

MINUTES

Ordinary

F22/55/05 – D25/37658

Date: 7 October 2025 at 3.30 PM

Venue: Council Chambers, 63 Miranda Street, Stratford

Present

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

In attendance

The Chief Executive – Mr S Hanne, the Director – Assets – Mrs V Araba, the Director – Corporate Services – Mrs R Johnson, the Director – Community Services – Ms K Whareaitu, the Committee Advisor and Executive Assistant – Mrs E Bishop, the Communications Manager – Ms G Gibson, the Corporate Accountant – Mrs C Craig, the Property and Projects Manager – Mr S Taylor (*part meeting*), the Roading Manager – Mr S Bowden, the Parks and Reserves Officer – Mrs M McBain (*part meeting*), seven members of the public, and one member of the Media (Stratford and South)

1. Welcome

The District Mayor welcomed Elected Members, members of the public, staff and the media to the meeting.

The opening karakia was read.

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

2. Apologies

An approved leave of absence noted for C M Tongaawhikau.

Recommendation

THAT the apologies be received.

BOYDE/WATT
Carried
CL/25/98

3. Announcements

The District Mayor noted a change to agenda items with Item 10 (Question Time) and Item 11 (Valedictory Comments) to be swapped.

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 conflicts of interest declared.

5. Attendance Schedule

The attendance schedule for Ordinary and Extraordinary Council meetings was attached.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

6.1 Audit and Risk Committee – 2 September 2025

D25/36480 (Open) D25/32957 (PE) Page 10

Recommendations

1. THAT the unconfirmed minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting, including the public excluded section, held on Tuesday 2 September be received.
2. THAT the recommendations in the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee, including those in the public excluded section, held on Tuesday 2 September be adopted.

BOYDE/ERWOOD

Carried

CL/25/99

3. THAT the members of the Audit and Risk Committee confirm the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting, including the public excluded section, held on Tuesday 2 September 2025 are a true and accurate record.

VOLZKE/ERWOOD

Carried

CL/25/100

6.2 Ordinary Meeting of Council – 9 September 2025

D25/33643 Page 34

Recommendation

THAT the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 9 September 2025, be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

VOLZKE/BECK

Carried

CL/25/101

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

- Amend date of meeting from 19 September to 9 September.
- Add Councillor V R Jones to in attendance.

6.3 Farm Committee – 23 September 2025
D25/36112 Page 38

Recommendations

1. THAT the unconfirmed minutes of the Farm Committee meeting held on Tuesday 23 September be received.
2. THAT the recommendations in the minutes of the Farm Committee held on Tuesday 23 September be adopted.

BOYDE/HALL
Carried
CL/25/102

3. THAT the members of the Farm Committee confirm the minutes of the Farm Committee meeting held on Tuesday 23 September 2025 are a true and accurate record.

BECK/JONES
Carried
CL/25/103

The Parks and Reserves Officer joined the meeting at 3.38pm.

6.4 Policy and Services Committee – 23 September 2025
D25/36072 Page 42

Recommendations

1. THAT the unconfirmed minutes of the Policy and Services Committee meeting held on Tuesday 23 September be received.
2. THAT the recommendations in the minutes of the Policy and Services Committee held on Tuesday 23 September be adopted.

SANDFORD/DUDLEY
Carried
CL/25/104

3. THAT the members of the Policy and Services Committee confirm the minutes of the Policy and Services Committee meeting held on Tuesday 23 September 2025 are a true and accurate record.

HARRIS/HALL
Carried
CL/25/105

6.4.1 Updated Street Trees Policy
D25/32073 Page 54

This was attached for Council's information.

6.4.2 Updated Wai o Rua – Stratford Aquatic Centre Activity Management Plan
D25/35388 Page 58

This was attached for Council's information.

Recommendation

THAT the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 30 September 2025, including the public excluded section, be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

VOLZKE/HARRIS
Carried
CL/25/106

7. District Mayor's Report
D25/37301 Page 92

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

VOLZKE/SANDFORD
Carried
CL/25/107

The Parks and Reserves Officer left the meeting at 3.44pm.

8. Information Report – 2024/25 Customer Satisfaction Survey
D25/35458 Page 95

Recommendation

THAT the report be received.

BOYDE/DUDLEY
Carried
CL/25/108

Recommended Reason

This is an information report only. It provides the 2024/25 Customer Satisfaction Survey results and a benchmarking report against other Councils.

The Communications Manager noted that this report was being presented later than usual to council as it was important to have included the benchmarking report to provide context to the results.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Boyde asked if the percentage of respondents had changed particularly with the change of removing the postal service. Ms Gibson noted that as part of the contract, Key Research, are required to meet a particular sample level. The demographic of respondents will always change and vary but their data analysts will assess this and if it is under represented by a particular area of the community then they will give a higher weighting to ensure it meets the overall structure of the community.
- Councillor Boyde asked how the neutral scores add into the percentages? Ms Gibson clarified that key research uses satisfaction as 7 and up which is best practice. She acknowledged that counting the 5s and 6s does raise the percentages.
- Councillor Boyde noted that Stratford sits at the upper end in the benchmarks.

- The Deputy Mayor questioned what was done with the results? Ms Gibson noted each of the four waves are shared internally to see if there are issues that can be fixed straight away. Mr Hanne noted that some of the results are criteria in the KPIs set by Council in the Long Term and Annual Plans. He noted that different parts of the survey inform different elements of council and it is used to interpret comments on individual facilities as well. Where we can read tangible results then it can influence the day to day, medium term and long term planning.
- The Deputy Mayor asked if some of the questions should be changed to ensure they are giving good information to make better decisions or better services? Ms Gibson noted that one of the recent changes had been including a prompt for a comment should a rate be lower than a 4. This is to see if we can capture the examples of why the score is low. Mr Hanne noted he was very cautious in making changes to long standing questions as it immediately loses the trend from previous years.
- Councillor Beck questioned why this was completed through an independent organisation. It was clarified that this had previously been completed in house but was very labour intensive and would not provide the benchmarking against other councils. It is good practice to have this done externally. It is now being conducted by email which has somewhat impacted the outcome as who we have the ability to email is from a particular rate payer based pool.
- Councillor Hall noted the image, reputation and perception is a significant part which has declined. She asked how elected members can do better moving forward in the next three years and are there things that are tangible that staff can support council in doing when it comes to how the community perceives council?
- The District Mayor noted that current community feelings regarding trust and transparency extends to other service providers such as banks and insurers. He noted the ability to communicate through the Stratford Press has changed and reduced our opportunities to get the message out there and the complete lack of attention from the Taranaki Daily News means that decisions are not being reported and this impacts perception of transparency. He noted when comparing the benchmarking figures Stratford was doing very well.

9. Information Report – Percy Thomson Trust – Annual Report 2024/25

D25/35854

Page 199

Recommendation

THAT the Percy Thomson Trust Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2025 be received.

BOYDE/WATT

Carried

CL/25/109

Recommended Reason

The Percy Thomson Trust is a Council Controlled Organisation of the Stratford District Council and the audit of their Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2025 was completed by Audit New Zealand.

It was noted that the Unmodified Audit Opinion and the Audit Report to the Trust Board had been circulated as these had not been available when the agenda was published.

10. Valedictory Comments

An opportunity was provided for retiring elected members to address the meeting.

- Councillor Jones noted it had been a big eye opening being part of council and that it was not easy to be in front of everyone to make a decision that a lot of people do not understand.
- Councillor Sandford acknowledged those who had passed away during his 30 years on council including Chief Executive Wayne Kimber, Mayor John Edwards and Councillor Peter Dalziel. He noted highlights had included council trips away including one to Gisborne to look at forestry roads and taking the Youth Council as they wanted to start one there. He noted starting the Youth Council with Pauline James and Brian

Jeffares had been a highlight and the Central Taranaki Safe Community Trust which resulted in organisations signing an MOU with the Trust and saw fire alarms installed in every home in Central Taranaki.

Three members of the public joined the meeting at 4.11pm.

- The Deputy Mayor noted she had done a lot of reflection on her time on council. She acknowledged the people in the building and around the table who had welcomed her with open arms, warmth and acceptance. Staff have always been really open and willing to work with her and she is really proud of the knowledge and experience that is held within this building. She acknowledged Erin Bishop who makes things happen seamlessly and having Mrs Bishop beside her made her feel safe and supported. Sven Hanne who has supported her through this journey, let her add her own flair on things and answered questions. Neil Volzke who gave her the opportunity to step into the role of Deputy Mayor that created a different path than had been there before. During her time on council she has gone from a bank manager, to a business owner, to a mum to Deputy Mayor. These were significant life changes and first for council being the first under 30 female elected member, the first elected member to give birth while in office, the first female Deputy Mayor and the first set of twins and she acknowledged all those who have embraced that and never showed any annoyance when Mick was brought to meetings and functions. She noted one of her favourite memories was when Mayor Volzke was telling her she would be Deputy Mayor and Mick was under his desk untying his shoe laces. She was pleased she could share this with people who are considering stepping into this role while embracing the challenges of a young family while representing the community. She noted there are big changes coming and part of her would like to be representing the community on those decisions but a part of her also feels relief. Council needs to take ownership of finding a way forward that is sustainable and this will require a real willingness to change. She acknowledged and noted her appreciation that everyone has different views on things but it does not railroad the reason that we are all here. She thanked her family for their support and her husband, Ryan, for being an incredible listening ear, challenging her thinking and supporting in her decisions. She acknowledged his sacrifices with work stepping into the role of dad and stopping working so that she could continue and her mum and sister for their support for different events. She noted she was looking forward to providing her views through different channels moving forward.

11. Questions

Councillor Boyde noted he had a question relating to an email sent to elected members yesterday by a member of the public. It was agreed to move into public excluded to discuss this to ensure the privacy of the individual.

Members of the public, media, the Director Corporate Services, the Director – Assets and the Deputy Mayor left the meeting at 4.21pm.

Recommendation

THAT the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

Agenda Item No: 11

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution to each matter	Grounds under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
Email	The withholding of the information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.	That the public conduct of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist, under section 6 and section 7 of the Act - specifically Section 7(2)(a) Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987

WATT/HALL
Carried
CL/25/110

Recommendation

THAT the open meeting resume.

VOLZKE/BECK
Carried
CL/25/111

12. Closing Karakia

D21/40748 Page 225

The closing karakia was read.

The meeting closed at 4.35pm.

N C Volzke
Chairman

Confirmed this 10th day of October 2025

N C Volzke
District Mayor

Sven Hanne
Chief Executive

As per Standing Order 28.4, the Chief Executive and the relevant Chairperson must sign the minutes of the last meeting of the council before the next election of members.