

MINUTES OF ROSCOMMON Municipal District HELD IN THE COUNCIL Chamber - Áras an Chontae, ON TUESDAY, 27th October, 2020 AT 11.00 am

PRESENT: Councillor Paschal Fitzmaurice **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: Cllr M. McDermott, Cllr A. Waldron, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr O. Leyden and Cllr K. Shanagher.

OFFICIALS: Neal Geraghty, Roscommon Municipal District Co-Ordinator
Breeda Burke, Staff Officer
Martin Lydon, Director of Services

APOLOGIES:

42.20 TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR ROSCOMMON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 2021

Martin Lydon informed the members as follows:

The Local Government Act 2001 Section 102, as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, provides the legislative basis for the revised budget process. It states that *“In the case of a county or city council, the Chief Executive shall consult the Municipal District Members for each Municipal District in the Local Authority’s functional area in the preparation of a Draft Local Authority Budget and, for that purpose, a Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District shall be prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive and submitted for consideration by the Municipal District Members for each Municipal District in the manner and in the format that may be prescribed by regulations made by the Minister.”*

The draft budgetary plans for municipal districts refer only to discretionary funding available to each municipal district, as discussions on strategic and non-discretionary expenditure of the Council form part of the plenary draft budget process. The plenary budget meeting is scheduled to be held on 26th November, 2020.

The total General Municipal Allocation (GMA) for 2021 is €2,485,200 with Roscommon MD receiving €930,100.

Martin Lydon clarified the draft budgetary plan had to be either accepted or rejected today.

Local Property Tax (LPT) Variation

The decision taken at the Plenary meeting on the 28th September to vary the LPT basic rate upwards by 15% allowed for the following items to be included in the GMA for 2021

- €150,000 for street cleaning.
- €120,000 of funding has been allocated to the general roads maintenance budget.
- €34,000 in funding has been granted to assist Tidy Town programmes and combat illegal dumping. These services are no longer funded from grant allocations.
- Town Team funding has been increased from €8,000 to €10,000 for each of the six town teams.

- It should be noted that €255,000 in match funding has been provided in the draft budgetary plan. This will lead to a nine-fold increase of grant aid for capital expenditure projects covering each municipal district.

Rationale for Allocating Funds

In considering the draft budgetary plans for the municipal districts as attached, the following was considered:

1. The needs and the resources available or likely to be made available to the Council.
2. The resource needs of each Municipal District, including where appropriate, condition survey, population, location of facilities, etc.

The model used in 2020 for apportioning roads expenditure (33.3% Population, 33.3% Km Road, 33.3% Condition) has once again been applied in 2021.

Funding of €35,000 in Voluntary Graveyard Grants has been split equally between the three municipal districts and is included in this year's allocation.

There is a budget allocation of €80,000 relating to the River Suck to improve drainage and amenities. This allocation has been included for the first time and is split between Athlone and Roscommon municipal districts.

The purpose of the draft budgetary plan meeting is to provide each municipal district an opportunity to allocate its proportion of the General Municipal Allocation according to its priorities.

Schedule of Municipal District Works and Service Delivery Plans

Section 103(A) (1) provides that, following the adoption of the local authority budget, a schedule of proposed works of maintenance and repairs to be carried out during 2021, in each municipal district, shall be prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive, having regard to the availability of resources.

The schedule of municipal district works shall be considered by the municipal district members concerned and be adopted by resolution, with or without amendment. In making an amendment, the municipal district members shall have due regard to the Local Authority Budget to be adopted in accordance with section 103(9).

General Municipal Allocation (GMA) and Municipal District Draft Budgetary Plans

Local Authorities have limited capacity in relation to discretionary type expenditure with the majority of costs being non-discretionary in nature and being reflected in the Plenary Council Budget as opposed to the municipal districts' draft budget plans.

When the Plenary Council budget has been finalised and formally adopted a schedule of municipal district works will be prepared and submitted to each municipal district.

The members welcomed the draft budget and made the following comments –

- The funding for the River Suck drainage is essential and additional money is required in this area
- The River Suck offers huge potential to develop our tourism and we need more investment in this area which will in turn generate jobs
- A query was raised regarding the budget for Roscommon Town Park and how the Illegal dumping fund can be used
- The funding for graveyard grants was mentioned and a question put forward regarding how the graveyard committees can access this money
- Town Teams and other community groups find themselves using their funds raised locally as matched funding due to difficulties in securing Roscommon County Council funds and asked if

- Roscommon County Council could give financial support to these groups
- The expenses of the elected members and the Moorhead report was commented on. The lack of recognition for members needs to be addressed with appropriate remuneration and expenses awarded in line with their duties
 - The need to keep the verges trimmed to ensure road safety

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Leyden

SECONDED by Councillor Shanagher

It was **AGREED** to send a letter to Minister Darragh O'Brien to request additional funding for 2021 to compensate the Local Authority for loss of income in rates and other areas due to Covid-19.

Martin Lydon responded to the matters that were raised

- The funding for the River Suck drainage has been in the budget for the last few years
- We have already sent in a claim to the Department for loss of income in rates and services due to Covid-19
- The €25,000 budget for Roscommon Town Park was also in the budget for 2020 as was the funding to assist Tidy Towns. The MD Co-ordinator will agree with the members the type of expenditure allowed and how to access the Tidy Towns allocation. The funding for graveyard grants has always been included in the budget
- Martin agreed to speak to the relevant Director of Services regarding matched funding.
- Roscommon County Council will inform the CPG if additional funding is received from the Department
- Any remaining budget due to undaimed conference expenses by members in 2020 will be used to fill other financial gaps due to Covid-19
- The funding generated due to the increase in the local property tax will help additional work in all areas including verge trimming

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Shanagher

SECONDED by Councillor Leyden

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Roscommon Municipal District Budget as presented.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator

Paschal Fitzmaurice

Cathaoirleach



Countersigned