept an

offer to settle the case for most of the defendants without pursuing formal prosecution on the following terms.

The person who initially posted the video would plead guilty to all charges, with fines and costs sought as set out in the SOF or otherwise as ordered by the court. Accept total diversion of \$5,250 (\$750 per defendant) for all the other defendants payable to a charity to fund wetland restoration activities in the region.

Ranging Activities

Councillor Brown asked whether there were any plans to go back to the areas on Arapuni that had exhibited high rates of noncompliance. Mr Daniel replied that there was a plan to check out the areas during spawning surveys and potentially go back next year to check some other maimais they hadn't made this year. The Chair suggested that the council should have a session on compliance at its February meeting. He noted that pre-emptive compliance could be conducted by placing notices on maimai informing hunters of compliance issues in their area and warning them to keep to the rules. Colin Sherrard suggested that a rural mail drop could also be implemented to inform landowners that shoot without licenses about the regulations. Councillor Brown also suggested that there should be discussion around the role of honorary rangers, noting the large disparity between noncompliance detection rates between staff and honorary teams.

The Chair thanked the CE and staff on behalf of the council for their excellent efforts this year noting it was the biggest ranging presence we have ever had in the region.

It was moved;

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

Dickey /Cocks – CARRIED

8. BUDGET LICENCE FORECAST AND LICENCE FEE RECOMMENDATION

Council had a wide-ranging discussion around the budget setting process and raised concerns regarding the lack of transparency of how this year's process was conducted, the basis NZC used for levying regions and NZC/National Office budget items.

Councillor Williamson noted that interest incomes should not be included in regional budgets as only licence revenue derived in the current FY should be subject to levy consideration.

It was moved;

That council provide feedback on the budget, licence forecast and licence fee recommendations in line with the CE recommendations and include points raised by Councillor Williamson.

Smith/Cocks – CARRIED

It was further moved;

That council approve the budget and licence fee recommendations to the Minister.

Cocks/Williamson – CARRIED

Councillor Barker joined the meeting at 7.26pm

9. NZC CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

All of the consultation documents were discussed by council, referencing a discussion document provided by the CE. The concern was raised that there was a general disconnect regarding what NZC perceive their role to be when setting national policy especially when it comes to H&S noting that NZC is not a PCBU for regions. It was noted that the NZC H&S committee had not been involved in formulating the draft policy and an alternative approach had been mooted by Steve McKnight, CEO of the CSI region.

10. MODERNISING THE FAMILY LICENCE

Council do not support this proposal. It was noted that the proposed change had not been through the usual evaluation process of the licence working party and not all implications, especially financial ones had been appropriately evaluated. It was noted that the recommendations relied on a survey of a very small subset of licence holders who all belonged to 'women on the fly' and further consultation with the wider licence holder base should be conducted. Council understands that there is a licence optimization process underway and this would be an appropriate time to evaluate all licence categories. Other ideas were floated e.g. simply making it that every resident AWS licence holder can take 2 kids fishing which would achieve the same outcome. Council felt it was unfair that female angler in relationship would have their licence fee reduced, but a solo mother would still have to pay the full price.

It was moved; to provide feedback to NZC covering CEs discussion document and recommendations by council captured above.

Cocks/Dickey – CARRIED

11. OSH UPDATE:

The May 2025 OSH report was tabled.

The CE noted one near miss when Mr. Daniel fell over during drift diving surveys and that new spikes had been ordered for his wading boots to mitigate this risk moving forward.

Ms. Lelievre gave an update on the QR code H&S system that runs through google forms that is operating for volunteer work on F&G wetlands. She noted it was generally working well and importantly had an in-built risk assessment that all volunteers complete and must acknowledge.

It was moved;

that the OSH report for May 2025 is accepted.

Smith/Dickey – CARRIED

12. GENERAL BUSINESS:

The Chair pre circulated an email highlighting that he would need to take a step back from council duties until November to begin a new business venture.

The Chair stood down as NZC council representative. Councillor Cocks nominated Councillor Williamson. There being no further nominations, Councillor Williamson was declared NZC Council representative.

The Council discussed its options regarding the Chairs role and the CE provided the relevant parts of the council's standing orders and the Local Government Act 2002.

It was moved

that the Chair will take a leave of absence until November, remaining as a councillor only, with Grant Annan appointed as acting Chair for that period.

Smith/Dickey – CARRIED

The meeting closed at 8.45pm