

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON
ON MONDAY, 25th November, 2019 AT 2.15 pm.**

- PRESENT:** Cllr. Paschal Fitzmaurice **PRESIDED**
- MEMBERS:** Cllr D. Kilduff, Cllr T. Crosby, Cllr M. McDermott, Cllr A. Waldron, Cllr O. Leyden, Cllr T. Ward, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr I. Connaughton, Cllr J. Cummins, Cllr L. Fallon, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr M. Mulligan, Cllr J. Murphy, Cllr J. Naughten, Cllr K. Shanagher and Cllr L. Callaghan.
- OFFICIALS:** Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive
Majella Hunt, Director of Services
Martin Lydon, Director of Services
Shane Tiernan, Director of Services
Liam Bergin, Director of Services
Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator
Michelle Carney, Staff Officer

Apologies:

176.19 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby
SECONDED by Cllr. Cummins
It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 21.10.2019

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McDermott
SECONDED by Cllr. Murphy
It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of Special Meeting of 11.11.2019

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fallon
SECONDED by Cllr. Ward
It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Budget Meeting of 18.11.2019

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cummins
SECONDED by Cllr. Leyden
It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of Special Meeting of 18.11.2019

177.19 MATTERS ARISING

Minutes of Special Plenary Meeting dated 11th November 2019.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Leyden
SECONDED by Cllr. Fitzmaurice
It was **AGREED** to invite the Chairperson and the full Board members of the Irish Wheelchair Association to meet with members of Roscommon County Council.

Cllr. Ward informed the members that he has tabled a question and a motion on the proposed closure of Cuisle and the facilities available there at the HSE Forum meeting later this week.

Minutes of Budget Meeting dated 18th November 2019

Cllr. Connaughton requested that a letter be sent to the Valuation Tribunal and this was omitted from the minutes.

178.19 MANAGEMENT REPORT

- Management Report for October, 2019 noted.

179.19 2018 AUDITED ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND AUDIT REPORT AND ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT.

Mr. Martin Lydon, Director of Services presented the 2018 Audited Annual Financial Statement (AFS) and Audit Report and the Audit Committee Report on the AFS 2018 and the Local Government Auditors Report to the members for noting:

He highlighted the following:

- The 2018 revenue account show a €6k surplus and accumulated surplus of €190k
- There is an increase of 3% in the rates collection, however a risk to the Council includes the sum of €2.5m in rates appeals valuation to be determined by the Rates Valuation Tribunal.
- The collection level for housing loans continues to be impacted by historic debts
- Irish Water SLA coming to an end in Dec 2021 will impact on the Council
- We need to continue to invest in IT equipment
- Roscommon Leisure Centre recorded a surplus after the subvention paid
- The Rockingham Moylurg Master Plan is being prepared for Lough Key and expected to be completed next year.
- Unfinished Housing Estates are high but decreasing.
- Training was completed with new staff to ensure the AFS and Budgets are up to date.

Cllr. Cummins, a member of the Audit Committee, indicated that they were pleased at the progress of the Council in 2018 as indicated by the reports and thanked the generosity of the ratepayers for the increase to 86% of the collection rate.

Members discussed the reports as follows:

- Welcome the recent investment in the county and hope that more progress can be made in the coming years.
- Concern about the level of unfinished estates
- Loan to pay for Áras an Chontae and the repayments in comparison to renting properties – is the loan fixed?
- Housing loans should be the responsibility of the Government
- Welcome the increased investment in tourism and the need to prioritise the Lough Key project.
- Welcome the rent and rates collection rate

- Need to invest in tourism as the county does not have large industries
- Need to have a plan in place if the ongoing rates revaluations have a negative impact on income

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Ward

SECONDED by Cllr. Waldron

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister for Finance to indicate that the housing loans should be the responsibility of the Government.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Waldron

SECONDED by Cllr. Connaughton

It was **AGREED** to establish tourism links with Fr. Flanagan Centre in Boys town, USA

180.19 MULTI ANNUAL RURAL WATER PROGRAMME 2019-2021

Ms. Catherine Finlay, Administrative Officer in Water Services Unit gave a detailed presentation to the members on the Multi Annual Rural Water Programme 2019-2021:

- The programme relates to small rural water and wastewater supplies not connected to the public mains (Irish Water network)
- The multi annual funding approach is scheme specific with water quality, water conservation and future proofing of supplies as the main policy objectives
- Nationally €75m over three years is allocated with €3.125m for Roscommon during this period.
- Funding for Roscommon over this three-year period is provided under a number of measures including:
 - Source protection for Group Water Schemes - €351,150
 - Public Health Compliance to improve water quality - €814,000
 - Enhancement of existing schemes including water conservation - €1,431,000
 - Transition of Existing Group Water and Group Sewerage Schemes to the Public (Irish Water) Sector - €247,000
 - Community Connections to public network - €18,113
 - Individual Well Grants and in-site wastewater treatment systems is to be announced to reflect recently announced changes.

The Members welcomed the update and the allocation of grants for rural water supplies and discussed the matter as follows:

- There is a need to have an awareness campaign to inform the public that the North East Regional Water Supply scheme (NERWSS) has a new treatment plant and the boil water notice is no longer applicable?
- There was concern expressed about the cost of making a connection to the Irish Water network, which is now €2,263 and can reach up to €50,000 if there is a considerable distance from the mains to the connection – what has changed?
- The allocation should be provided early in the year to allow to plan for work for the year ahead.
- Are the works in the programme 100% funded and if not, who makes up the shortfall?

- Forward thinking of the Council to ensure all services up to standard before village enhancement works such as was recently completed in Athleague.
- When will the UV treatment on the Mid Roscommon supply be completed?
- Can the Council put pressure on Irish water to carry out repairs more quickly?

Mr. Martin Lydon, Director of Services and Ms. Catherine Finlay replied to queries and comments as follows:

- The pricing of water connections has been agreed through the Commission for Regulation of Utilities
- Irish Water undertook a publicity campaign earlier in 2019 when the new water treatment plant was officially opened for the NERWSS.
- There is 100% funding for source protection works, which is currently a pilot project. The remainder of the schemes are funded at 85% with the groups funding the remaining 15%.
- The new three-year allocation will allow the Council to plan better for works required over the coming years.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Ward

SECONDED by Cllr. Connaughton

It was **AGREED** that in future, for the people of rural county Roscommon, normal charges should apply for water connections, irrespective of the distance from the watermain. It was further agreed that this letter be sent to Irish Water and every Local Authority.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council invite the managing Director or Senior Official from Irish Water to attend a meeting of Roscommon County Council.

181.19 APPOINTMENT OF ELECTED MEMBER TO STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Shanagher

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** that Cllr. Naughten be appointed to the Housing, ICT and Rural Water Strategic Policy committee following the resignation of Cllr. Donal Kilduff.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Shanagher

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** that Cllr. Kilduff be appointed to the Roads, Transportation and Emergency Services Strategic Policy committee following the resignation of Cllr. John Naughten.

182.19 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL MEMBERS TO STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh

SECONDED by Cllr. McDermott

It was **AGREED** to appoint the following to the Economic Development and Enterprise Support (Including Tourism, Culture and Libraries) SPC:

Business Commercial: Mr. John Mee, Sidero Ltd., Monksland, Athlone (Chambers Ireland)

Development/Construction: Mr. Liam Murray, Garrynagowna Construction Ltd., Summerhill, Co. Roscommon.

Environmental/Conservation: Mr. Michael Ewing, An Taisce North west Branch

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne

SECONDED by Cllr. Fallon

It was **AGREED** to appoint the following to the Housing, ICT and Rural Water SPC:

Community Voluntary: Mr. Vincent Moran, Frenchpark Development Committee

Trade Union: Ms. Monica Mahon (ICTU - HSE)

Development /Construction: Mr. Alex Connolly., T Murray & Sons Ltd. (C.I.F)

Agriculture/Farming: Mr. Jim O'Connor, Grange, Boye Co Roscommon (IFA)

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McDermott

SECONDED by Cllr. Murphy

It was **AGREED** to appoint the following to the Roads, Transportation and Emergency Services SPC:

Business/Commercial: Ms. Mary Clifford, Boyle, Co. Roscommon (Chambers Ireland)

Development/Construction: Mr. Matthew Dwyer, Ecoflex Surfacing Ltd., Frenchpark (C.I.F)

Environmental /Conservation: Ms. Rebecca Dobson, Plastic Free Roscommon

Community Voluntary: Mr. Trevor Hunt, Aghrim Kilmore Development Association

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby

SECONDED by Cllr. Dineen

It was **AGREED** to appoint the following to the Planning, Environment, Climate Change, Corporate & Governance SPC:

Agriculture/Farming: Mr. Ned O'Connor Strokestown Co. Roscommon (IFA)

Community/Voluntary: Mr. Gareth Scahill, Castlerea Tidy Towns

Environmental/Conservation: Ms. Hannah Mole, Roscommon Environment Network.

Development/Construction: Mr. Ciaran King, King & Moffatt Ltd (CIF)

Business Commercial: Mr. Sean Mahon, Mahon Sweeney Solicitors (Chambers Ireland)

183.19 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

Framework for Economic Development of Athlone

The Chief executive informed the members that the Council has been recently engaged in procuring a consultant to assist in the work of preparing an economic strategy for the Athlone area. Director of Services, Mr. Liam Bergin circulated details to the Members regarding the preparatory stage for the Urban Area Plan for the Regional Centre of Athlone as designated in the National Planning Framework, a plan that will be jointly prepared by the Athlone MD members of Roscommon and Westmeath County Councils. This is a 20 year document and will include a marketing plan to promote Athlone with its own unique brand and singular identity for and there will be equal input and agreement by the two Councils and the process is now commencing.

The Platform for Coal Regions in Transition – EU Initiative

The Chief Executive informed the members that the Midlands Region has been accepted as part of the EU Coal Regions in Transition Initiative. It is designed to assist EU members States and Regions in tackling socio-economic and environmental challenges associated with transition to a low carbon economy. Director of Services, Majella Hunt outlined details of the initiative as the Midland region was accepted into this initiative in July 2019 and membership allows for the application of funds from the EU secretariat of Regions in Transition (START). A steering committee is being set up consisting of all stakeholders in the Region to identify all of the issues and opportunities including funding requirements. A meeting with the elected representatives from Longford, Westmeath and Roscommon and the consultants appointed under START will take place on Tuesday 3rd December and four nominees are required from Roscommon. It was proposed that that Cllrs. Murphy, Leyden, Crosby, Waldron and Ward attend the meeting on behalf of the Council. Cllr. Crosby withdrew as there were five nominees.

Ms. Hunt indicated she would circulate the information to all of the members and the Cathaoirleach suggested that as there may be more of the members interested in the initiative, attendance at some of the meetings could be alternated between the members for the future meetings.

184.19 CORRESPONDENCE

Resolutions from Other Local Authorities:

- Letter dated 16th October, 2019 from Monaghan County Council regarding resolution:
“That Monaghan County Council calls on the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and the Environment, Richard Bruton TD, to legislate for the banning of all non-recyclable materials used in food/drinks packaging by the end of 2021 and ensure that only recyclable and biodegradable packaging be used”.
- Letter dated 22nd October, 2019 from Westmeath County Council regarding resolution:
“For Westmeath County Council to call on the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence, Leo Varadkar TD to establish without delay a Commission on the Future of the Defence Forces in Ireland and also to establish a Permanent and Independent Defence Forces Pay Body”;
- Letter dated 21st October, 2019 from Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council regarding resolution:
“That the Chief Executive, once again writes to the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Eoghan Murphy, TD and the Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe, TD to express this Council’s complete dissatisfaction with the requirement for all Councils

to decide on the variation of the Local Property Tax (LPT) basis rate in the absence of comprehensive budgetary information which is impossible to achieve within the existing timescale i.e. end of September each year. This Council calls on both Ministers to undertake to move the date required for that all local authorities to inform the Revenue Commissioners of the basic rate of LPT to no earlier than the end of October and that a copy of this motion is sent to all local authorities across Ireland”;

- Letter dated 25th October, 2019 from Fingal County Council regarding resolution: “That this Council congratulates the Community Development Office for their presentation to representatives from 27 Local Authorities at the recent “Developing and Implementing Local Migrant Integration Strategies” and asks that copies of the presentation be forwarded to all Elected Representatives in Ireland in the hope it will prevent future discriminatory comments being made by politicians similar to the offensive comments made recently in Oughterard”;
- Letter dated 25th October, 2019 from Carlow County Council regarding resolution: “Carlow County Council calls on the Minister for Health to immediately reinstate the Rehabilitative Training Bonus for people with disabilities”:

Acknowledgements to Resolutions from Roscommon County Council:

- Acknowledgment Email dated 16th October, 2019 from Minister Regina Doherty, TD Office, Employment Affairs and Social Protection re
 - Resolution on Carers Allowance – Sept 2019 137.19(b)
- Acknowledgment Email dated 16th October, 2019 from Minister Eoghan Murphy, TD Office, Housing Planning and Local Government re
 - Resolution on Rural Water Allocation Dates – Sept 2019 137.19(a)
- Acknowledgment Email dated 18th October, 2019 from Minister Simon Harris, TD Minister for Health re
 - Resolution on Carers Allowance – Sept 2019 137.19(b)

Replies to Resolutions from Roscommon County Council:

- Letter dated 21st October, 2019 from the Office of Public Works;
 - Lough Fuinshinagh Analysis Report – Sept 2019
- Reply dated 6th November, 2019 from Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection re
 - Carers Allowance – Sept 2019 137.19(b)
- Reply dated 15th November, 2019 from Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government;
 - Rural Water Programme – Sept 2019 137.19(a)

185.19 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McDermott

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** to adopt the list of payments for training and conferences as circulated.

186.19 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Cathaoirleach confirmed he had a number of items requested to be discussed under any other

business.

186.19a PRESENTATION BY CEO OF ROSCOMMON MAYO HOSPICE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice, Cathaoirleach

SECONDED by Cllr. Byrne

It was **AGREED** to invite Ms. Martina Jennings, CEO of the Roscommon Mayo Hospice to make a presentation to the members at the December Plenary meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice, Cathaoirleach

SECONDED by Cllr. Leyden

It was **AGREED** to host a fundraiser and awareness function for the Roscommon Mayo Hospice in Áras an Chontae in the Spring of 2020

186.19b UPDATE ON CASTLEREA FIRE STATION

Cllr. Nigel Dineen raised the matter of Castlerea fire station and the commitment the C.E. gave earlier in the year to reopen the fire station and requested a timeline in regard to this.

He asked a number of questions and made a number of comments as follows:

- Has any refresher training taken place for any of the seven firefighters in Castlerea to date?
- He was asked to highlight a matter that is a concern of people in Castlerea and surrounding areas that companies do ask the question if there is a fire service available in the area when quoting for insurance and will then hike up the premium or decline to insure the property if there is not a fire service available.
- He stated the minimum requirement to attend a fire is a crew of five. Last week there was a chimney fire in Castlerea town and Ballaghaderreen fire brigade could not attend as they had only four firefighters available at the time of the call. Ten minutes after the initial call, Ballyhaunis were contacted to attend and they had six firefighters available. When the Ballyhaunis crew arrived to the fire, the Ballaghaderreen tender had already arrived with only four firefighters which was a breach of protocol and Health and Safety. Eventually the fifth firefighter from Ballaghaderreen arrived to the fire one hour and ten minutes after the call in his own private vehicle. Under Health and Safety Procedures Cllr. Dineen asked the following questions of the Chief Executive and Director of Services
 - Does the firefighter go straight to the fire station first before he/she can attend the fire?
 - Can a firefighter attend a fire using his/her own car?
 - Can a firefighter arrive at a fire without his/her PPE or can he/she put on turnout gear at the fire?
 - Ballaghaderreen fire tender arrived at the fire with a crew of four, what are the procedures in that situation?

He stated that a number of years ago a crew from Castlerea could not attend a call over an elderly man trapped in his property in Castlerea town because they only had a crew of three and had to wait for backup crew to attend the fire before they could leave the station. He asked if the procedures changes since then that the four firefighters came from Castlerea to the fire before the back-up crew arrived from Ballyhaunis and was he correct in stating that the crew from Ballaghaderreen should not have attended the fire first and were procedures carried out properly

under health and safety in this regard? He stated that in the end there were eleven firefighters, two engines and two jeeps present at the chimney fire in Castlerea.

He stated that what happened in Castlerea last week was reckless and it's sad to see this is the fire service the Council is running in the county. Eighteen councillors passed the budget last week while a fire was happening in Castlerea and part of this budget was to provide an adequate fire service for the people of county Roscommon. This is not the service I want for this county where people's lives are put at risk. Finally, he stated that it is important that the Chief Executive knows what's happening in the fire service throughout the county and requested that the Director of Services or Chief Executive to answer the questions that he raised.

investigation into what occurred last week in Castlerea and find out if the fire service is serving the needs of our county safely and with proper procedures in place. Secondly there is a review ongoing on Castlerea Fire Station and I am proposing that there is a full review of the whole fire service throughout this county.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Dineen

SECONDED by Cllr. McDermott

It was **AGREED** that a full internal investigation takes place into the fire in Castlerea last week to find out if the fire service is serving the needs of the county safely with proper procedures in place.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Dineen

SECONDED by Cllr. Ward

It was **AGREED** that there will be a full review of the fire service currently within the County of Roscommon.

The Cathaoirleach asked what is the up to date position with regard to the reopening of the Castlerea Fire Station as the members are aware there is a report to be carried out on the Castlerea Station and its performance and operations etc.

In reply the Chief Executive stated that he closed the station three years ago, not because he wanted to but because he had to. He confirmed that there had been and continues to be an excellent and efficient fire service being provided by the fire Authority. He is well aware of what happens in the Fire Service and the issues. He welcomed the recent interest in the Fire Station and but confirmed that he would not be rushed into making a decision in relation to the reopening of the Station in Castlerea and he or the Director of Services had nothing further to add.

Cllr. Dineen stated that he expected to receive answers to questions raised in the chamber and as an elected member of Roscommon County Council he has a voice for the Roscommon and Castlerea area however the Chief Executive replied that the matter was raised under Any Other Business and members are aware that answers to such questions must be sought in a more formal way.

186.19c ATHLONE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY CONSORTIUM WITH LIMERICK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY.

Cllr. Shanagher informed the members that Athlone Institute of Technology confirmed that it is forming a consortium with Limerick Institute of Technology to develop a new technological university (TU) for the Midlands and Mid-West. This is the key governance step opening the pathway to commence work on the new university. It follows the recent Government announcement that it is to make funding of €90 million available for the development of technological universities over the next three years. A Board member of A.I.T., Cllr Shanagher acknowledged the work of the President, Prof. Ciarán Ó Catháin and the good relationship Roscommon County Council has built up with the college over the past number of years.

The Members welcomed the news.

186.19d CUISLE RESPITE CENTRE

Cllr. Keogh references the email from Minister McGraths office where there is no reference to the structure of the building and this is not consistent with the message that came from the IWA at the recent Special meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh
SECONDED by Cllr. Ward


It was **AGREED** to write to the Board of the Irish Wheelchair Association, the CEO and the Ministers Office to confirm why there is conflicting accounts of the information provided to the members of Roscommon County Council.

NEXT MEETING


The next meeting will be on Monday, 16th December, 2019.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:


Meetings Administrator


Cathaoirleach


Countersigned