

WAIROA DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

(Warrant to Act Delegation and Amalgamation Communication)

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of Council held in the Council Chambers, Coronation Square, Wairoa on Friday, 23 January 2015 at 8.00am.

PRESENT: His Worship the Mayor Mr C Little (Chairman)

COUNCILLORS

M Johansen, D. Eaglesome-Karekare, M. Bird

IN ATTENDANCE:

F Power	(Chief Executive Officer)
J Baty	(Corporate Services Manager)
J Cox	(Engineering Manager)
H Montgomery	(Regulatory Manager)
D Steed	(Finance Manager)
K Tipuna	(Communications Strategist)
L McGee	(Acting Governance Advisor and Policy Strategist/Intern)

CIVIC PRAYER

The civic prayer was given by the Corporate Services Manager.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Flood and Cairns.

<u>Resolved:</u> <i>That the apologies be received from Councillors Flood and Cairns.</i> <i>Johansen/Eaglesome-Karekare</i>

CALLS FOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Nil

CALLS FOR ITEMS OF URGENT GENERAL BUSINESS NOT INCLUDED IN THE AGENDA AND NOTICES:

Nil

General Items

DELEGATIONS – WARRANT TO ACT

<u>Resolved:</u> <i>That in accordance with Section 46A (7) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act the item DELEGATIONS – WARRANT TO ACT be considered given the item had not come to hand at the time of Agenda compilation and consideration of this matter is required now in order to respond within the time frame allowed.</i> <i>Eaglesome-Karekare/Johansen</i>
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A report prepared by the Corporate Services Manager was presented to Council. He advised that:

1. The issuing of warrants must be done by Council and not delegated to a staff member or committee.

2. Warrants only expire if the staff member's appointment is terminated or the authority is revoked by Council except in the case of Rural Fire Officers which have a ten year life.
3. It is a criminal offence to hold oneself out as having a warrant when you don't or your warrant doesn't cover the matter at hand (Section 236 of the LGA 2002).

<u>Resolved:</u>	<p><i>That:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The report is received.</i> 2. <i>The delegations and appointments as scheduled in the Schedule of Delegations be approved with immediate effect.</i> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Eaglesome-Karekare/Johansen</i></p>
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NAME	DELEGATION/AUTHORITY
Ronald Mervyn Johnston	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Rural Fire Officer under Section 13 of the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977. 2. An enforcement officer appointed under Section 177 of the Local Government Act 2002 for the enforcement of bylaws and regulations.

AMALGAMATION COMMUNICATION

<u>Resolved:</u>	<p><i>That in accordance with Section 46A (7) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act the item AMALGAMATION COMMUNICATION be considered given the item had not come to hand at the time of Agenda compilation and consideration of this matter is required now in order to respond within the time frame allowed.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Eaglesome-Karekare/Johansen</i></p>
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The CEO sought approval of support for a communications initiative aimed at communicating with the community about amalgamation-related issues and to generally further inform the debate surrounding the Local Government Commission's current amalgamation proposal.

The Wairoa District Council has adopted a policy opposing the Local Government Commission's proposal to amalgamate all local authorities in Hawke's Bay.

Hastings District Council is the only Hawke's Bay local authority to support the Local Government Commission's proposal to merge the region's five councils into a single entity and has budgeted \$35,000 in its annual plan to promote amalgamation.

Prior to Christmas, Hastings District Council arranged for a pro-amalgamation brochure to be distributed to all households in the Hastings area.

It is appropriate that the Council provide ratepayers and residents with information to enable them to make an informed decision about amalgamation.

Councillors were informed of the current situation. The amalgamation proposal for Hawke's Bay is very likely the single most important issue which the Wairoa district community has faced in a generation.

The ramifications of amalgamation (economic, social, environmental) are potentially significant and the Council has a duty to ensure that its community is as fully informed as possible in advance of any requirement to vote on the proposal for amalgamation.

As a source of well-researched and balanced information, the community of the Wairoa district looks to the Wairoa District Council for leadership and guidance on this important issue.

In light of the active (and well-funded) promotional activities of Hastings District Council, it is appropriate that the Wairoa District Council provides reliable information to its community, and considers entering into joint communication initiatives with Napier City Council and Central Hawke's Bay District Council.

The Chief Executive Officer noted that Council had been fairly silent on the matter of amalgamation in the public domain in recent times and that the community was now seeking guidance from a Wairoa perspective.

Councillor Eaglesome advised that she supported more so the amalgamation of Napier and Hastings and possibility Central Hawke's Bay but not Wairoa. She commented that the brochure prepared by Napier on behalf of the Council's opposing amalgamation was well-balanced and she supported Wairoa being involved.

His Worship the Mayor informed Councillors that he had received two visits from members of the public who were not in favour of amalgamation and their fear was that Wairoa would not be fairly treated if amalgamated. Their comment was that it would be like how Hawke's Bay Regional Council currently treats Wairoa.

Councillors were referred to the recent article by Chris Joblin in the BayBuzz magazine - copies to be emailed to Councillors.

Councillor Johansen advised that it was important for Council to distribute information relating to amalgamation. In his view it was important for the public to understand the pros and cons and ultimately make their own decision on the matter. In this regard Councillor Bird advised that he understood that Council would be transparent on the matter of amalgamation.

Councillors were referred to a research paper entitled *Smoke and Mirrors: Fallacies in the NSW Government's Views on Local Government Financial Capacity* by Dr. Peter Abelson and Dr. Roselyne Joyeux (Dr. Peter Abelson is Mayor of Mosman Council and has held a Chair in Economics at Macquarie University. Dr. Roselyne Joyeux is an Associate Professor at Macquarie University).

This research makes three main points. Points 2 and 3 are related.

1. The State Government has changed a key financial benchmark which was the basis for government rate setting since 1977 and it has exploited this change to allege that many local councils lack financial capacity without taking responsibility for the rate pegging.
2. Lack of financial capacity is fundamentally a function of low income not of the size (population) of a local council area.
3. Differences in expenditure per capita are explained by differences in income and service levels not by the size of the local community or the unit cost of services.

The options and assessments thereto were noted, specifically:

Option 1: Do nothing.

Option 2: Approve the development of a communications initiative.

Option 1 is contrary to the Council's policy position relating to the Local Government Commission's proposal for amalgamation of all Hawke's Bay local authorities.

Option 2 would meet the council's obligations to keep its community as fully informed as possible in relation to this important issue.

The Chief Executive Officer advised that the preferred option is Option 2.

Having discussed the Chief Executive Officer's report in full, His Worship the Mayor called for a motion.

<u>Resolved:</u>	<i>That:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Council approve the development of a communications strategy in relation to the proposal for amalgamation of Hawke's Bay local authorities; and2. Council encourage joint local authority communication initiatives in relation to this matter. <p style="text-align: right;">Eaglesome-Karekare/Johansen</p>
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There being no General Business His Worship the Mayor declared the meeting closed.

CLOSED: The meeting closed at **9:17am.**

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Chair