

MINUTES

Policy and Services Committee

F22/55/05 – D23/12257

Date: Tuesday 28 March 2023 at 3.00PM

Venue: Council Chambers, 63 Miranda Street, Stratford

Present

The Deputy Mayor – M McKay (the Chairperson), the District Mayor N C Volzke, Councillors: S J Beck, G W Boyde, A M C Dudley, J M S Erwood, A K Harris, E E Hall, V R Jones, M McKay, C M Tongaawhikau, M J Watt

In attendance

The Chief Executive – Mr S Hanne, the Director – Corporate Services – Mrs T Radich, the Director – Assets – Mrs V Araba, the Director – Environmental Services – Mr B Sutherland, the Acting Director – Community Services – Mr C Julie, the Committee Advisor and Executive Assistant – Mrs E Bishop, the Communications Manager – Ms G Gibson, the Sustainability Advisor – Mrs V Dombroski (*part meeting*), the Community Development Officer – Mrs A Kingston (*part meeting*), the Customer and Leisure Services Manager – Mrs A Mathews (*part meeting*), the Aquatic Services Team Leader – Mr R Naicker (*part meeting*), the HR & Governance Advisor – Mrs C Reynolds (*part meeting*), the Services Asset Manager – Mr J Cooper (*part meeting*), the Roading Engineer – Mrs D Taplin, the Projects Manager/Engineer – Mr S Taylor (*part meeting*), the Parks and Reserves Officer – Mrs M McBain (*part meeting*), the Property Officer – Mrs S Flight, Mrs A Woodhead (Stratford Flyers Swim School, *part meeting*), Mr D Hancock (Stratford Flyers Swimming Club, *part meeting*) and one member of the media (Stratford Press).

Via audio visual link: Mr Kelvin Wright (Venture Taranaki, *part meeting*)

1. Welcome

The opening karakia was read.

The Deputy Mayor welcomed the Chief Executive, Councillors, staff, and the media.

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

2. Apologies

An apology was received from Councillor W J Sandford

Recommendation

THAT the apologies be received.

ERWOOD/HALL
Carried
P&S/23/35

3. Announcements

The Chief Executive noted a re-print of the Swimming Pool Fees and Charges had been tabled. The notable change is the swim school lane hire and entry fees being separated to ensure the charges are clearer. The amended tabled will be considered with Item 10.

4. Declarations of members interest

Elected members were asked 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 Policy and Services Committee meetings, including Hearings, was attached.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

6.1 Policy & Services Committee – 28 February 2023 D23/7711 (PE) D23/8213 (Open) Page 11

Recommendation

THAT the minutes of the Policy and Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 28 February 2023, including the public excluded section, be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

VOLZKE/BOYDE
Carried
P&S/23/36

The Committee Advisor and Executive Assistant undertook to make the following amendments:

- Page 14, item 11. Councillor Hall noted she had asked if it was possible to have an enforcement policy without the resources to enforce it, which the Chief Executive had confirmed it would be. Add to minutes.

The Property Officer, Parks and Reserve Officer and Project Engineer/Manager joined the meeting at 3.03pm.

7. Matters Outstanding

D16/47 Page 22

Recommendation

THAT the Matters Outstanding be received.

BECK/HARRIS
Carried
P&S/23/37

The Chief Executive noted the following points:

- The Street Numbering project is yet to be brought back to elected members.
- The Future of the Page Street swimming pool complex conversation will be held once the Annual Plan discussions have concluded.
- The request for the LGOIMA requestor details to be shared have resulted in a change in process where the requestor will be informed their details will be published, however there will be the option for them to keep their details private. This has been implemented this month.
- Officers have added the croquet club request to their work programmes.
- A report on the Kingheim Mountain Bike tracks will be brought to elected members at a later date.

Questions/Points of Clarification

- The District Mayor noted he had written to the Stratford Croquet Club as requested by Council noting that officers would further investigate council owned sites and encouraging the club to explore non-council owned sites further. The club had replied stating there were no suitable sites and the Mayor had reiterated that council had requested they show they have explored other options and discussed this with other sporting codes.

8. Information Report – Economic Development Quarterly Report – Quarter Two
D23/9640 Page 23

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

DUDLEY/HARRIS
Carried
P&S/23/38

Mr Wright, Venture Taranaki, noted the question regarding the value added from investment to Venture Taranaki had been detailed in the report and showed over the last five years there had been a 208% return on the investment into the region.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified that Brook Sabin, Stuff, was taken on a full trip around the maunga and included a stop in Stratford.
- Mr Wright noted he was unsure if a Stratford business would be showcased in the third season of power up. He noted the final presentation in terms of what will be involved in this is currently being put together.
- Mr Wright noted the entire leadership team would be presenting to council on Venture Taranaki's focus for the upcoming year and the team would provide a more comprehensive overview for all council's questions.
- Mr Wright clarified that the branching out programme helped connect land owners with the intelligence and support they require to grow the new crops. This includes scientific data and environmental knowledge, the normal functions of the enterprise team and planning for post production including support in looking into creations of unique products. Venture Taranaki also looks at funding or vouchers for professional advice to help take the venture to the next level.

The Services Asset Manager and Roding Engineer joined the meeting at 3.11pm.

9. Information Report – Reserve Balances and Movements – 2021/22
D23/10029 Page 51

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

TONGAAWHIKAU/BOYDE
Carried
P&S/23/39

Recommended Reason

To inform the Policy and Services Committee of the current reserves balances and a summary of the movements from the previous year.

The Director – Corporate Services noted the following points:

- This report is brought to council every year after the annual report has been finalised and highlights movements in reserves for the previous financial year.
- There are a variety of reserves that are on council's balance sheets and these all have different purposes.

The Community Development Officer left the meeting at 3.13pm.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified that the three water reserves will be netted off against council's debt relating to three waters on takeover date which will leave these at a zero balance.
- The District Mayor noted that the cash balance was approximately \$8 million but the strategy was to have at least \$6 million in term deposits at all times, and questioned if the surplus should be used to reduce debt? Mrs Radich noted that at this particular date there was surplus cash, however this varies every month in terms of revenue received and expenditure going out and is also impacted on the quarterly rates payment. It requested that this limit be referred to the Audit and Risk committee for review.

10. Decision Report – Fees and Charges Schedule 2023/24

D23/10539 Page 57

Deputations were approved for Aimee Woodhead and Daniel Hancock to speak to council regarding this item.

Aimee Woodhead – Flyers Swim School

Points noted in presentation:

- This presentation is due to the recent discussions about the pool budget leading to the learn to swim school and club being discussed.
- She noted the options at the pool are to make positive choices and to make it a place that is engaging with interesting programmes that people can access at a reasonable price. It needs to get people through the door!
- She noted an increase to driving up lane hire fees will mean people cannot afford to attend the local swim school.
- Hawera learn to swim is \$95 a term for ten lessons and New Plymouth Aquatic Centre is \$110. Stratford Flyers charge \$132 which includes pool entry. She noted other private swim schools charged \$180 - \$230 a term. It was noted there are 600 learn to swim students in the New Plymouth Aquatic Centre and 300 in Hawera. There are approximately 600 learn to swim students with the Stratford Flyers at the moment with 175 squad swimmers who swim multiple times a week.
- Council run swim schools have a reputation for their level of service and provide no pathway to competitive squads.
- She noted she worked hard to ensure tamariki were in groups that suit them, the instructors are paid well and have a good work environment and she worked hard to be a good employer.
- It was noted there had been issues with the envibe system and the payment monthly as the invoicing has been far less than what should have been. She had been advised the contract was not a governance matter but noted she could not continue with the money not being collected correctly.
- She felt that if the swim school was lost due to price increases then the instructors will be lost who are the backbone of the community and are loyal to the flyers. A council run swim school will be nowhere near what is currently offered and the reputation and numbers will drop.
- An economical management system needs to be put in place to add value and would be a positive way forward. The pool needs to be marketed as a beautiful pool!
- There are 27 instructors involved with the Flyers Swim School and succession planning in place. This has grown from 60 students to 600 and continues to grow 10% a year. It is also established in Inglewood at the primary school there.
- It was noted that the Ako Wai Charitable Organisation had also been established for the wider community to get funding for lessons and then finds the students requiring this.
- There are more than 40 competitive swimmers in the squads at the moment, and other clubs are declining. Within this club there are multiple national title holders.
- Holiday programmes are currently being organised for the squads.
- She urged councillors to hear the plea to keep this affordable and hold onto awesome staff.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified that both Hawera and New Plymouth are council run services.
- It was noted that issue regarding the payment system was not able to be discussed as part of this deputation.
- The District Mayor questioned how the Flyers intended to deal with the \$20 per hour lane hire fee, if it was to be absorbed or passed onto the swimmer? It was clarified that this fee was to be applied to the swim school only and not the swimming club and would be on top of pool entry. Mrs Woodhead

questioned how this was fair as it was double dipping? She noted one of her values is providing affordable lessons and felt it would be letting the community down if she thought it was ok to pass that charge on as she was already charging higher fees than elsewhere. She noted that it could mean that running at a council facility is no longer appropriate.

- It was clarified that the current fee for learn to swim was \$132 and included entry fee. This is collected all together and split out.
- The Deputy Mayor asked if Mrs Woodhead disagreed with the fee or could propose another level of fee? Mrs Woodhead noted the fee didn't need to be increased but what was needed was to look at what could be approved and how people could be brought in. Stratford is growing and to make it more desirable they shouldn't be adding a lane fee. This sort of fee had been proposed in the past and what will result is annoyed people who can't access a service they have accessed in the past.
- The Deputy Mayor questioned if the facility should be offered at no charge and Mrs Woodhead noted she worked really hard to get numbers for the entry fee and felt it was sufficient charge. She noted the Flyers was a small business and it had been hard after two years of Covid-19.

Daniel Hancock – Stratford Flyers Swimming Club

Points noted in presentation:

- This presentation was to reinforce the points made previously but to offer a different perspective from the Stratford Flyers Swimming Club.
- He noted the newspaper article mentioned the swimming club being subsidised and proposed the swim school could be taken in-house.
- He noted that the price increase won't affect the club financially but would indirectly impact it.
- The swim school runs from aquatots right through to competitive swimming. Swimmers can see the progression, how it works and how they get to the next level and the end goal of competitive swimming.
- Instructors at the school work under the guidance of Aimee and they all have the same skill set to get those kids to where they need to be as a competitive swimmer.
- At present there are 730 kids going through the swim schools and swim squads. Of those, 50-60 are part of the swimming club with most of them doing two to six sessions a week depending on their level. There are also about 100 kids in the development and fitness section who do sessions twice a week. There are 580 kids accessing the pool about once a week. This equates to around 1,000 pool entries a week for about 48 weeks of the year.
- With about 1,300 kids in the district the swim school and club have got around 730 of those for learn to swim. It is great for them to learn to swim and to have them coming through having had proper instruction.
- About 10% of the swim school are coming through for competitive swimming which is really good compared to surrounding districts. Hawera who has a council run learn to swim set up have about 15 competitive swimming, New Plymouth has a lot of private learn to swim groups as well as the council run one and has an estimated 2,000 kids in learn to swim programmes but their competitive swimming club only has about 50-70 kids which is a very poor conversion rate compared to Stratford.
- The Flyers Swim School provides a pathway and he noted his concern that without this the swimming club will disappear.
- A charge such as the lane hire will need to be passed on and will limit the amount of people who can do the courses, lower numbers will result in a need for higher entry fee and less people mean revenue will go down.
- If council takes over the learn to swim school then a swim coach will need to be hired and that will cost swimmers which means competitive swimmers will probably go elsewhere.
- He noted Aimee was all about getting as many people swimming as possible hence keeping the fees as low as possible and that is what the club tries to achieve as well.
- He noted the previous pool manager had restricted swimmers from doing learn to swim and our swimmers had to go to a small school pool. As a result learn to swim died in Stratford which also crushed the numbers in competitive swimming.
- He understood the pressures and the need to keep rates down but noted an increase in fees is unwanted and to put the blame on the increases at the swimming pool on the club is incorrect as they do pay entry fees and without them the deficit will be a lot more.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Boyde noted that the swimming club had not been mentioned in the Stratford Press and questioned if it had been interpreted that way? Mr Hancock noted that there is huge confusion that the swim school and the swimming club is the same organisation, however he noted you need to be a member of a club to be a competitive swimmer and that swimmers transitioned from the swim school. The Stratford Swimming Club had combined with the Flyers Swimming Club and since then they get put in the same basket. He had answered comments regarding no sport getting looked after like swimming in Stratford that they do pay entry fees.
- The District Mayor requested clarification of the relationship between the swimming squad and who operates the advanced training and if the coaching role was a paid position? Mr Hancock noted that the coaching role was part of where the school and club run together. The coach is paid by the swimmers involved. He noted the Flyers had been set up when the Stratford pool had been first covered in an attempt to allow swimmers to go back to their respective clubs for their competitive swimming to ensure clubs in Taranaki survived. He noted if the coach was funded solely out of competitive swimming this would be a colossal amount to fund. Mrs Woodhead clarified as a coach to the swimming club she is an independent contractor and without this the club would be looking to bring in a coach at a cost of between \$50,000 to \$60,000. The swim school is a completely separate standalone business.
- It was reiterated that the swimmers pay for the coach. The swimming club is about having a club so that the swimmers can compete nationally and does not hire staff. He also reiterated that while the club was not directly impacted by the increases it would indirectly impact the club if costs were passed on.

Aimee Woodhead and Daniel Hancock left the meeting at 3.45pm.

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.

HALL/BODYE
Carried
P&S/23/40

2. ~~THAT the fees and charges schedule 2023/24 be approved.~~

Recommended Reason

The Fees and Charges impact the Annual Plan 2023/24 financial budgets, which is currently being prepared.

The Director – Corporate Services noted the following points:

- The fees and charges will lead directly into the development of the revenue for the Annual Plan budget for 2023/24. It is anticipated that a draft Annual Plan will be brought to the Policy and Services Committee in April or May.
- Some of the more significant changes are the updates to building control to ensure there is a more accurate representation of costs incurred and a universal increase of \$10 on dog registration and license fees due to ongoing increases to the costs of delivery of animal control.
- An updated table of the swimming pool fees and charges was tabled as there were additional changes made following the agenda being produced.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified that the entry fee was a separate fee to the external swim school lane hire charge. This would be charged in addition. Councillor Boyde noted it was strange to set a lane hire fee and then charge entry on top of that.
- It was clarified that the private lane hire fee of \$25 included entry fee.
- It was clarified that the lane fee (including entry) for a private lane hire had no maximum for people to use that lane but that the hire was dependent on the availability at the time.
- It was clarified the external swim school fee of \$4 per entry was the same as the standard casual entry fee. The Chief Executive noted that historically swim school discounts for concession cards had not been available as no lane fees had been set. However if the set up went back to the scenario where council charges the entry fee separate to the operator then he would encourage not

setting the fees different for swim school or casual entry as there would be no visibility of who was entering for lessons or a casual swim.

- The District Mayor noted that a concession card would bring the entry fee for a child to \$3.50 an entry so at \$4 it would be dearer to go to swimming lessons.

Points noted in discussion:

Swimming Pool

- Councillor Boyde noted he did not support the spectator fee of \$2 per person. He felt spectators added another set of eyes to the pool and felt the facility would become another babysitting service if this fee was introduced.
- Councillor Dudley supported those concerns and noted she was a spectator who attended swimming lessons and felt the excuse that spectators may use the public toilets was unfair as there is no charge to use the toilet facilities at netball or rugby. She felt there should not be a charge if you are attending lessons to sit and watch but felt if the caregiver was to be there for over an hour with recreational swimming then it was ok.

The Property Officer left the meeting at 3.54pm.

- The Customer and Service Manager noted that a rough calculation had been done for the spectator fee revenue based on the number of children who have accessed the facility. Based on one spectator per every two kids it would be 1,500 bringing in \$3000 of revenue. This was calculated on the period the facility has been opened (since October), however the numbers were the same for the full year at the old facility. It was difficult to calculate as how the total numbers for the year would look was still unknown.
- Councillor Beck questioned whether without parents it would cost more for council staffing? It was noted there was the potential to have more first aid incidents if parents are not in the pool with the children but that most spectators are passively watching from the bench or are on their phones.

The Parks and Reserves Officer and Services Asset Manager left the meeting at 3.58pm.

- Councillor Harris supported no spectator fee full stop. She noted people needed to be encouraged to watch swimming as an extra pair of eyes. She felt a spectator fee would complicate matters and require increased staffing levels.
- It was clarified the 3,000 children who had accessed the pool since October were casual users and did not include the children with the swim school.
- The numbers of caregivers was recorded as they are recorded as a zero dollar mark upon entry was just over 3,500.
- Councillor Hall supported removing the spectator charge.
- Councillor Watt supported removing the spectator charge but also supported increasing the caregivers charge to the full adult entry fee.
- **It was agreed to remove the spectator fee.**
- Councillor Boyde noted his support for the caregiver charge as they were getting into the pool and using the facility. He felt \$2 was fair.
- Councillor Hall noted that a caregiver fee was required. She noted the premise of not having a fee encouraged parents to get in to the pool as it was less desirable to get wet and into togs at an older age but this was countered with the enjoyment of swimming with your children. She supported the fee but suggested an increase from \$2 to closer to the current \$5 adult entry fee.
- Councillor Jones agreed that the caregiver is using the pool, and acknowledged the comments regarding the adult charge but as the caregiver is looking after a child and not swimming on their own he did not support a full adult charge.
- Councillor Erwood supported the comments relating to the caregiver fee and noted his support at keeping this at \$2.
- Councillor Beck supported increasing the caregivers fee as he expected a person supervising the child to pay the same fee as if they were swimming.
- It was clarified that swim school instructors were not classified as caregivers.
- It was suggested that a change could be made to *50% of adult entry fee* which would be \$2.50.
- It was clarified that a caregiver was defined as supervising a child under 8 years old. If they are going in with a child older than that then they would be paying full price. No caregiver for a child under 8 means that child cannot swim.

- The Deputy Mayor agreed with Councillor Watt as the caregiver still had access to the full facility but noted they were not able to swim with their own freedom and therefore supported an increase to \$2.50.
- **The Caregiver entry fee will be amended to 50% of adult entry.**
- Lane Hire for External Swim School
 - Councillor Boyde recognised that the two speakers had highlighted a lot of stuff around costs and participation. He noted all sports had had massive increases over everything and a price increase was not just for the pool. He supported the introduction of the lane hire fee. He noted that he had heard today that the pool required \$500 per hour of operating costs which includes staff, power, heating and chemicals so supported the introduction of this fee as it was only \$2 per swimmer per lane for a lane of 10 swimmers over the hour. As the governance team it was important to make sure they do what is right for the pool and council needs to work hard to make some serious savings at the pool.
 - Councillor Jones noted that Mr Hancock had made the point that the Flyers Swim School was potentially undercharging as the cheapest privately run school in the district so there was the potential to increase the fee. The lane hire fee will be passed onto the users and he was unsure at what point would they stop coming.
 - Councillor Dudley noted her opposition to the lane hire fee. This is a small low socio economic town and it is important to teach kids to swim as national drowning rates are so high. The fee will go to the kids and they will miss out.
 - Councillor Erwood supported the fee. He noted that sadly there are increases everywhere, everyone has rates, insurance and costs increasing. It is a right that everyone has the right to learn to swim but the Flyers were taking it to the next step where they are an elite sport. Kids have the option to carry on with it and so do their parents.
 - Councillor Hall supported the lane hire fee. She acknowledged the ownership of the asset but also the passion and skill set base in the learn to swim for our district which was clear from the speakers today. She acknowledged that as a parent things do cost money, prices are increasing across the board with everything and there is a facility here that council needs to pay for. She noted this will still only be a contribution towards the costs to deliver and felt there would likely be a price increase for users as they are likely undercharging for the service.
 - Councillor Beck supported the lane hire fee and noted that Mrs Woodhead had said Stratford has one of the best facilities around and that isn't possible without a price attached to it.
 - Councillor Tongaawhikau supported the fee. He noted that councillors responsibility comes back to the community and if council cannot justify its worth then it will loose at the end of the day. He noted he sees an asset that we have and the amount that has cost to get to this point and how much it will cost to continue to stay the course. He acknowledged the passion and love from the two speakers and agreed with a lot of things they said, however for our tamariki and mokopuna in the community it is important that council has their best interests at heart and don't leave them with a debt. He noted each time the kids are taken to McDonalds it was a cost to use an external facility to cook and provide food.
 - The District Mayor noted that there was a small percentage of the population who use the pool with about 90% of the population not using it, however he acknowledged the group who do use it do use it a lot. Those users have a perception that it is expensive for them to use, however the other 90% who still pay for it don't use it at all! He did not begrudge that as his children and grandchildren use it but he felt that should be taken into account when considering who pays for the cost of this asset. There are pensioners and beneficiaries who pay rates and are really feeling financial strain at the moment. The flyers have a small group of advanced swimmers who can't afford to have a full coach of their own so they use the swim school to provide the same service. He felt there should be a lane fee but was unsure if \$20 per hour was the correct amount. He acknowledged the point that there was a potential detrimental effect and that people may not use the service and that is a risk factor that needs to be evaluated. He noted other private swim schools ranged in price from \$155 - \$230 and in comparison to those the flyers were not necessarily so expensive the the fees could not be increased. He noted that whatever was not received in way of revenue would impact the ratepayers.
- **Approved \$20 per hour Swim School Lane Hire Fee**
- **Approved Spousal Entry be amended to Partner**

The Customer and Leisure Service Manager and Aquatic Services Team Leader left the meeting at 4.22pm.

Animal Control

- Councillor Harris noted her opposition to a universal fee increase of \$10 across all dog registration fees. She noted that Good and Select Dog owners equate to about 17% increase but that the rural dogs were having a 28% increase. Around 58% of registered dogs were rural dogs and over the last three years only 21% of dogs impounded were from a rural area. She noted she would support an increase that was more in-alignment with the percentages.
- It was noted a \$10 universal increase was the result of a recommendation from the Section 17a reviews.
- The District Mayor noted his agreement that the increase should be apportioned across the different categories and felt it was the ones who don't meet the good owner categories who should bare the brunt of the increase.
- Councillor Harris clarified that with the percentages applied the select dog owners would be looking at a 17% increase and two or more rural dogs would look at about \$5-\$7 increase.
- It was requested that the total amount proposed to be collected with the proposed universal \$10 increased be allocated out across the fees in proportion. This will not change the total amount collected but will be more accurately applied.
- It was noted that the 2022/23 Annual Report showed revenue was \$145,000 for Animal Control and the total cost was \$227,000. This amendment would bring in approximately \$20,000 additional revenue.
- It was noted that it was important to note that there is a public good component to this activity as it keeps non-dog owners safe from the dogs, including dogs that may not be registered in this area.

Cemetery

- Councillor Boyde noted he would like to see work done around the cemetery and charges as there seems to be a bit of difference between Stratford neighbouring areas and he wanted to ensure Stratford was in line with the neighbouring districts. Mrs Radich noted the South Taranaki District Council have not yet adopted their fees and charges but have indicated all fees and charges will be increased.
- The Deputy Mayor supported an increase in cemetery fees. Costs are going up and the cemetery is extending and this would provide an opportunity to recover costs. She suggested an increase for a plot to \$2,500 (compared to New Plymouth at \$2,649) and internment to \$2,000.

The Sustainability Advisor left the meeting at 4.33pm.

- Councillor Erwood supported an increase.
- Councillor Hall acknowledged that the times these fees are accessed is a hard time for anyone and any increase would be a challenge. However an increase is necessary.
- **It was approved to do a 10% increase on all cemetery fees excluding the infant and stillborn charges.**

Miscellaneous

- It was clarified that Victoria Park Sports Ground hire is more expensive as it is a premier field. All codes pay the same for the other fields.
- Councillor Dudley requested a 24 hour rate for the War Memorial Centre and Centennial Rest Rooms be included and suggested a discounted 24 hour rate.

Recommendations

2. THAT the fees and charges schedule 2023/24 be approved, including tabled amendments for the swimming pool, and with the following amendments:
 - Lane hire external swim school provider to be displayed under separate heading
 - Proposed spectator fee be deleted
 - Caregiver /supervisor for under 8 be set and displayed at 50% of adult entry fee
 - Decision for dog fees be suspended until adoption of Annual Plan
 - Cemetery fees be increased by 10% across board, except where they apply to infant and stillborn burials.

BOYDE/HALL
Carried
1 against
P&S/23/41

Note this item was left to lie on the table at the Policy and Services Committee Meeting on 28 February 2023.

Recommendations

1. THAT the report be received.

HARRIS/DUDLEY
Carried
P&S/23/42

2. THAT the Committee approves the erection of fencing around the wastewater pond

3. THAT the committee approve the allocation of funding to erect the fencing in this financial year but with an expressed maximum of \$175,000 and a requirement for this matter to be re-presented to council with an updated quote if tenders exceeded this budget.

BOYDE/HALL
Division
For 10
Against 1
P&S/23/43

Recommended Reason

To minimise the Council's exposure to risk of injury or death as a result of falling or drowning in the wastewater treatment ponds.

Points noted in discussion:

- Councillor Boyde noted that he had been struggling with this decision purely because he felt the biggest need was around the lake at Victoria Park. But he noted he understood this was proposed to make all practical steps to make the wastewater ponds safe. The current fence is not fit for purpose. He noted that if council is going to do this then it needs to be done at minimal cost while taking all steps to ensure it complies. His biggest concern was the huge amount of money required to do this after no issues in the past 80 years. He questioned if council was still liable if something was to go wrong? The Chief Executive noted that potentially there would still be liability for council but this makes sure an effort has been made and the mitigating circumstances were taken into account for this situation.
- The District Mayor noted that health and safety legislation meant liability would never be removed; however, council can mitigate the circumstances to reduce or eliminate the risk. There is always an element of liability. He noted he had initially been opposed to this proposal as it is not the highest risk with council assets, however as an owner of a public facility council needs to be responsible for that and ask is it safe for people for whatever reason they are there for. He noted he now supported construction of a fence around the wastewater ponds and that due to the funding being sourced from underspent project funds there was no immediate impact on ratepayers. He requested officers take a minimalistic approach with basic construction as appearance is inconsequential. The fence needs to be function and a reasonable attempt to keep children and intruders out.
- Councillor Hall supported the building of the fence. She noted council had tragically been given an example of what could happen without a fence. Being a council owned asset it was important to ensure it is safe and secure from the public. She noted there were two factors to think about – the risk to the community and council liability. Where the lake is placed is quite a fair way away but little people can walk great distances when motivated to do so and these are a risk for our children. She felt council would be remiss if it didn't build a fence. She requested clarification on best practice for the components of the fence and requested that it be done properly but as cheaply as possible.
- Councillor Erwood noted he was sitting on the fence for this decision as it was a lot of money. He had researched the Gore incident and noted that while council can be mindful of parental responsibility kids can wander off. He supported the building of the fence but suggested fixing what is currently there and adding to the top of the existing fence which could reduce costs.

- Councillor Watt noted his opposing view. He felt this argument to build a fence could be used in other areas such as the Victoria Park lake. He felt this did not rank highly for the risk of liability or the risk of people drowning. All incidents are different and while council cannot predict what a court would decide he noted council could be spending \$175,000 to mitigate the risk of a \$100,000 penalty if a similar case occurred. He noted the same risk could apply for other areas including those council does not have responsibility for.
- Councillor Beck supported a 1.8-meter high fence, but not a security fence as the cost for that would be colossal. He thought deer fencing for that height could be completed for half the quoted price or that the work could be done in stages such as beginning at the walkway side. The Deputy Mayor noted that completing the work in stages would lose efficiencies.
- Councillor Harris supported the erection of a fence but with a minimalistic approach.
- It was clarified that this job would go out for tender as per the procurement policy. The quoted price was to get an idea of the cost for the decision to be brought to council. Councillor Harris requested that if the tenders exceed the quoted price of \$175,000 then this be brought back for further discussion.
- Councillor Jones noted that Health and Safety is about what is practical and what is reasonable. Anything is practical at a price but is it reasonable to ask ratepayers for the funding to build a fence above the maximum fine that may come out, he questioned if council was willing to foot that cost if it comes out. He noted practically council can do this, however he noted he was struggling with if he found it reasonable.
- Councillor Erwood questioned if there was an appetite for add to the existing fence, the Chief Executive noted that this was an operational decision and the tenderer may not agree this was the best option which would require the decision to be brought back to the Policy and Services Committee.
- Councillor Boyde noted the views of council had been expressed and he would leave the operational side up to management, however he noted council would not be happy if it was wrong.

A division was called.

Those voting for the resolution: the District Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, Councillors; Beck, Boyde, Dudley, Erwood, Hall, Harris, Jones and Tongaawhikau

Those voting against the resolution: Councillor Watt

12. Monthly Reports

12.1 Assets Report
D23/9538 Page 87

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

ERWOOD/DUDLEY
Carried
P&S/23/44

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified that a lot of the performance measures that have not been achieved are due to timing such as surveys and road maintenance that has not yet been completed. However the Director – Assets noted that the waste water recommended target time had not been achieved due to contractor resourcing.
- It was clarified there had been no update from the MRF centre regarding the contamination rates due to their resourcing issues.
- It was noted that 2.3, *Mangaehu and Brewer Roads* should have read \$500 per km for the maintenance grading.
- It was clarified the new pool facility discharges into the wastewater system so a resource consent was not required.
- The District Mayor noted the photos of Mangaehu and Brewer Road give weight and credibility to the review of the forestry rate when it comes to setting the rates for the upcoming year.

- The District Mayor noted he had attended a workshop with Waka Kotahi last week where an update on the Speed Management Plan was discussed. He noted it was likely that the changes around schools and marae were to go ahead but the 80km speed limit for the open roads was unlikely to proceed with the exception of 1% of the highest risk areas.

12.2 Community Services Report
D23/9563 Page 108

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

ERWOOD/BOYDE
Carried
P&S/23/45

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Hall noted it was great to see a full muster of Youth Councillors. She asked if there had been any resistance or concern from requestors about publishing their details and LGOIMA request? The Communications Manager noted it had only begun this month with only a few requests having been received, one had requested their name not be published.

12.3 Environmental Services Report
D23/5923 Page 117

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

HARRIS/TONGAAWHIKAU
Carried
P&S/23/46

The Director – Environmental Services noted he hoped the re-numbering and re-naming project would be brought to council soon as this project needed tidying up before the general election this year.

12.4 Corporate Services Report
D23/10346 Page 124

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

ERWOOD/DUDLEY
Carried
P&S/23/47

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- It was clarified that the correct figure for liabilities maturing was \$3.5 million.
- It was clarified the interest rates for borrowing are 2.98% and around 4.9% for investments.
- It was noted that cash reserves have gone down in recent months but have now gone back up to \$6 million.
- It was clarified that the Waka Kotahi subsidy is done on a three year plan, therefore some of this can be spent earlier within the three year period.

- It was clarified the unspent funds for the Road to Zero funding was partly due to outstanding payments but also outstanding projects as this funding was for the entire road to zero plan not just the Swansea Road/Stratford High School work.

13. Questions

- Councillor Boyde questioned the impact on ratepayers with the work required to clean up vandalism. He noted the vandals did not realise they were costing every single ratepayer each time this needed to be rectified. The Director – Assets noted it cost council approximately \$5,000 a year for vandalism, although she noted some vandalism was absorbed into other budgets such as replacement of road signs.
- Councillor Jones questioned the design of the road islands on Swansea Road due to it appearing to be narrower on one side restricting accessibility for trucks. It was noted that this was intentionally narrow to reduce speed, however the centre the island would be clearer once the painting of the road was completed and then it would not appear to be narrower on just one side. It was also noted that the wider berth on the opposite side of the road was to allow for buses to turn. The full plan and design had been audited by Waka Kotahi for safety.

14. Closing Karakia

D21/40748

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The meeting closed at 5.29pm.

M McKay
Chairperson

Confirmed this 18th day of April 2023.

N C Volzke
District Mayor