

# MINUTES

## Ordinary Meeting of Council



F19/13/04 – D21/27963

Date: Tuesday 10 August 2021 at 3.30pm  
Venue: Council Chambers, 63 Miranda Street, Stratford

### Present

The District Mayor N C Volzke (the Chairman), the Deputy Mayor A L Jamieson, Councillors G W Boyde, P S Dalziel, 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 – Community Services – Ms K Whareaitu, the Director Assets – Mrs V Araba, the Director Environmental Services – Mr B Sutherland, the Director – Corporate Services – Mrs T Radich, the Administration & Communication Support Officer – Ms R Vanstone, the Communications Manager – Ms G Gibson and three members of the media (Stratford Press, Taranaki Daily News and Te Korimako o Taranaki) and three members of the public.

#### 1. Welcome

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

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

#### 2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

#### 3. Announcements

The District Mayor took the opportunity to acknowledge the passing of Stratford resident Mr Roy Lithgow. Mr Lithgow was a very community minded person who contributed to many organisations throughout the district and generously supported young people by providing an annual scholarship through Stratford High School. He was one of Stratford's earliest citizen award winners. Mr Lithgow will be sadly missed. Comforting thoughts go to Mr Lithgow's family at this time.

#### 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.

Due to their roles as Taranaki Electricity Trust trustees, the Deputy Mayor and Councillor Erwood, declared an interest in matters relating to the trust.

The declaration of member's interest was circulated for updating.

#### 5. Attendance Schedule

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

Councillor Dalziel noted that the attendance schedule had not been updated for the July meeting.

## 6. Confirmation of minutes

### 6.1 Ordinary Meeting of Council – 13 July 2021 D21/27963 Page 7

#### Recommendation

THAT the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 13 July 2021 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

BOYDE/DALZIEL  
Carried  
CL/21/66

### 6.2 Audit & Risk Committee – 20 July 2021 D21/26251 Page 12

#### Recommendations

1. THAT the unconfirmed minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on Tuesday 20 July 2021, be received.
2. THAT the recommendations in the minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee held on Tuesday 20 July 2021, be adopted.

DALZIEL/McKAY  
Carried  
CL/21/67

ERWOOD/DALZIEL  
Carried  
CL/21/68

### 6.3 Policy & Services Committee – 27 July 2021 D21/28353 Page 19

#### Recommendations

1. THAT the unconfirmed minutes of the Policy & Services Committee meeting held on Tuesday 27 July 2021 be received.
2. THAT the recommendations in the minutes of the Policy & Services Committee meeting held on Tuesday 27 July 2021 be adopted.

BOYDE/JONES  
Carried  
CL/21/69

McKAY/SANDFORD  
Carried  
CL/21/70

The District Mayor noted that minor changes relating to the chair and attendees at this meeting, would be made prior to the confirmation of these minutes.

7. District Mayor's Report  
D21/27700 Page 28

**Recommendation**

THAT the District Mayor's report be received.

VOLZKE/JAMIESON  
Carried  
CL/21/71

The District Mayor noted that discussions on three waters and local government reforms are ongoing and starting to gather momentum. More detailed information is being circulated to elected members as it becomes available.

Questions/Points of Clarification:

- Councillor Boyde sought clarification on whether information was getting back to government and ministers on local government reforms.
- Mayor Volzke noted that a series of workshops on the functions and roles of local government had been held recently with a number of elected members in attendance. An interim report identifying key issues is due for release in September. Council's will have opportunities to feed back our views. At the moment, central government is information gathering.

8. Decision Report – Representation Review 2021 – Initial Proposal  
D21/27982 Page 33

**Recommendations**

1. THAT the report be received.

BOYDE/WEBBY  
Carried  
CL/21/72

2. THAT councillors consider the various options detailed in this report and make decisions on each of the following for the next two local elections:

- If councillors are to be elected by wards, or a mixture of wards and 'at large', the proposed number, names, boundaries of wards, and the number of councillors that will represent each,
- If wards are established (in addition to the Māori ward), the description of each proposed ward boundary and any explanation of changes,
- The total number of councillors to be elected,
- Whether to have community boards, and if so, how many, their names, and their membership.

3. THAT councillors adopt formal resolutions based on the decisions made on the above and release the Initial Proposal for consultation no later than 24 August 2021.

McKAY/ERWOOD  
Carried  
CL/21/73

**Recommended Reason**

There are no specific recommendations given by council officers on each of the decisions that need to be made. This is a political decision councillors must decide on.

The Director Corporate Services noted that the establishment of a Māori ward had been previously agreed to by elected members and that this report included options to consider for how representation is to look.

The District Mayor clarified that this report would normally go to the Policy and Services Committee however the timeline did not allow this, hence it is coming to a full meeting of council. Mayor Volzke asked elected members to give permission for the standing orders to be suspended to allow council to treat the item as if it were being considered at a Policy and Services Committee meeting. There were no objections from elected members.

A number of options were discussed and considered, as outlined on page 42 of the report, in the following order and a resolution followed each option:

- Retain Wards – Urban and Rural, or disestablish wards altogether:
  - The Deputy Mayor's view was that the current ward structure be retained so that, especially, the rural community would be represented. The bulk of the districts resources come from the rural community and they must be given a fair voice.
  - Councillor Dalziel was in favour of disestablishing wards altogether and all elected members being 'at large'. As a small community he sees no need for rural and urban wards and rural ratepayers would continue to be well served by elected members. He had not received too much feedback about change.
  - Councillor Boyde disagreed with Councillor Dalziel. The current ward structure had stood the test of time. The capital value from the rural ward is 81% and there are fundamental differences between the urban and rural populations. Current legislation requires an equitable system and the current ward structure gives a voice to both.
  - Councillor Harris supported the retention of the wards. As she is from a rural background, it is great to know that you have a sense of belonging and the wards address the communities of interest very well.
  - Councillor Coplestone disagreed with Councillor Dalziel. He had recently been to some of the more distant communities, such as Mt Dampier, in the district and they need (and want) representation.
  - Councillor McKay was in favour of seeing some 'at large' representatives but also saw value in rural and urban wards. She considered that a portion of the community did not fit into either ward – that of the growing lifestyle property population. Councillor McKay liked the idea of 'at large' because it gave voters more of a say with the ability to exercise an extra vote if there was a combination of the two. It would also attract more candidates and increase voter turnout.
  - Mayor Volzke clarified that there is scope to have a combination of the two systems but in doing so, serious consideration ought to be given to the number of councillors.
  - Councillor Sandford's view was the current system worked well and he felt that 'at large' would not work for this community. There had been lot of discussion in the community about a Māori ward.
  - Councillor Webby's view was that the current system did not need to change.
  - Councillor Erwood agreed with the Deputy Mayor and felt that both the urban and rural communities needed representation and did not want to see any name changes.
  - Mayor Volzke supported the retention of the urban and rural wards in Stratford district.

### Recommendation

4. THAT Council retain the existing urban and rural wards.

BOYDE/COPLESTONE  
Carried  
Against DALZIEL  
CL/21/74

- Establish 'at large' seats – and if so, how many:
  - The Deputy Mayor asked whether the District Mayors seat is 'at large'. Mayor Volzke clarified that the mayor is elected 'at large' as per legislation.
  - Councillor Dalziel expressed concern for electors noting, given that council had just agreed to retain urban and rural wards, there could be confusion to establish 'at large' seats.

- Councillors Erwood, Sandford and Coplestone agreed with Councillor Dalziel.
- Mayor Volzke noted that an unfortunate consequence of 'at large' and urban and rural seats is that unless you have quite a significant number of 'at large' candidates the negative effect may be that a very good candidate happens to choose the wrong seat producing some bizarre results. The only way to overcome this situation is to have a pure model.

### Recommendation

5. THAT Council will not establish any at large seats for elected members.

SANDFORD/BOYDE  
Carried  
*Against Councillor McKay*  
CL/21/75

- Establish Community Boards, or continue with the status quo having no Community Boards:
  - Councillor Coplestone considered it unnecessary to change the current system and did not think the district big enough to warrant community boards.
  - The Deputy Mayor was of the view that community boards do not have enough 'teeth' to make decisions.
  - Councillor Sandford noted that he had not received any approaches from the community that they were not represented by the current structure.
  - Councillor Erwood spoke in favour of the previous speakers and noted that the community was served well by the diverse group of elected members currently sitting around the council table.

### Recommendation

6. THAT Council remain with the status quo and no community boards will be established.

ERWOOD/COPELSTONE  
Carried  
CL/21/76

- Confirm names for Urban, Rural and Māori wards:
  - The Deputy Mayor did not wish to see name changes as it would cause confusion.
  - Councillors Harris and Boyde were in agreement with the Deputy Mayor.
  - Councillor Boyde asked if iwi had a view about the name of the Māori ward. The Director Corporate Service responded that this had not come. Mayor Volzke clarified that iwi could make a suggestion during the submission process.

### Recommendation

7. THAT the names of the wards will be the urban ward, the rural ward and the Māori ward.

WEBBY/HARRIS  
Carried  
CL/21/77

- Amend Ward Boundaries – refer **Appendix 1** for recommended option based on feedback from June workshop:
  - Mayor Volzke noted that the decision in front of elected members today is to add two new areas to the urban ward – those being the Mercade Estate and east towards Beaconsfield Road.

- The Deputy Mayor saw no reason to exclude these areas from the urban ward due to Stratford's growing population and its sprawling nature. Residents from Mercade Estate already considered themselves urban. He was satisfied to extend the urban ward boundaries to incorporate these areas.
- Councillor Erwood considered that as these areas that were already receiving urban services, it is pragmatic to include them in the urban ward.
- Councillor Sandford asked about Hunt Road West – one side of which is considered urban and the other side rural.
- Councillor Dalziel supported the proposal.
- Councillor Erwood sought clarification on the consultation process and whether changes, such as Hunt Road West, could not be submitted now for change. Mrs Radich confirmed that changes could be made now but it would mean adding all of the larger farm areas into an urban ward because of how the mesh block for this area has been configured, before the initial proposal. She suggested that she would request the changes to the mesh blocks so that if submissions are received, the applicable parts can be split off at the hearing stage. The next opportunity to propose change would be six years from now.
- Councillor Sandford noted that residents off Pembroke Road expressed a desire to be part of the urban ward and this solution meant that will be a reality.

### Recommendation

8. THAT the Māori ward be 'at large' across the district and that the urban and rural ward boundaries be as shown in **Appendix 1**.

DALZIEL/BOYDE  
Carried  
CL/21/78

- Determine the number of councillors in total:
  - Mayor Volzke noted that the current split allows for 6 urban councillors and 4 rural. In the new council there will be an additional one councillor representing the Māori ward. That position is not factored into the mandatory plus or minus 10 per cent rule because that ward is across the district – or 'at large'.
  - Councillor McKay was in favour of reducing the overall number of councillors to 8 with the Māori ward as an additional one. When she reflected back to her first few meetings as a councillor, she noted that there were few times when every councillor was vocal on every (major) decision. She asked herself would council have been better with an additional voice around the table, and felt the answer to this would have been not. She noted also that fewer councillors meant greater visibility to the community and more responsibility and accountability for those left around the table. Councillor McKay was of the view that fewer seats would see stronger candidates running for them and ultimately, a strong team of elected members.
  - Councillor Dalziel agreed with Councillor McKay noting that Carterton District Council, of only slightly smaller size, had seven elected members plus the mayor and large public companies operated with a board of the same size.
  - Councillor Sandford disagreed noting that fewer councillors did not mean any less accountability and nor would there be cost savings to the ratepayer. Residents had told Councillor Sandford that they are satisfied with the current number and they wanted visible and accessible elected members. Councillor Sandford added that there was already accountability around the table and did not agree with lessening the number of councillors.
  - Councillor Erwood agreed with Councillor Sandford adding that the district does not have community boards and councillors do the work for the community and for ratepayers.
  - Councillor Coplestone noted that due to the large geographical size of the district, the rural community needed representation and the various areas within the district were well-served by their elected members.
  - Councillor Boyde agreed with Councillor Sandford adding that he had received feedback from the community which found favour with current numbers which provided an effective voice.

- Councillor Harris agreed to retain the status quo. She felt that the job was a big one and primarily it was about being seen and having enough people on the ground to make that happen. She acknowledged the support network that her council peers had provided her.
- Mayor Volzke noted that this had been interesting discussion because in the time he'd been in council he had always advocated that there were too many councillors and his preference was to reduce numbers to eight. He was not of the view that urban and rural wards necessarily guarantee representation for those communities as historically rural councillors of the past have not necessarily lived in the rural area. However in general terms the chances of people accessing an elected member is greater when there are greater numbers. He also considered that in a small council where all the elected members are working part-time as councillors, it is important that there be some continuity and a bigger pool ensures this. Under present circumstances, Mayor Volzke supported the status quo of 6 urban and 4 rural councillors.

### Recommendation

9. THAT Council have a total of 11 elected members plus the District Mayor. This will be made up of 6 urban representatives, 4 rural representatives and one Māori representative.

BOYDE/COPELSTONE

*Division*

*For 8*

*Against 3*

Carried

CL/21/79

*A division was called.*

*Those voting for the motion were: The District Mayor, Councillors: Boyde, Coplestone, Erwood, Harris, Jones, Sandford, Webby.*

*Those voting against the motion were: The Deputy Mayor, Councillors: Dalziel and McKay.*

The District Mayor noted that a proposal had now been developed for public consultation and he looked forward to submissions.

### 9. Questions

Councillor Sandford asked about damage sustained to stonework around the Broadway pedestrian crossing. This matter has been added to matters outstanding for follow up by the Director Assets.

*The meeting closed at 4.35pm*

N C Volzke  
**Chairman**

Confirmed this 14<sup>th</sup> day of September 2021.

N C Volzke  
**District Mayor**