



## MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL COMMUNITY CENTRE IN CURRAGHBOY MONDAY, 22ND MAY, 2017 AT 2.15 PM.

PRESENT:	Councillor Tony Ward, Cathaoirleach Roscommon County Council PRESIDED
MEMBERS:	Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr I. Connaughton, Cllr M. Creaton, Cllr J. Cummins, Cllr R. Doherty, Cllr L. Fallon, Cllr P. Fitzmaurice, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr P. Kilduff, Cllr O. Leyden, Cllr M. Mulligan, Cllr J. Murphy, Cllr J. Naughten, Cllr K. Shanagher and Cllr L. Callaghan.
OFFICIALS:	Eugene Cummins, Chief Executive Derek Caldbeck, A/Director of Services Majella Hunt, Director of Services Martin Lydon, Director of Services Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator Cait Kenny, Assistant Staff Officer

Apologies: Cllr D. Connolly.

## 61.17 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Cathaoirleach Tony Ward welcomed the executive, members, local community and the press to the May Council Meeting which was being held in Curraghboy Community Centre in Councillor Ward's home town. He invited the Chairperson of St Brigid's Handball Club and well-known local man Seamus McHugh to speak. Mr. McHugh welcomed everyone to Curraghboy and noted it was their second occasion to host a plenary meeting, having been previously held in 2010. He congratulated Tony on his achievements paying particular attention to his work with the Save Roscommon Campaign, Tidy Towns Committee, Gerry O'Malley Commemorative Committee, and as a trustee of St Brigid's GAA Club.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Creaton **SECONDED** by Councillor Keogh It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Plenary Meeting held 24.04.2017

## 62.17 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising

## 63.17 MANAGEMENT REPORT

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

Members noted the Management Report for April 2017.

#### 64.17 LEASE OF LANDS

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fitzmaurice

SECONDED by Councillor Creaton

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the lease of property pursuant to the provisions of Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001. Particulars of the property which the County Council proposes to lease:-

**The Property:** Old Fire Station (formerly Youth Work Ireland), Barrack Street, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon **The persons to whom the Property is to be leased**: Castlerea Town Team Company Ltd.

Consideration: €100/annum Term of Lease: 10 years Conditions: None

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Keogh

SECONDED by Councillor Fallon

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the lease of property pursuant to the provisions of Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001. Particulars of the property which the County Council proposes to lease:-

The Property: Unit 1, Monksland Civic Centre, Monksland, Athlone, Co. Roscommon The persons from whom the land was acquired: John P. Naughton The persons to whom the Property is to be leased: Nicola Ryan & Sallie Lane Consideration: €600/month (€7,200 per annum) plus service charges. Term of Lease: 4 years and 9 months

# 65.17 DISPOSAL OF LANDS

# On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Connaughton

SECONDED by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** that the Council consent to the disposal of lands pursuant to the provision of Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001. Particulars of the land which the County Council proposes to dispose of:-

The land: 0.2981 Ha in the Townland of Beagh, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway The persons from whom the land was acquired: Galway County Council, Prospect Hill, Galway. The person to whom the land is to be disposed: Conor Ryan, Beagh, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway Consideration: €10,000 Conditions: None registered on Folio 25275F

## 66.17 AUDIT COMMITTEE

- Audit Committee Report on Annual Financial Statement 2015
- Audit Committee Annual Report 2015
- Audit Committee Annual Report 2016

Mr. Derek Caldbeck A/Head of Finance explained to the members that the Audit Committee met four times in 2015, had a period of inactivity during 2016 but was reconstituted in early 2017. The new chairperson is Ms. Sinead Devine and the committee is currently preparing its 3 year strategic plan.

He referred the members to the report from the Audit Committee Chairperson which stated that the Audit Committee had considered the 2015 audited Annual Financial Statement (AFS) and the Local Government Auditor's report at its meeting held on 20.2.2017. He stated that the Auditor's opinion is that the AFS presents fairly in accordance with the Code of Practice and Accounting Regulations, the financial position of the Council at 31.12.2015 and its income and expenditure for the year reported.

The Audit Committee wish to bring the following to the attention of the members:-

- The Revenue account reports a deficit of €17k for 2015, having achieved a surplus of €18k for the previous year, while the accumulated surplus at 31/12/2015 is €150k.
- The 93% collection yield for rates was an improvement on the previous year's performance (80%). However, this was based on new methodology issued by the Department. The 2015 collection percentage under the old calculation method was 82%.
- Against the outstanding balances at the year end totalling €1.86m, there is a specific bad debt provision of €1.2m with an additional €200k as a general bad debt provision.
- Collection rate for Rents & Annuities (89%) which was above the national average of 87%.
- The loans collection yielded 75% and was is in line with the national average.
- The bad debt provision for all major collection being 74% of gross debtors is considered adequate.
- Following a review of all customer accounts during 2015 adjustments of €600k were reflected in the 2015 AFS.
- The committee welcomed the new Asset and Energy Management team that was established to record fixed assets and the registration of titles.
- Moylurg Rockingham Ltd is 50% owned by Roscommon County Council and for 2015 a profit of €200k was reported. Roscommon Leisure Centre is 100% owned by the council and reported a loss of €100k after receipt of a subvention of €74k.
- A Procurement Section was established in June 2014 and the controls put in place by the Council appear to be effective in indentifying and addressing material procurement breaches.
- Bonds to the value of €2m have been paid over in relation to 16 unfinished housing estates.
- The Council had a shared service arrangement with Sligo County Council for Internal Auditor for 10 months.

## 67.17 ADOPTION OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DEC 2016

Mr. Caldbeck informed the members that the Annual Financial Statement (AFS) for 2016 has been completed and circulated in its unaudited form for members' attention and provided a summary of the financial activity for the year. Mr Caldbeck presented a report to members and he explained that two resolutions were necessary in line with the content of his report.

- To approve the over expenditure compared to budget (in the main counterbalanced by increased income over that budgeted for the year)
- To approve the transfers to/from Revenue to Capital for the year (in the main amounts that had been approved by members as part of the budget process for 2016)

The key points for members to note from the AFS 2016 are:

- The Revenue account reports a surplus of €22k for 2016.
- Over expenditure was financed by increase in income streams.
- Revenue expenditure included €5m on flooding
- Vacant commercial property cost €2.3m in rates. This has increased dramatically since 2008
- Equalisation payment for LPT of €5.00m there is more and more risk attached to receipt of this money.
- Large increase in staff pension payments.
- 18% of our income in 2016 was from rates, in 2008 it was 12%. There is a huge reliance on a small number of ratepayers for the bulk of the rates income
- We received €240,000 in compensation for loss of rates income from globals and we do not expect any compensation in 2017.
- The revaluation exercise in 2016 had an impact on our cash flow
- Our expenditure per head of population in county was €1,350 (€87m for 64,436 pop)
- Final Account of Áras an Chontae not yet complete but expected to be €22m as per the loan sanction

Mr. Caldbeck outlined financial pressures for 2017/2018 as follows:

- Haddington Road Staff pay costs in 2017 will be €400,000 over budget while pension costs are more difficult to predict going forward
- Lack of compensation for loss of globals rates adjustment
- Budget pressure on ARV for 2018 as a result of evaluation
- Will NPRR stream eventually run out and if so how will the income be replaced?
- Possible costs associated with severe weather incidents such as fires or flooding
- Financial risks also include income threat to PRD, Thornhill Report recommendations on LPT, dependency on Irish water SLA, Irish water funding of pension, pressures to increase LPT and possible outsourcing of services.

The following issues were raised discussed by the members:

- Prudent management of the resources ensured that the Council had no recourse to the overdraft facility in 2016. The 2016 AFS report shows that Roscommon County Council is in a healthy state financially.
- The vacant property levy of 15% will put small businesses under pressure.
- Not in favour of commercial rates on vacant properties when businesses are struggling and this may be more appropriate in large cities.
- The Thornhill Report is of concern if it is implemented as it recommends each county retains its own property tax and we are subsidised up to €5m annually. This ultimately means we have to increase our property tax.
- What is the value of the bonds are outstanding?
- Although the sum of million was spent to alleviate flooding in 2016, there are still outstanding problems and pressure must continue to be brought to bear to deal with these issues.
- Members supported the ongoing financing of the Roscommon leisure centre as its provision was more than a financial matter. What happened regarding the Leisure Centre Advisory body and it would be considered good governance in view resources spent on it. Also consider Wi fi installation
- Concern with regard to rising cost of staff pensions, ageing staff profile and suggestion there should be a national fund for pensions.
- When will Final Account for Áras an Chontae be completed?

- Concern about current staff strike, phones not answered and request for a clear statement from CE on the matter
- Consider advisory body for Lough Key Forest Park similar to the Leisure centre. Moylurg Ltd. are making a presentation at the next Boyle Municipal District meeting.
- Rates on wind farms have increased how will solar farms be rated?
- Concern from businesses in not so much rates as increasing insurance costs
- Management should look for motor tax payments to be retained in county
- Concern about cut in funding for local roads from year to year many roads not resurfaced for years
- Incentives for businesses starting off not to have to pay rates for a number of years

Mr. Caldbeck replied to points raised as follows:

- The difference in amount billed vs. amount paid for rates is an accounting amount.
- The loan sanction for the new HQ was always €22m and there have been various presentations to members outlining the costs. The contractor costs are €15.7m, Land and associated costs €2.4m, Furniture fittings and ICT €2.1m Consultancy fees €1.3m and Miscellaneous costs €0.5m.
- The council always try to maximise grant funding received for housing

Ms. Majella Hunt, Director of Services informed the members of the significant investment in the Leisure centre. There have been changes in legislation with regard to Directorships and this will have to be regularised and part of this process will involve introduction of new structures including reestablishment of the advisory body.

Mr. Martin Lydon, Director of Services informed members that a total of €13.6m is outstanding in bonds but not all will be called in. Income from development levies increased due to the construction of the wind farm. There have been a couple of planning applications for solar farms but as the subsidy payments have discontinued it is difficult to know if they will progress

The C.E., Mr. Eugene Cummins stated that he was delighted to be able to attend the meeting in Curraghboy and thanked Mr. Seamus McHugh for the hospitality. He said that the Final account for Áras an Chontae headquarters is imminent with one significant outstanding item to be resolved. In response to a query on the final account, he confirmed that a full breakdown of the final account would be made available to the members when completed. He also informed the members that as the recent staff dispute has been referred to the Labour Court he could make no further comment on the matter.

## On the PROPOSAL of Councillor Naughten

## SECONDED by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** that that Roscommon County Council seek extra funding for grants from the Department of Housing.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Leyden

SECONDED by Councillor Shanagher

It was **AGREED** that that Roscommon County Council reconstitute the Advisory Body of the Roscommon Leisure Centre.

## **SECONDED** by Councillor Dineen

It was **RESOLVED** that Roscommon County Council authorise the over expenditure under the Divisions as set out in Mr Caldbeck's report of 12<sup>th</sup> May 2017 which accompanied the Annual Financial Statement 2016 pursuant to Section 104 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and the transfers to/from Capital Revenue accounts.

## On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughten

## SECONDED by Councillor Fallon

It was **AGREED** that the unaudited Annual Financial Statement for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2016 be adopted.

The Cathaoirleach at this point thanked Mr. Seamus McHugh from St. Bridget's handball club and all of the hall committee for their work in having the hall in such wonderful shape for the meeting and for the hospitality.

## 68.17 UPDATE ON AGE FRIENDLY STRATEGY

Mr. Pat Murtagh, SEO gave a brief overview of Roscommon Age Friendly Strategy for 2016 to the members and outlined the rationale for Age Friendly, the actions undertaken by the Working Group and proposals for 2017.

The members made the following comments:

- Important to have a strategy in place to deal with growing number of older people.
- Following on from loss of telephone allowance, could the Council liaise with mobile phone companies to put a package in place for the elderly.
- Local Link connects Boyle and Strokestown to Roscommon, desirable to have this extended to other areas.
- Care and Assist Programme run by RLP this is run by Roscommon Leader Partnership.
- Greatest problem is rural isolation and loneliness, must find some mechanism of transport to allow people to leave their houses, especially at night.
- Need to make our streets and towns age friendly e.g. footpaths, high kerbs, street crossings.
- Need to extend the social car scheme.
- Roscommon Sports partnership healthy ageing programme being developed.

## On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Callaghan

SECONDED by Councillor Byrne

It was **AGREED** to write to Minister for Social Protection to engage with mobile phone companies to put a proposal in place to encourage use of mobile phones by older people.

## On the PROPOSAL of Councillor Byrne

## SECONDED by Councillor Leyden

It was **AGREED** to write to Minister for Social Protection requesting an increase in the rate of the old age pension for a single person living alone.

## 69.17 OUTDOOR RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEME 2017

Martin Lydon, Director of Services outlined this scheme is to provide 80% funding for the development of outdoor recreational infrastructure.

Eligible applicants are the

- Local Authorities in cooperation with local communities for small scale projects up to €10,000; local authorities individually,
- Local Authorities working with other local authorities or local stake holders for medium scale projects up to €100,000
- State Agencies individually or working collaboratively with Local Authorities or local authorities working together for large projects from €100,000 to €1,000,000

He noted that the deadlines for the scheme are clear but will be difficult to achieve as the small and medium projects must be completed in 2017.

He advised that he has been in contact with Roscommon Leader Partnership, who understands the process as they previously administered the scheme.

In response to members concerns in relation to very tight timelines, Mr. Lydon advised that this message is being communicated back to the Department.

## 70.17 PRESENTATION FROM IARNRÓD EIREANN - 'ENHANCING CUSTOMER SERVICES'

Ms. Jane Cregan, Events and PR Manager and Mr. Eddie Fitzpatrick, District Manager gave a presentation to the Members in relation to proposed larnród Éireann reorganisation to meet changing customer demands. The new focus is to provide outstanding customer service throughout journey focussing on:

- Move to On-line and ticket vending machines for payments
- Onboard customer service representatives.
- Station Customer Service
- A mix of manned and self-service stations
- Revenue management better match of supply and demand
- Preparing local implementation plans for each station
- Update public representatives as local implementation plans finalised

Following the Presentation, various issues were raised by the Members:

- Overcrowding is an issue that needs to be looked at.
- Charge for car parking at Boyle station is forcing cars onto street and super valu car park.
- Welcome onboard customer service reps.
- Any scope to develop a service from Knockcroghery during off-peak times.
- Breakdown on regional basis regarding use of vending machines.
- Don't want to implement policy that is biased to rural Ireland.
- Anti-social behaviour on Dublin to Westport route with hen and stag parties.
- Castlerea Station no staff, waiting room or toilets with reliance on vending machines and poor signage outlining this leading to poor customer experience and fines.
- Issue with car parking at Cortober during peak times.
- Reserved seating is hard to locate.
- Lack of tea/coffee services.
- Policy to serve no alcohol on board trains.
- Minimum level of staff should be retained at station to avoid incidents occurring.

- Issue with parking and clamping at Athlone station.
- Can you purchase an integrated ticket Rail, Luas, Dublin bus.
- Sequencing of level crossings gates come down a long way in advance of train arriving.
- Move to self-service stations is disappointing.
- Cost of train ticket is expensive.
- Propose vending machine on train to purchase tickets to avoid fines.
- Any plans to close agricultural land crossings?

Ms. Cregan replied to issues raised as follows:

- Better booking system will help with overcrowding and ensure trains are operating at capacity. Single line track in Roscommon, with freight going up and down.
- Revenue from car parking at Boyle station goes back to generating new car parks but will consider this further
- Will provide members with regional breakdown regarding use of vending machines.
- Knockcroghery is outside of our remit and would need to be raised with NTA.
- Line speed 45 75 mph barriers will be down for shorter period of time.
- Hen and stag parties not exclusive to Sligo and Westport. Some trains are alcohol free but would have to find a balance. Customer service will help with this issue.
- Castlerea Station is fully staffed most of time, staff out sick with illness. Commit to get issue with signage rectified.
- Athlone Town Council looking at availability of land for additional car parking. Currently looking at proposal for changing structure of road.
- Iarnrod Eireann offer heavily discounted fares off-peak and early booking.
- Project setup to improve seat reservation system, very successful so far.
- Normally not an issue with catering but will bring this to the attention of catering company.
- Integrated ticketing no unlimited ticket available but leap card allows you to travel on Dublin bus and LUAS. The proposed new machines will facilitate leap cards.
- Statistics show fewer bookings at stations.
- There would be technical issue with vending machines on board trains. Revenue protection has been clamped down on in last five years. At moment RPV issue fines only, this policy will change.
- Assistance will be given at station from the onboard customer service personnel who will get off train to help families and people with mobility issues.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Ms. Cregan for her presentation and Mr. Eddie Fitzpatrick, District Manager, Iarnród Eireann, for attending the meeting.

# 71.17 EXTENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

On the PROPOSAL of Councillor Keogh

SECONDED by Councillor Kilduff

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

# 72.17 'PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE' - PRESENTATION BY DIRECTOR OF SERVICES, ENTERPRISE AND PLANNING

Mr. Martin Lydon outlined the need to have projects ready for development on the basis that funding will

become available from the Department.

- Projects must come within the Policy Framework
- Town Teams represent a bottom up approach in developing projects this is the way forward an Roscommon County Council were the first to initiate town teams.
- What is required is Vision, Forward Planning, Finance, Partnerships and Collaboration
  - The Vision represents town plans, architect, master plan for Roscommon town centre, pocket parks, strategic traffic assessment, tourism and recreational facilities, improvements to town approach roads, housing (unfinished estates), economic development
  - Forward panning will involve need for Part 8 planning, use of Municipal District funds for village plans and the need for "ready to go schemes"
  - The projects will be financed by way of loans, Government Grants such as Clar and Town and Villages and Roscommon County Council funds
  - Partnerships that we expect to work with are Other Local Authorities, Agencies such as Waterways Ireland and Inland Fisheries and semi state bodies like Coillte. This is the way future.
  - The projects will need the collaboration of the members, community groups including town teams, government departments and chambers of commerce.

The Chief Executive outlined that the changes and new structure that have taken place in the organisation regarding the Municipal Districts, and new focus on communities and towns and villages. It is important to use the energies and synergies created from around the county. Some of the projects outlined today will require brave decisions from the members. We are in a healthy state financially and are restructuring our debt to get low interest rates and we have the capacity to borrow. This is the essence of the work plan for the next number of years and we will be initially focussing on Roscommon and Monksland.

The members welcomed the Plan put forward for discussion and the following points were discussed:

- We need to do something for ourselves we need some large projects to make a difference.
- Will consideration be given to link Road at Boganfin?
- Consider support for Rindoon Castle that is falling down.
- Support the great work being done at Derryglad museum.
- There is positivity coming from the towns and villages around the county.
- Members looking forward to working to bring people working together for the good of the county. Everyone needs to be ambassadors for their own towns.

## 73.17 RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR IRELAND 2018 - 2021

- The Draft Plan was approved by the Minister and published on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017
- There is a 6 month public consultation process underway and the Final River Basin Management Plan due to be completed in December 2017.
- The Objectives and priorities include compliance with EU legislation, water objectives for "protected areas", supporting measures in circa. 650 prioritised water bodies.
- Programme of measures include agriculture, septic tanks, industry, forestry, water treatment, physical modification etc.
- The implementation strategy will use an evidence based approach and community engagement and awareness.
- Local Authority Waters and Communities Offices have been established regionally and community water officers appointed

- National Water Forum is facilitating stakeholder engagement on all water issues and informs public
- The role of the Local Authorities includes the coordinated delivery of measures at regional and local level.
- Previous consultations highlighted the need for better engagement at national level and the facilitation of public and stakeholder engagement at local level.
- Public meetings will be held in local areas to be completed at the end of August 2017 (C. 100 nationally). Roscommon meetings will be held on 13<sup>th</sup> June in Lough Key Forest Park, Boyle; 14<sup>th</sup> June in Abbey Hotel Roscommon and 15<sup>th</sup> June in Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone all at 7.30pm.

# 74.17 CORRESPONDENCE

- Letter from Galway County Council RE: resolution adopted by members in relation to downgrading of Bus or Rail services in Rural County Galway.
- Letter from Tipperary Council RE: resolution adopted by members to progress the Coroner's Bill as a matter of urgency.
- Letter from Tipperary Council RE: resolution adopted by members in relation to Community Employment Schemes.
- Letter of acknowledgement from Minister for Health, Simon Harris, T.D. concerning Orkambi.
- Letter from TII in response to our letter of 25 April 2017 regarding the N60 west of Castlerea to Meelickaduff.

# 75.17 NOTICE OF MOTION

# LANDS AT THE WALK / LANESBORO ROAD

# Notice of Motion from Councillors Leyden and Byrne – 06/17

"That Roscommon County Council will make the lands on The Walk / Lanesboro Road available for mixedtenure housing in accordance with the "major policy intervention" being forwarded by Minister for Housing, Simon Coveney T.D."

Cllr Leyden advised the meeting that this item is deferred for discussion at the relevant SPC.

# 76.17 COUNCILLORS CONFERENCES - PAYMENT/ATTENDANCE

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Fallon

SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

It was **AGREED** to adopt the list of payments for attendance at conferences as circulated to the members.

# 77.17 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SYMPATHY

## Votes of sympathy were extended to:

- The Shine family, Drum, Athlone, Co. Roscommon on the death of Donal (Donie) Shine Snr.
- The Dennehy family, Curlea, Curraghboy, Athlone, Co. Roscommon on the death of Pat Dennehy.

# 78.17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

## **Castlerea Fire Service**

Cllr. Fitzmaurice called on the Chief Executive to do whatever was necessary to reopen Castlerea Fire

Service. In reply the CE said "it was a cause of great concern that I still find myself in the position that I cannot open the station and I am very aware of risk associated with the closure".

#### Ballaghaderreen Cigar Factory

Cllr. Callaghan said there was an expectation that a deputation would meet with the Minister and was looking for an update. In reply the CE advised that the commitment given that Roscommon County Council would lead a delegation to meet the Minister still stands and we are waiting confirmation of a suitable date.

#### Freedom of County Roscommon

The Cathaoirleach advised all members, at the CPG meeting held earlier today it was agreed, on the proposal of the Cathaoirleach that Mr. Jim Callery be awarded the Freedom of County Roscommon on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber.

The Cathaoirleach thanked everyone who provided and served refreshments for the meeting. He welcomed Tessie, Diane and Dylan Dennehy and extended sincere sympathies to them on the loss of Pat Dennehy, who was a close friend of his. An ordinary man that did extraordinary things in his lifetime, and he would be a huge loss to his family and the community.

#### **NEXT MEETING The next meeting will be on Monday**, 26th June, 2017.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are Confirmed and Signed:

Meetings Administrator

Cathaoirleach

Countersigned