

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON
ON MONDAY, 25TH APRIL, 2022 AT 2.15 PM.**

PRESENT: Councillor Joe Murphy, Cathaoirleach 2021/2022 **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: Cllr E. Kelly, Cllr P. Fitzmaurice, 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 J. Cummins, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr M. Mulligan, Cllr J. Naughten, Cllr K. Shanagher and Cllr L. Callaghan.

OFFICIALS: Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive
Majella Hunt, Director of Services
Shane Tieman, Director of Services
Caitlín Conneely, A/Director of Services
Sean Mullarkey, Acting Head of Finance
Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator
Claudette Collins, Asst. Staff Officer

Apologies: Cllr L. Fallon

67.22 DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST (SECTION 177 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 AS AMENDED)

No declarations recorded by the Members

68.22 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McDermott
SECONDED by Cllr. Cummins

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting of 28.03.2022

69.22 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

70.22 MANAGEMENT REPORT

- Management Report for Quarter 3 2022 noted.

71.22 UNAUDITED ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2021

Mr. Sean Mullarkey, A/Head of Finance presented to the Members the Annual Financial Statement 2021:

- Income €53.447mm, Expenditure of €71.366m - Rates €12.5m and LPT €10.825m (€6.965m from equalisation fund) and Transfers to Capital €5.4m
- A surplus of €25,040 delivered on the Revenue Account
- Combined total of €115.6m spend on the revenue and capital accounts delivering services
- Our Net Assets are €1,901k. During the year 6 houses, 9 vehicles were purchased and 14 houses disposed of.
- Trade Debtors and Prepayments €5.1m, Creditors and Accruals €10.4m
- Loans Payable €28.59m – including loan on Áras an Chontae

- Bank investments €42m – received €9m advance payment from TII before Christmas for N5 project
- Work in Progress is €17.127m – predominantly development sites and houses – there are 38 projects ongoing in all.
- The cash of the Council was managed prudently, with no recourse to an overdraft and 98% of invoices paid within 30 days
- The rates collection rate increased by 21% to 89%
- The rents collection maintained at 93% in line with 2020
- The collection rate for loans increased by 3% to 65% - all new loans performing well
- NPPR Income was €378k above budget at €504k

The Members welcomed the presentation and raised some matters:

- The debtors situation is good, coming out of the pandemic. The Council has helped the local economy and is to be commended for the 98% payment rate of invoices on time.
- Is the allocation for the N5 By Pass drawn down, based on the current situation?
- As we are moving to a situation where interest rates appear to be increasing – is there merit in fixing interest rates on loans such as the Corporate Building?
- Is there any update on the N5 contract – will this project have to be re-tendered?

Mr. Mullarkey replied as follows:

- The Council received €9m advance payment for N5 from TII and €2.5m has been paid to the contractor for works completed. As per instructions from TII this has been lodged to separate bank account.
- The Finance Section will look at our loans in terms of fixing rates.

72.22 APPROVAL OF OVER EXPENDITURE AND TRANSFERS BETWEEN REVENUE AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS 2021

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

It was **AGREED** to approve the over expenditure against the Adopted Budget of 2021 that incurred within the various divisions during the financial year as identified in Note 16 to the Annual Financial Statement. It was also agreed to approve the transfers between the revenue and capital account as detailed in appendix 9 of the AFS 2021.

73.22 SECTION 11 (2) (B) OF THE ROADS ACT 1993 AND ROADS REGULATIONS 1994, PART 2

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby
SECONDED by Cllr. Murphy

It was **AGREED** that a road at Cloonfour, Rooskey, County Roscommon declared to be a public road in accordance with Section 11 (2) (b) of the Roads Act 1993 and Roads Regulations 1994, Part 2 and as outlined in the map circulated.

74.22 CEMETERY IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE GRANT SCHEME 2022

Mr. Shane Tiernan, Director of services presented the proposed grants for 2022:

Roscommon County Council allocated €35,000 in the 2022 budget for the maintenance of burial grounds in County Roscommon. The members agreed a further allocation of €30,000, on a once off basis, (funded from the General Municipal Allocation) bringing the total grant allocation to €65,000.

The scheme was advertised on 4th February 2022. A total of 95 applications were received from voluntary groups with requests for funding of €226,124 for ongoing maintenance and improvements of burial grounds in County Roscommon.

The grant allocations were noted and welcomed by the Members:

- This is a small recompense to help the wonderful work done annually by local committees
- The issue of damage to cemeteries by trees was raised, specifically in Kiltoom cemetery.
- Can the Council assist with mowing the grass in Shankill cemetery? This is an old cemetery and there are few people to maintain it anymore so any assistance would be appreciated.
- What is the rationale as to how is the grant aid distributed? There seems to be variances in money sought.
- At one time there was €120k available for distribution – it is money well spent and gives a great return. The Council should work towards increasing the allocation annually.
- Some graveyards are full and is consideration being given to extensions where required?
- Can consideration be given to space allocated in cemeteries for cremation remains?
- The contribution for Kilcooley cemetery could be larger.
- Last year a motion was forwarded to the Government to provide a National Fund for Cemeteries and not accepted. This needs to be revisited.

In response to queries raised, Mr. Tieman replied:

- There are over 100 cemeteries in the county and the grants proposed are proportional to the amount sought by applicants and activity. There is a variance in what is sought by applicants but it is distributed on the basis of €20k per MD. Unfortunately resources are not available to offer any more assistance.
- Expansion of graveyards are funded from the Councils own resources.
- The council is continuously carrying out risk based assessments and works but funding is limited.
- The Council is assessing a Columbarian wall for some cemeteries and there is some demand and plans are actively under consideration at the relevant SPC.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Cllr. Callaghan

It was **AGREED** to note the Cemetery grants allocation for 2022.

75.22 TIDY TOWNS AMENITY AND GRANT SCHEME 2022

Ms. Majella Hunt, Director of Services presented the Allocations under the Tidy Towns and Amenity Grants Scheme for 2022:

The total budget for 2022 is €60,000. The scheme is available to community groups and voluntary organisations wishing to undertake small scale projects in their local area.

A total of 84 applications were received of which 80 were deemed eligible. In accordance with the scheme, funding for Tidy Towns Associations who enter the National Tidy Towns competition is prioritised. Funding of Local Development Associations who are carrying out small scale enhancement works is recommended. An allocation to Roscommon Community Games and two sub aqua clubs involved in search and rescue in Roscommon is also recommended.

The Cathaoirleach thanked the Director for the presentation on the scheme and the allocations proposed which will be very welcome to all the groups.

The members discussed as follows:

- Can the time be extended to spend the allocation and submit the invoices – to October or November, and can there be more flexibility with regard to the spending of the money so that no unspent money had to be handed back?
- This scheme is a great asset to visitors to the county and a great return for efforts of groups, especially those who have won national medals and it is an encouragement to them going forward.
- This allocation is well spread throughout the county.
- There is a need for a fresh look at allocations as insurances are an issue for a lot of groups – can a quotation be got by the Council for a block insurance policy for groups?
- Can insurance costs be included in the claim application as it is not currently included?
- The PPN could be asked to assist in the proposal to get a block insurance.
- In last year's budget, there was a proposal that unspent councillors conference budget be allocated to this Grant fund. Can this be clarified if it has been included?
The sum of €10,000 was proposed and seconded that it should be included in this year's allocation. Can this be done now?

Mr. Sean Mullarkey responded that the it was his understanding that if there was an unspent allocation for councillor's conferences it would be carried forward in the AFS and this was done so it will be available for next year.

The Director of Services noted that if an extra allocation was to be awarded then all applications would have to be revisited and the extra money allocated on a pro rata basis and consideration of the fact that some groups have already received the maximum allocation.

In response to the query on insurances the Chief Executive noted that the Council have assessed the viability of insuring the playgrounds through the council's insurance but the inspection regime is quite onerous and would take resources we do not have at present. It would be preferable that the groups have their own insurance and if this can be done on a groups basis it could be an answer.

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

It was **AGREED** that a sum of €10,000 be included in the next Budget to increase the Tidy Towns and Amenity Grant Scheme allocation by that amount next year.

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

It was **AGREED** that the Council review the Amenity Grant Scheme to include insurance costs.

76.22 S85 AGREEMENT WITH GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

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

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council enter into an agreement with Galway County Council under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 whereby Roscommon County Council agrees to carry out the functions of Galway County Council under Article 7 (2) of the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 i.e. Roscommon County Council will carry out drinking water compliance monitoring on private supplies within the administrative area of Galway County Council. The agreement to be for an initial period of a maximum of 3 years to the end of 2024 and any renewal beyond that date to be subject to new resolution of Council.

77.22 CORRESPONDENCE

Replies to Resolutions from Roscommon County Council:

- **5th April, 2022** - Reply from The Minister for Social Protection Ms. Heather Humphreys TD to the Notice of Motion passed by Roscommon County Council at the February Plenary Meeting regarding removing the means test for Carer's Allowance in situations where the person being cared for has a full detailed medical report in support of their condition.

Resolutions from other Local Authorities:

13th April 2022 –Clare County Council

That the Minister for Health approves and allocates funding for both the equipment and the recruitment of appropriate personnel for the Gynaecology department in Ennis

13th April 2022 - Clare County Council

That the Council call on the Minister for Justice to propose legislation the use of the "Z" symbol used by the Russian army in the war on Ukraine

6th April 2022 –Galway County Council

That all Banks assist in setting up cashless transactions and low cost debit cards to all OAP and Credit Unions so they are allowed to enter a competitive banking market

11th April 2022 –Limerick City and County Council

That LCCC put in place working system for GDPR consent forms and call on Minister for Housing to intervene.

13th April 2022 – Westmeath County Council

That Minister for Environment Mr. Eamonn Ryan give permission to Bord na Mona to allow contractors to harvest turf in light of war in Ukraine

13th April 2022 – Westmeath County Council

That relevant Government Departments are requested to further reduce taxes on fuel

Other Correspondence:

- **12th April 2022** – Final Report from Just Transition Commissioner (previously circulated)

78.22 NOTICE OF MOTION 06.22 COMPENSATION FOR FARMERS AT LOUGH FUNSHINAGH - CLLR. WARD

"I am calling on the Government, the Minister for Finance, Mr. Paschal Donohoe and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Mr. Charlie McConalogue TD to provide the necessary compensation to the farmers that have lands on or adjacent to Lough Funshinagh that are badly affected by the flooding since 2015"

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:

This Motion requires a resolution of the Council

Clr. Ward outlined the difficulties of the land owners adjacent to Lough Funshinagh who have their land flooded over the past number of years with over 40 families affected and they can no longer farm the land with a resulting loss of income. Habitats have also been destroyed. The Minister should meet with Roscommon IFA and local public representatives on this matter.

He was supported by Clrs. Naughten, Kelly, Keogh and Kilduff who also agreed that a meeting should be requested of the Minister with the local community affected as their capacity to generate income is diminished and they should be helped.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Ward

SECONDED by Cllr. Naughten

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister for Finance, Mr. Paschal Donohoe and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Mr. Charlie McConalogue TD to provide the necessary compensation to the farmers that have lands on or adjacent to Lough Funshinagh that are badly affected by the flooding since 2015. It was further agreed to request that the Minister for Agriculture meet the local community affected to discuss this matter.

79.22 CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

The Chief Executive advised the Members that since the last meeting, correspondence was received from the Planning Regulator that congratulated the planning authority on the delivery of a well-presented county development plan which provides a clear and concise strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Roscommon over the plan period.

The Director of Services read the letter from the OPR to the Members that highlighted the following:

- Pleased with the adoption of setback distances for wind turbines this demonstrates the Planning Authority's clear commitment to supporting national renewable energy targets under the climate action Plan
- Zoning— OPR accepts rationale of Members not to comply with material alteration in relation to Castlerea, Athleague and Barrymore/Hodson Bay.

The Plan in its entirety has been accepted with no Ministerial Directions and has come into effect from the 19th of April and is available to view on our dedicated website and a formal letter will issue to the Members. The LAPs will now commence as soon as possible and a timeline will also be circulated.

80.22 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh

SECONDED by Cllr. McDermott

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

81.22 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

81.22a DENTAL SERVICES FOR MEDICAL CARD HOLDERS IN COUNTY ROSCOMMON

Cllr. Ward outlined difficulties that has been brought to his attention regarding medical holders in the county having to access dental services outside the county recently.

He will be raising the matter at the HSE Forum later this week.

The Members welcomed the motion from Cllr. Ward as they too had been contacted regarding this matter:

- This is a serious issue as dental emergencies are urgent. We cannot be waiting for the Minister to act on this matter and the people affected must be immediately reimbursed.
- A unit must be set up immediately in Roscommon and this is the remit of the HSE.
- The Minister announced last week the expansion of dental healthcare for medical card holders in the dental treatment services scheme and he also confirmed his commitment to review of the scheme and as a result of the changes there should be an increase in dentists offering treatment to medical card patients. Cllr. Ward thanked the members for their support and welcomed the

proposed expansion of the scheme.

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

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister for Health to highlight the situation in Roscommon that people on medical cards do not have to access to public dental services and have to travel outside the county to do so and to request that the HSE immediately rectify the situation.

81.22b LAMA AWARD FOR SOMERS PARK, CASTLEREA

Cllr. Fitzmaurice thanked everyone involved in the improvement works in Somers park, including the funding and maintenance assistance of the Council. The park is now a very safe space for people to use and the upgrade was recognised with a LAMA award last week.

Cllr. Dineen acknowledged the recognition of the work in achieving the award.

81.22c THE ROSCOMMON UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY RESPONSE FORUM

The Cathaoirleach informed the Members that the Community Forum that was set up in relation to Covid has moved to deal with the Ukrainian Crisis. The Council is the Lead Authority with the Chief Executive chairing the meeting and the local partners including HSE, LEADER, An Post, An Garda Siochanna Tusla, etc. have representation at the forum.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Monday, 23rd May, 2022.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:

Petrizis Bohan
Meetings Administrator

Joseph Murphy

Cathaoirleach

Petrizis Bohan

Countersigned