

MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, THE COURTHOUSE, ROSCOMMON, ON MONDAY THE 22nd JUNE, 2015 AT 2.15 P.M.

PRESENT Councillor Paddy Kilduff, Cathaoirleach **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: V. Byrne I. Connaughton M. Creaton D. Connolly
N. Dineen R. Doherty L. Fallon P. Fitzmaurice
M. Hopkins J. Cummins J. Keogh O. Leyden
M. Mulligan E. Murphy J. Naughten K. Shanagher
T. Ward.

OFFICIALS: Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive
Majella Hunt, Director of Services
Martin Lydon, Head of Finance & Planning
John O'Rourke, A/ Director of Services
Pat Murtagh, A/Director of Services
Fiona ní Chuinn, Meetings Administrator

Cathaoirleach Paddy Kilduff welcomed everybody to the meeting. He expressed his sadness at the recent death of Tom Gunning of the Planning Department of Roscommon County Council and extended his sympathies to his family. A minutes silence was held.

63.15. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

Councillor Doherty questioned the wording of the minutes on the Service Delivery Plan and the proposed changes to Fire, Library & Emergency Services. She stated that her proposal was seconded by Councillor Leyden and had been agreed by the members, which was not stated in the minutes. Councillor Doherty insisted that her exact wording on the Service Delivery Plan be used in the minutes as previously agreed.

Tommy Ryan informed the meeting that a long debate had ensued on the matter at the monthly meeting in Boyle and that the Executives understanding on the amendment to the Annual Service Plan was that the wording put forward stating that "Roscommon County Council is subject to national and local agreement" had been agreed.

On the **PROPOSAL** by Councillor Doherty
SECONDED by Councillor Leyden
It was **AGREED** to amend the minute as follows

On the **PROPOSAL** by Councillor Doherty
SECONDED by Councillor Leyden
It was **AGREED** that in the absence of new National Guidelines published by the Department of Environment specifically in relation to Fire Services & Emergency Services and Library services Councillors reserve the right to reject any future proposal by the Department which will negatively affect the current and/or future Service Delivery Plans

Tommy Ryan confirmed that we are obliged to implement national policy but all the Annual Service Plan is stating is that these documents exist and suggested the following

wording would be included in the document “Roscommon County Council is subject to national and local agreement”

Councillor Ivan Connaughton sought clarification in relation to Motion 18.15 on property sales. He had sought a commitment from Roscommon County Council to sell residential properties on the open market to achieve the maximum price for the local authority

Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive replied that where the minutes state it was agreed to proceed as outlined, this refers to the answer as outlined in the Executive’s response and re-iterated that Roscommon County Council is not a speculator of property and under the current system have flexibility in methods of disposal of land and property depending on varying circumstances. He confirmed that if Roscommon County Council pass a resolution to sell property on the open market this discretion and flexibility will be lost.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward

SECONDED by Councillor Murphy

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Minutes of the Plenary Meeting held on 25.5.2015, as amended.

64.15. CONSIDERATION OF MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT SUBJECT TO SECTION 51, SUB-SECTIONS (3) & (4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ACT, 2014:

- **May, 2015**

Members noted the Monthly Management Report for the month of May, 2015.

65.15. NATIONAL INSPECTION PLAN 2015-2017 – DOMESTIC WASTE WATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS

Majella Hunt, Director of Services presented to the meeting the National Inspection Plan 2015 – 2017 for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems.

She outlined the following:

- Roscommon County Council are taking a two strand approach - awareness and inspection
- EPA campaign in assistance with the local authority
- Roscommon County Council must complete 84 inspections with the period 2015-2017 which equates to 28 per year
- Inspections are due to commence in quarter 3 of 2015
- Inspection procedures
- Methods of citizen engagement
- Issues in Roscommon
- Grant aid available

The members raised the following issues: -

- Issues with guidelines for septic tanks
- Engineers are applying best practise rules
- Must seek affordable solutions for people
- Costs of rectifying septic tanks problems is causing hardship for people
- Costs associated with septic tank upgrade and repairs is very expensive and causing distress for families
- Can members see where inspections have taken place
- Many specified septic tanks systems are failing inspection tests
- Why has Roscommon County Council the highest non-compliance rate?

- Issue with ownership where septic tanks are situated in lands adjacent to a property – right of way issue.
- Level of funding available needs to be reviewed
- Is there difficulty getting planning in vulnerable zones based on EPA Guidelines
- Policy difficult to implement due to lack of funding available
- What flexibility is there for timeframe for required works to be carried out?
- Regulations may be a future preventative for development in rural communities
- How many contractors are registered with Roscommon County Council for desludging permits
- Number of annual inspections very low
- The timeframe people have to carry out required works
- Will Roscommon County Council re-open the facility to provide additional licenses/permits
- Objective of the inspections is to improve the water quality in the county.

Majella Hunt responded to the issues as follows:

- EPA mapping website and breakdown of inspections per Municipal District will be emailed to all members
- EPA & Departmental training is provided to all inspectors
- EPA database must be populated based on inspection reports and returns are required
- There is flexibility regarding the timeframe for required works to be carried out. The required works must be complete within 6 months of issuing the advisory notice however 1 extension is available following discussions with the applicant
- Roscommon County Council must comply with EU Directives to preserve water quality and the county is very vulnerable due to our ground water sources.
- Desludging and maintenance are the main problems with septic tanks. Roscommon County Council has a number of registered contractors but are not in a position to extend the facility as this is now under the remit of Irish Water.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fitzmaurice
SECONDED by Councillor Leyden

It was **AGREED** to write to the Department to seek clarification and guidance for families unable to carry out the necessary works.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward
SECONDED by Councillor Fallon

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister to seek amendment to the regulations that if people have a written report from an Engineer that they should automatically qualify for funding.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Leyden
SECONDED by Councillor Doherty

It was **AGREED** to write to the Department requesting that a loan system be put in place for people to access funds to assist in septic tank upgrades.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughten
SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

It was **AGREED** to write to the Department to increase the level of grant aid from 50% to 80% for the upgrade of septic tanks

66.15. EXTENSION OF STANDING ORDERS:

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Keogh

SECONDED by Councillor Connaughton

It was **AGREED** to extend Standing Orders to the close of business.

67.15. PLANNED CLOSURE OF PSYCHIATRIC RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES/HOSTELS AND DAY CARE CENTRES IN COUNTY ROSCOMMON

Correspondence from Minister Kathleen Lynch, Department of Health was circulated to the meeting stating that all mental health services across the country are currently being reviewed. A clinical review of the Rosalie Unit has been completed. This will be followed by a social assessment and following on from this, the HSE will determine what resources and services are required in Roscommon and set out a provision for the future accordingly.

Councillor Michael Creaton informed the meeting that Minister Varadkar is willing to meet with the members of Roscommon County Council and Minister Kathleen Lynch, depending on her availability.

The members raised the following issues:

- Welcomed the proposal by Minister Varadkar for a meeting
- Delay in meeting is unacceptable due to the proposed closure of Rosalie Unit
- Ensure deputation at meeting represents the entire county of Roscommon
- Current shortage of nursing homes in Co. Roscommon
- Continue to raise this as a concern and keep on the Agenda until closure is ruled out.
- The elected members must work as a group to pursue the matter.
- Look at all the services especially mental health in Co. Roscommon and collate the information prior to meeting the Minister.
- Prepare questions in advance of meeting in order for Minister to have answers on the day of meeting.
- Need for a Government commitment that the unit will remain open.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Doherty

SECONDED by Councillor Leyden

It was **AGREED** to write to Catherine Cunningham requesting a list of appointments to the provision of mental health services in Co. Roscommon

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Councillor Leyden

It was **AGREED** to keep the issue to the proposed closure of the Rosalie Unit on the Agenda for the next plenary meeting.

68.15. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Letter from Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources re: new broadband scheme
2. Letter from Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport re: current bus service from Roscommon to Athlone
3. Letter from Fingal County Council re: the derogation on the status of the Irish language in the EU

4. Letter from Cork City Council re: the Minister attending the opening of Social Housing Schemes
5. Email from South Dublin County Council outlining a motion calling on the Minister to introduce a bin waiver for people with health issues

69.15. QUESTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER NO. 135.

Replies to the Question submitted by members were circulated (see schedule).

70.15. NOTICES OF MOTION

19.15. RENT ALLOWANCE

Notice of Motion from Councillor Naughten – 19/15

“That Roscommon County Council requests the Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton, TD to review the current rent allowance structures which are currently capped on a county basis.”

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:-

This Notice of Motion requires a Resolution of the Council.

Councillor Naughten highlighted the issue that rent allowance in the Monksland and West Athlone area is capped at €400 per week where as in East Athlone rent allowance is capped at €500 per week. This has a direct impact on low income families living in the West Athlone area with the problem of increasing rents.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughten

SECONDED by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister to seek a review of the rent allowance scheme

20.15. SACRED HEART HOSPITAL:

Notice of Motion from Councillor Ward – 20/15

“I am calling on the Minister for Health, Mr. Leo Varadkar, and the HSE to provide the necessary funding for the refurbishment of the Sacred Heart Hospital in Roscommon, which will bring it up to a standard that will comply with HIQA requirements in 2016.”

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:-

This Notice of Motion requires a Resolution of the Council.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward

SECONDED by Councillor Fitzmaurice

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister to provide funding for the upgrade of the Sacred Heart Hospital to meet HIQA standards.

71.15 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Cummins

SECONDED by Councillor Connaughton

It was **AGREED** to adopt the list of Conferences as circulated to the members.

Cllr. T. Ward

Protected Disclosures Act 2014, The Connacht Hotel, Old Dublin Road, Galway

AILG Training (Module 3), Local Community Development and LCDC, Radisson Blu Hotel, Sligo

Sustainable Tourism Development, The Connacht Hotel, Dublin Road, Galway.

AILG Training (Module 2), Clayton Hotel, Galway

Govt's Construction 2020 Strategy Local Govt. Housing Supply, White's Hotel, Wexford.

Cllr. M.Creaton	Irish National Radon Forum, EPA Headquarters, Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford
Cllr. K. Shanagher	LAMA Spring Training, Ard Rí Hotel, Tuam, Co. Galway AILG Annual Conference, Nuremore Hotel, Carrickmacross
Cllr. N. Dineen	AILG Annual Conference, Nuremore Hotel, Carrickmacross Protected Disclosures Act 2014, The Connacht Hotel, Old Dublin Road, Galway

72.15. VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS were extended to:

Roscommon Hurlers on winning a place in the Christy Ring Cup 2016

73.15. VOTES OF SYMPATHY were extended to:

Bishop Thomas Flynn, Ballaghaderreen R.I.P.
The Gunning family, Curraghboy, Athlone on the death of Thomas Gunning
The Callaghan family, Castlerea on the death of Hubert Callaghan
The Hunt family, Castleplunkett on the death of Mickie Hunt
The Hanley family, Fuerty on the death of Audrey Hanly (nee Kenny)
The McCrann family, Elphin on the death of Gerry McCrann
The Beirne family, Elphin on the death of Pdraig (Dolly) Beirne
The Bruen family, Ballaghaderreen on the death of Tom Bruen
The Moriarty family, Roscommon Town on the death of Brendan Moriarty
The Kedian family, Mullymux on the death of Pauline Kedian
The Sharkey family, Castlerea

74.15. AOB

Athlone Boundary Committee

Councillor Kilduff referred to correspondence that was circulated to the meeting outlining the terms of reference for the Athlone Boundary Committee. The document outlines that the committee is required to:

- Carry out a review of the boundary between County Westmeath and County Roscommon.
- Make such recommendations with respect to that boundary, and any consequential recommendations with respect to the area of the Municipal District of Athlone, that it considers to be necessary in the interests of effective and convenient local government
- Prepare and furnish to the Minister a report in writing of that review and its recommendations.

He informed the meeting that the Chief Executive, Tommy Ryan had spoken to the members of the Athlone Municipal District prior to today's meeting. He confirmed that it is intended that the members of Roscommon County Council in consultation with the Executive will be making a submission on the matter

Members raised the following issues:

- The extension of the Athlone UDC would have dire consequences financially on the County of Roscommon as a whole in terms of the revenue generated from motor tax, rates, etc.
- 1/3 of rates paid in County Roscommon are paid by businesses in the Athlone and Kiltoom area.
- Monksland very developed and highly populated area of Athlone
- Detailed discussion required going forward regarding the proposal to the Boundary Committee
- The Executive Team examining the boundary review must have an in-depth knowledge of the area and link in with members.
- Existing integrated approach between Westmeath County Council and Roscommon County Council in developing retail strategy, etc.
- Disappointing if boundary review results in loss of Roscommon County Council investment in infrastructure and services being leaked into Westmeath County Council
- Submission from group must have a strong, co-ordinated and strategic approach
- Current boundary should be extended back to the bridge
- People of Monksland wish to remain in County Roscommon

Tommy Ryan, Chief Executive replied to issues as follows:

- The deadline for completion of the submission is 29th February 2016
- Roscommon County Council will start immediately to prepare a submission involving data collection and incorporating social, cultural and community elements to create a fully detailed and comprehensive submission.
- He confirmed that Roscommon County Council will devote resources to working on this issue to prepare a credible and convincing report.
- There will be further consultation with members in the coming months.

Control of Dogs

Councillor John Keogh raised the issue of Roscommon County Council's Control of Dogs policy and stated the need to revisit the issue of re-homing restricted breeds.

On the **PROPOSAL** by Councillor Keogh

SECONDED by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** that the issue of control of dogs policy would revert back to SPC for review.

Moss Vision

Councillor Kathleen Shanagher welcomed the announcement from Moss Vision of 50 new jobs in Roscommon Town. The company representatives have stated that they were impressed by the facilities and services in the town.

Councillor Orla Leyden complimented the work of Tommy Ryan, Kathleen Martin and Pat Murtagh and their proactive approach in developing the IDA lands. She hopes that this will lead to further employment and investment in the town in the near future.

'Let's Go Mental'

Councillor Kathleen Shanagher informed the meeting of an event organised by Comhairle na nÓg on the 29th July 2015 in Lough Key, Boyle called Let's Go Mental. The aim of the event is to promote positive mental health in young people.

Housing Adaptation Grant

Councillor Rachel Doherty queried if there has been any update from the Department in relation to housing adaptation grants.

John O'Rourke, A/Director of Services informed the meeting that Roscommon County Council had received an allocation for Housing Adaptation Grants last May. He will circulate this information to the members.

Roscommon Races

Councillor Ivan Connaughton suggested that Roscommon County Council would consider sponsoring a race at the Roscommon Races to support the facility. This could act as a staff evening to improve staff morale.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:

Meetings Administrator

Cathaoirleach

Countersigned

QUESTION – JUNE, 2015

Question 1 – Councillor Naughten:

Have Roscommon County Council made a request to the Department of Environment to recommence the hiring of staff to replace staff who have retired as there are currently shortages in many areas?

The Meetings Administrator read the following reply:-

Roscommon County Council has submitted a Workforce Plan to the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government for the filling of vacant posts, including posts that have become vacant due to staff retirements. The filling of staff vacancies is subject to the approval of the Department and budgetary provisions.