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## **MINUTES OF THE EMERGENCY ORDINARY MEETING OF THE STRATFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, STRATFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL ON FRIDAY 21 MAY 2021 AT 10.05AM**

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### **PRESENT**

The District Mayor N C Volzke (the Chairman), the Deputy Mayor A L Jamieson, Councillors G W Boyde (*via audio/visual link*), P S Dalziel (*via audio/visual link*), J M S Erwood, R W Coplestone, A K Harris, V R Jones, M McKay, W J Sandford and G M Webby.

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

The Chief Executive – Mr S Hanne, the Director Assets – Mrs V Araba, the Director Environmental Services – Mr B Sutherland, the Director – Corporate Services – Mrs T Radich, the Executive Administration Officer – Mrs E Bishop, the Communications Manager – Ms G Gibson, the Administration & Communications Support Officer – Ms R Vanstone, the Revenue Manager – Mrs J Erwood, the Community Development Manager – Mr C Julie, the IT Support Officer – Mr R Goddard, the Community Development Officer – Mrs S Shepherd, the Parks & Reserves Officer – Mrs M McBain, five members of the media (Stratford Press, Te Korimako o Taranaki, Radio NZ & Taranaki Daily News) and approximately 95 members of the public.

#### 1. **WELCOME**

The District Mayor welcomed the Chief Executive, Councillors, staff, members of the public, and the media.

The District Mayor reiterated the health and safety message and emergency procedures.

#### 2. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies received.

#### 3. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chief Executive noted there had been seven requests for deputations for today's meeting from Te Runanga o Ngāti Ruanui, Te Korowai o Ngāruahine, Te Runanga o Ngāti Maru, Taranaki Māori Trust Board, Sue Comrie, Fiona Kahukura and Jordan Marshall-Wansbrough.

He noted that two Councillors were in attendance via audio/visual link. These Councillors will contribute to the meeting and have full voting rights in accordance with the Epidemic Preparedness (COVID-19) notice 2020. He reminded Councillors to ensure they use their microphones and speak clearly for the benefit of those attending by audio/visual link and for those in the public gallery.

The District Mayor noted there had been two key reasons for which he had exercised his authority under Council's Standing Orders to call an emergency meeting. He noted that the deadline for this decision was today (Friday 21 May 2021). At the Policy and Services Committee meeting on Tuesday the Committee had made a decision to continue with deferring the discussion on Māori wards until the 2024 review date. He noted that this committee only had the power to recommend decisions which are then presented to the full Council which would not meet until June, if Council at that point had decided a different outcome for this decision then it would have had missed the deadline to do so. He noted that until Tuesday Council had felt there had not been sufficient information on this topic received

from iwi, however this had now changed as two iwi had submitted and presented their views on the subject to Council on Tuesday. He felt it no longer made sense to wait until 2024 as Council had now heard what iwi wanted and felt making a decision one way or another was preferable to no decision or a delay.

4. **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS INTEREST**

The District Mayor requested Councillors to declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest relating to items on this agenda. There were no declarations of interest.

5. **ATTENDANCE SCHEDULE**

The Attendance Schedule for Ordinary and Extraordinary Council meetings was attached.

6. **DECISION REPORT - MĀORI REPRESENTATION**

D21/17017

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. THAT the report be received.

ERWOOD/McKAY  
Carried  
CL/21/45

**Deputations**

Representatives from Te Runanga o Ngāti Ruanui presented to Council. Points noted in the presentation:

- Mr Herewini Nopera noted that colonisation has disadvantaged Tangata Whenua and contributed greatly to the negative statistics for health, education, employment, poverty, Māori in prisons, mental health conditions and the loss of land. This needs to be continuously checked and called out on when accountability is needed. Tangata Whenua and Māori are more educated and more aware of what is happening in our country nowadays more than ever before and are more comfortable within a political environment. He acknowledged those who had marched in the 1970s and 1980s seeking justice for their people at a time there wasn't any and noted now was the time to honour them with the partnerships between Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti to ensure that, as a nation, we move forward for a better and fairer nation for our mokopuna. This can only happen if Tangata Whenua have a seat at the table to have the opportunity to have a say with what happens in its community. He encouraged Council to reconsider its decision to establish a Māori ward which will only strengthen the relationship with Tangata Whenua, the marae and all iwi in Taranaki. The community as a whole will benefit if Council votes yes today. This is a new beginning, there is a lot of work to do so say yes so we can pull up our sleeves and get to work. Let us not leave today doing nothing but leave together which is the key to success in the future for us all.
- Mr Graham Young requested that Council reflected on the last few days as the voice of iwi sent an overwhelming message to establish a Māori ward. He noted they had brought the consultation Council had said they wanted to them, to their council chambers. If there had been any doubt with what iwi wanted then look to New Plymouth District Council, South Taranaki District Council and the Taranaki Regional Council where iwi supported the establishment of Māori wards. The reasoning to delay the decision to 2024 was flawed and disrespectful to mana whenua when we have told you that we support this. There is a statutory obligation to work together but Council's actions and comments seem to undermine this and

any decision to not establish a Māori ward today would drive a wedge in the Stratford community, will cause disharmony and will make the Council look racist. History shows these failings all the time and history will not look kindly on a decision to not establish a Māori ward. This would trample the relationship you hold with us as it has thrown away trust and partnerships and shown us our actions and investments in the community potentially mean nothing to Council. You have the opportunity to correct this today, to show you have listened to iwi. Introduce a Māori ward for the Stratford District and lift the heavy cloud that is spreading over the Council. Do not eliminate us, let the voice of mana whenua be heard at this table.

- Mr Clive Tongaawhikau noted he could only speak what was in his heart and soul. He noted they are all there and embraced. People won't let go of the past and hold onto the wrong korero. He noted the importance of putting on the table your tīpuna, values and tikanga of the paper to move away from that and understand the people here. He urged Council to not be scared to give back to the whenua. He noted the changes he had seen in schools from the principals right down to the tamariki as he teaches in around 15 schools in the province. He noted iwi were not divided no matter what has been chucked at them, they love each other, they cry together and they move together and he noted they want to bring Council with them.

Representatives from Te Korowai o Ngāruahine and Te Runanga o Ngāti Maru presented to Council. Points noted in the presentation:

- Mr John Hooker noted that 250 years ago this was the rohe of the famed warrior and poet Tu Raukawa. His uri are in this room today. He was the eldest member of his whānau and each of the ruahine hapu descend from his siblings. He welcomed the industrious whānau of the other poet – Shakespeare. This community is one with a can do attitude where no hurdle is too great or insurmountable. He noted that six years ago, as an iwi, they were against Māori wards for a number of reasons but at that stage it was easier to fight the crown instead of looking at local government. Now the iwi is most definitely for Māori wards. He noted the relationship with the Taranaki Iwi Trust Board which related to eight of the iwi around the maunga. It is now time to embrace courage and it is now time to embrace maturity and undertake the right thing to do. He noted as a community we stood together following the horrific events in Christchurch where over 50 people lost their lives. We stood next to each other and shared our karakia for a combined purpose. At midnight last night there were 28 Councils that had now said yes to Māori wards. He noted that the Officer's recommendation at South Taranaki District Council had been to defer the Māori ward decision, however the Māori community said no, we are ready! A special meeting was called following the korero of our people and all 12 of the Councillors said yes. He noted his non-fail 'daughter test' had supported the establishment of Māori wards and it was now time to roll up our sleeves and get on with the job.
- Mr Hori Manuirangi spoke as the Chairperson of the Ngāruahine Iwi Authority which was created in 1989 as the result of the demolition of Māori affairs. He noted he had been denied learning of his culture at schools but was part of a household where the culture still prevailed. He noted the Treaty of Waitangi is just as relevant today as it was 181 years ago. He noted Mr Judd having been asked "why are you supporting all these Māoris, don't you realise we are all one people?" and Mr Judd replying "Yeah right which people? Lets all be Māori" and the conversation changed. Māori have a history dating back to the 1300s and they live by their tikanga and ancestral customary practices. He noted you could not sweep history and genealogy under the table and was here today to encourage Council to choose wisely, there is a way for us to be one people and we are seeing these changes coming about.
- Mr Anaru Marshall noted he had spoken to the trustees of Ngāti Maru and was asked to attend to represent them today. He noted he stood united today with the other iwi in the room for this proposition and encouraged Council to move forward and implement Māori wards in this District. He noted the trust's view was what the future looks like and where it is going, and he questioned if Council was going to move forward today or parting ways? He noted that a partnership model works best for Ngāti Maru, for Council and the wider Stratford community,

this will mean sharing the good times and the bad times and the responsibilities moving forward. Collectively we have seen how collaboration can work for all parties and he noted he would like to see that moving forward and being a part of collaboration would mean a seat at the Council table. He encouraged Council to implement Māori wards as it was the right thing to do.

- Mr Dinnie Moeahu noted he was not speaking as an Elected Member of New Plymouth District Council. He acknowledged his tīpuna and acknowledged those that were at the meeting today. He noted he had been emotional driving here today because this opportunity means so much for the future, for our people. He noted he was the son of a prolific advocate for our people and he was groomed to step forward now, on behalf of his people, and help educate and move forward. He acknowledged there is a time of difficult decisions coming up. He noted the impact the advertisement of an emergency meeting had for him and his children, that the foundations had been laid for this decision having seen wall after wall put up in the past. He noted his wish to normalise a decision like this. He noted Ngaere Gladdis, a woman reprimanded from her job for greeting customers with Kia ora and now it is normal. How in 1999 when the national anthem was sung for the first time in Māori in London and the singer was persecuted and ridiculed by her own country and now it is normal. Today is the opportunity to cement our place in history and he noted he believed we are so much better, stronger and powerful when working together. Our people here are people of dignity, integrity and humility and are extending their raukura to you all. It is a powerful example of what can be achieved together. Let us be the architects of change and solidify our place in our country's history. Change is not possible if change does not happen.
- Mr Peter Moeahu noted he had been on this journey for the last 20 years. He first broached this suggestion with New Plymouth District Council shortly after the bill had been passed but the decision was deferred and it was deferred again and again. He felt fortunate he had lived long enough to have seen New Plymouth, South Taranaki and the Regional Council embrace a Māori ward and encouraged Council to feel all the love filling this room at the moment and employed Council to establish a Māori ward.
- Mrs Patricia Coles noted a time she had accompanied her mother to a field growing charmolia as they had no greens for their dinner. They picked only a small basket and the farmer kicked them out. She grew up thinking they were thieves but it was an attitude at a time when many others suffered similar behaviours. You can stop that today and allow us to fill up our kete, how proud you can be today with the decision to fill the kete up with good stuff, do not let our grandchildren's kete be empty with a bad decision – your decision today will change attitudes for tomorrow.
- Mr Hemi Ngarewa noted that the people had spoken in support for a Māori ward. This kaupapa goes back 671 years and he noted he spoke on behalf of Tangahoe and Pakakohi. He noted in 1350 the Aotea waka travelled and arrived from Hawaiki having navigated the seas by stars, winds and tides at night and by the sun and the tide during the day. After landing and travelling across the country they arrived in Whakaahurangi where when the chief woke up he saw the stars – hence the name. They travelled and settled in Patea. Under legislation Ngāti Ruanui spreads from Whenakura to Whakaahurangi. Council are very highly intelligent people, he asked how eleven people can turn down one vote? He felt this was going to change and noted the District Mayor was a visionary person.

Representatives from Taranaki Māori Trust Board presented to Council. Points noted in the presentation:

- Mr Wharehoka Wano felt Council would make the decision as it is the right one. He noted he comes today first as uri of Taranaki Maunga. He noted the board spreads across the four councils in our rohe and acknowledged the three councils who had already made the decision to establish a Māori ward. He thanked the District Mayor for bringing this to the table under such urgency but noted this urgency has been over many generations. He noted that the letter presented by Ngāti Ruanui covers four iwi within the District and noted that he was here as the chair of the Taranaki Māori Board Trust and noted their support for a Māori ward. A formal letter was presented to the Mayor and was tabled at this meeting. He noted Māori are

a values based people and they will add value and that perhaps there has not been enough conversations with each other not just in the forums but in all of the big decisions we have to make as a region with environmental issues being some of the biggest issues we will face. They have strong aspirations with the three waters and these conversations will need to be had together. As the chair of the Taranaki Māori Trust Board and as the facilitator for the Iwi Chair Board – we tell you very clearly that we support Māori wards.

- Ms Puna Wano-Bryant noted she spoke as a member of the Ronogomou Community Action group which has been active in the establishment of Māori wards throughout the nation. She questioned if Council had listened to the mana whenua of this area as they are here, they are saying they want a Māori ward. This is sufficient engagement. If Councillors had followed the examples of the other three Councils in the region then they would have seen that they all had iwi support in the establishment of Māori wards. You asked iwi to prove themselves and answer a question and they have answered ‘yes give us the representation and voice we have fought and died for’. She pleaded Council not to hide behind misguided notions of community consultation – the law change removed these barriers, not to use numbers and majority rhetoric as it has never served a nation’s minority. The toroa, albatross, won’t land where there is disruption. Clear this space to let the sacred bird of peace land and seek refuge as only then can it rise on the unity and warmth and fly above the maunga again. Lets do our maunga proud. Establish a Māori ward in the Stratford District.

Mr Jordan Marshall-Wansbrough noted the following points:

- His deputation had been emailed and circulated to Council.
- He noted he was of Ngāti Maru, Te Atiawa tonu, Taranaki Tuturu, Ngā Ruahinerangi, Ngāti Ruanui and Ngā Rauru hoki descent.
- He noted his family had not lived in Taranaki for a very long time but as a former Youth Councillor for the Porirua District Council he wanted to emphasise what a Māori ward meant to him.
- He reiterated that Stratford needs a Māori ward.

Ms Sue Comrie noted the following points:

- She acknowledged the representatives of iwi, the wider community, the District Mayor and Councillors. She noted she had lived in the area for over 40 years, that her children had gone to school here and she had worked at both Avon and Stratford primary schools.
- She is part of a group of Taranaki Māori and Pākehā that have worked together for the establishment of Māori wards in the region and was here to continue the support to friends and whānau in the establishment of a Māori ward for Stratford.
- She questioned if there was anymore that sounded more like apartheid than white voices shouting down to the minority. She noted that there are those who get why this is needed then those who just don’t get it and question why Māori can’t just stand and get elected like others.
- Those who say ‘not yet’ do not understand that this is fundamentally a Māori country just as France is the country of the French. It is hidden by the English overlay and we are not taught about the colonial systems for what they were designed to do which is for the benefit of non-Māori. If we had been taught what had really happened and more about our own country then these conversations today would not be going on.
- As the processes are reassessed the fact that we don’t have Māori seats mandated by and for Māori is wrong. It is time to right the wrongs of the past, Māori should not feel like second class citizens and should not have to plead for equitability. It is no longer acceptable that anyone other than Māori decide what Māori need.
- It is time for Māori wards to become part of the fabric of Local Government. Decisions that do not include a Māori vote are not truly representative of our Māori.
- Māori wards are not the same as general seats. Māori who are elected to the general seats – their constituents are the general public. Māori elected to a Māori ward seat are for and to speak to the iwi and hapu who have nominated and voted for them. Democracy is about equal representation and not just domination by the majority. It is time for non- Māori to step aside and give Māori a seat at the table.

- Te Ao Māori can only add value. She urged Council to demonstrate courage and leadership and join the other three councils to normalise Māori wards. Bring us together as one people of Taranaki.

Fiona Kahukura noted that she had travelled from Taumarunui through to Fielding and Levin to support the kaupapa of Māori wards. She noted if Council had not heard this today then she worried for them.

The District Mayor noted the two letters that were tabled and circulated to councillors. He has personally spoken to representatives of each of the iwi and what we have heard today is reflective of what those phone calls entailed.

The Director – Corporate Services noted the following points:

- The report reflects on the decision making process and noted that very recently decisions by Council had been changed such as the location of the pool and the removal of the green waste collection at Tuesdays hearing. She noted a true leader can reflect on the past and embrace new information to relook at a decision.
- She noted if Council decided to have a Māori ward the proposal for the representation review would be due by 31 August 2021 which will look at wards, boundaries and possibility of electing some members at large. She confirmed there is time to complete this process.
- If Council decided to defer until 2024 then the representation review would be done at that time.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

2. THAT Council consider the following options for Māori representation at the decision making level of Council:

- Option 1: Establish a Māori ward that will have effect for the 2022 and 2025 local elections, and then continue until a further resolution takes effect.

McKAY/DALZIEL

Division

For 11

Against 0

CL/21/46

*Or*

- ~~Option 2: Do not establish a Māori ward, instead review this decision at the 2024 Representation Review.~~

- Councillor McKay noted she was the perfect picture of pākehā white privilege and her view of the world had had her thinking she could sit at the table on behalf of the whole community. She noted she is open minded and caring and knew she would always have the right intentions at the centre of what she does. She noted she was no longer naive enough to truly believe that she could make the right decision for her entire community – because she was not her entire community. She has different beliefs, lives a different life and acknowledged the community is made of many different cultures, different genders, different ages and the list goes on. She noted this was why diversity was needed at the council table, because without diversity it was not truly representing its entire community. She noted sweeping this position under the radar was no longer acceptable by those people who have elected them. She noted there had been justifications for the current position by saying Council had not said no, she felt just as much damage had been done as if they had said no. She noted it was time to hear the views of all Councillors on their formal position and noted that if Councillors were going to say no then to formally note that. She clarified several arguments opposing a Māori ward: one seat not

being enough, should we be giving every culture a seat, that Stratford does not have a large Māori population, that we are all one people and this shouldn't be established on race and that Council did not consult with its community. She gave her absolute support to the establishment of a Māori ward for the 2022 elections and thanked the Māori community for their unified, dignified, inclusive and loving approach to seeing a better future for their culture.

- Councillor Dalziel spoke in support of the motion and noted he had supported this since it was first spoken about. He noted one of the key reasons on the introduction of Māori wards was due to Māori being under represented in Local Government throughout New Zealand. One of the key issues is because they are Māori and that reflects a view in society that has resulted in Māori not being at the table where they should be. He noted there had been an argument that the establishment of a Māori ward was not democratic and clarified that until all parts of our society were treated equally then it is not a democratic society. He noted this debate was not dissimilar to the debate 25 years ago regarding women in senior management roles and in governance and he noted the progress that has happened since then and the enormous influence women have brought. The Māori perspective will be an enriching one and their contribution at the table will be huge and will help level the playing field. This is a partnership and to be able to have a true partnership then a seat at the table is needed. Iwi have significant economic strength and it is in everyone's interest to have Māori at the table as part of the decision making. He noted his disappointment that it had come to the very last day for this decision when the opportunity was presented to Council a couple of months ago when the majority voted against revisiting it. He urged Councillors not to waste this opportunity as it is the right thing to do.
- Councillor Boyde noted that when iwi presented on Tuesday there had been no correspondence from the other iwi at that point. He noted he had not been supportive for a number of reasons but there was support received from 8 iwi to support a Māori ward. He did not want to see a negative effect on relationships or a negative impact on operational issues, consents or the District Plan. He noted that a strong relationship was vital. He noted the need to remove emotion and provide leadership to the community and as quoted today he noted he was happy to become an architect of the future and noted his support for Option 1 – the establishment of a Māori ward for the Stratford District.
- Councillor Harris noted it was clear Council and iwi have a common goal and the mutual benefits in the partnerships were spoken about on Tuesday for Māori and the community as a whole. She noted the importance of being provided with all the information to be able to make an informed decision and felt like it had now been provided. She had questioned other forms of Māori representation but she acknowledged that this was for the Māori community to decide and felt she was not there to drive the car but to provide the vehicle. She believes this is the right way forward and she noted the amount of laughter and love that has been felt within the room today. She was looking forward to sharing more of that and noted her support for option 1 – the establishment of a Māori ward.
- The Deputy Mayor noted that this was a historic meeting and felt it was the start of a long process to address Māori representation. He noted his support for Option 1 – the establishment of a Māori ward.
- Councillor Erwood noted he had never been against a Māori ward but some of his decisions for not voting to establish a ward had been based on council staff being in contact with all seven iwi and saw those relationships travelling well, he felt iwi were happy with this relationship and he was concerned that one seat would cause division between all seven iwi. He noted he had concerns about the lack of consultation with the community, however noted he wanted to see relationships between iwi and Council continue to grow and therefore noted his support for Option 1 – establishment of a Māori ward.
- Councillor Coplestone noted he had not been in support of this initially and he still has concerns that he has raised with people. He noted he had been conscious of the lack of consultation with the Eastern Taranaki residents, he felt it would be a long road to convince some of residents and requested support and help in that process. He noted his support for Option 1 – the establishment of a Māori ward.

- Councillor Sandford noted he had previously not supported this as he felt one was not needed, if you wanted to stand you stood as an individual and are elected by the ratepayers, however he noted that today his eyes were opened. He noted how impressed he had been with the speakers and the young Councillors who have shown what we can achieve together. He noted he was looking forward to meeting with you all and more engagement with iwi representatives.
- Councillor Webby noted she believed we were one people, she was elected for the people and she has listened to the people. She noted that everyone had come together today as one people and she will be voting for option 1 – the establishment of a Māori ward.
- Councillor Jones noted this whole process had been a failure of time. A decision had been previously made stating more time was needed, he noted personally he wanted to know the reasons behind establishing a Māori ward. He noted he was concerned this had been left till the last day and felt that some will view it that Council has been pushed into this with others feeling Council has made the right decision.
- The District Mayor noted he had thought long and hard about this issue and had tried to form a view that is principled, informed and offered a way forward for the whole community while weighing up the benefits and the negatives arising from a Māori ward. He noted he had reflected on 20 years of experience with this Council and on his relationships with iwi across many forums across the region. He noted his experience with iwi had been a very positive, productive and enriching experience and noted his view that working collaboratively and inclusively brings the best and most productive outcomes. He noted the most rewarding decisions he has been part of in Council are those that have given people, or a group or organisation, the opportunity to do something, to move forward with their ideas and achieve their aspirations. The opportunity to establish a Māori ward would allow us to move ward and fulfil the aspiration of tangata whenua to have a seat at the Council table. He acknowledged this would not fix all the issues facing Māori but it was a step in the right direction. He noted that he had heard the comment ‘stuff the treaty, the council never signed it’ and acknowledged the fact that this had been signed by the crown with the partnership obligations enshrined in all law including the Local Government Act which states to improve opportunities for Māori to contribute to local government decision making – how can they contribute without a guaranteed place at the table? He noted the significant investments and commitments made by iwi in our District such as the Mountain House, Dawson Falls and the Te Wera Forest and asked why would you not want to build relationship to create more opportunities together. He noted as community leaders, elected to do what is best for the community, means sometimes you are at the front of the bunch and sometimes slightly ahead which can make you feel vulnerable. He urged Councillors to overcome that feeling, apply your knowledge and principles and make your own judgements. He reiterated that Councillors had all heard the call for a Māori ward and asked Councillors to keep an open mind and make the best decision for the future of the community.

*A division was called:*

*Those voting for the motion: Councillors: Boyde, Coplestone, Dalziel, Erwood, Harris, Jones, McKay, Sandford, Webby, the Deputy Mayor and the District Mayor.*

*Those voting against the motion: Nil*



*The meeting closed at 12.38pm*

N C Volzke  
**CHAIRMAN**

Confirmed this 8<sup>th</sup> day of June 2021.

N C Volzke  
**DISTRICT MAYOR**