



Annual General Meeting of Electors  
Minutes  
22 March 2018

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

I hereby certify that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Electors held on 22 March 2018 are a true and accurate record of the proceedings contained therein.

.....  
Matthew Niikkula  
Shire President

.....  
7/2/2019

Dated

# INDEX OF MINTUES

- 1. DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS..... 3**
- 2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE ..... 3**
- 3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS..... 4**
- 4. RECEIVAL OF THE 2016/2017 ANNUAL REPORT ..... 4
- 5. GENERAL BUSINESS..... 5**
- 6. CLOSURE OF MEETING.....10**

# ANNUAL ELECTORS MEETING MINTUES

## Our Vision

To support and develop a vibrant, welcoming community that embraces its past, values its present and plans for a sustainable future

## Our Purpose

To responsibly provide governance for the whole community in the best interest of current and future generations

## Our Strategic Objectives

- To provide sustainable management of the organisation
- To consistently apply the principles of Good Governance
- To communicate effectively
- To promote socioeconomic development
- To value our environment and heritage

### 1. DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

The Shire President welcomed the electors in the gallery and declared the meeting open at 6.00pm.

The Shire President acknowledged the aboriginal people both past and present, as the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet.

The Shire President advised the gallery in adhering to both the *Local Government Act 1995*, and the Shire of Exmouth Meeting Procedures Local Law 2015, it is an offense to record the proceedings of this meeting and asked the gallery to switch off any recording devices, including phones.

He went onto advise the gallery the meeting will be recorded by the Executive Secretary for the purpose of compiling an accurate record of the minutes only; and the recording will be erased once they are confirmed.

### 2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Councillor M (Matthew) Niikkula

Shire President

Councillor G (Gary) Mounsey

Deputy Shire President

Councillor B (Ben) Dixon

Councillor H (Heather) Lake

Councillor M (Mark) Lucas	
Councillor G (Gavin) Penfold	
Mr C Woods	Chief Executive Officer
Mr K Woodward	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Mr M Bird	Executive Manger Commercial and Community
Mr K Wilson	Executive Manager Corporate Services
Mrs M Head	Minute Clerk

**GALLERY** 12

**APOLOGIES** Nil

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE** Nil

### 3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

That the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Electors of the Shire of Exmouth held on 7 March 2017 be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

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#### RESOLUTION

#### ITEM 3

**Res No: 11-0318**

**MOVED: Cr Lucas**

**SECONDED: Cr Lake**

**That the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Electors of the Shire of Exmouth held on 7 March 2017 be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.**

**CARRIED 6/0**

### 4. RECEIVAL OF THE 2016/2017 ANNUAL REPORT

That the Electors' of the Shire of Exmouth receive the 2016/2017 Annual Report as adopted by Council at the Special Council Meeting held 7 March 2018, incorporating the Commissioners report, Acting Chief Executive Officer report, the Annual Financial report and Audits report.

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#### RESOLUTION

#### ITEM 4

**MOVED: Cr Lucas**

**SECONDED: Cr Mounsey**

**Res No: 12-0318**

**That the Electors' of the Shire of Exmouth receive the 2016/2017 Annual Report as adopted by Council at the Special Council Meeting held 7 March 2018, incorporating the**

**Commissioners report, Acting Chief Executive Officer report, the Annual Financial report and Audits report.****CARRIED 6/0****5. GENERAL BUSINESS**

The Chief Executive Officer summarized the Commissioner report from the Annual Report.

He acknowledged the hard work done by the Ian Fletcher, Commissioner and Keith Woodward, Acting Chief Executive Officer during the 2016/2017 period.

He quoted the following from the Commissioners report included in the Annual Report:

*I am pleased to report that despite very significant challenges, the Ningaloo Centre was completed with a comprehensive business plan for the successful operation of the centre on a sustainable basis.*

*Other initiatives that were initiated under my stewardship as Commissioner included:*

- *The creation of the Exmouth Community Strategic Reference Group (ECSRG), to ensure greater transparency and accountability from the shire to the community. The ECSRG will also play a key role in developing the shire's new Integrated Strategic Plan as required under the Local Government Act 1995.*
- *A complete review of all shire policies to ensure that they are both modern and compliant with relevant legislation.*
- *The introduction of an alcohol free workplace and random alcohol and drug testing for all shire employees.*
- *Worked with the CEO to ensure a more efficient and effective shire operation. This has resulted in a new organisation structure.*
- *A major independent review of the shire's airport operations, including the Learmonth Domestic Airport and Heliport.*
- *An independent expert review into the Ningaloo Visitors' Centre.*
- *A comprehensive selection and recruitment process to find a new CEO. As a result Mr Cameron Woods was appointed on 6 June 2017.*
- *Approved the adoption of the shire budget for the 17/18 financial year in which there were no rate increases and minimal rises in fees and charges. The budget made provision for staff at the new Ningaloo Centre to enable it to function efficiently and effectively. It also included significant funding for a human resources and governance function which had previously been non-existent.*

The Chief Executive Officer made mention and acknowledged the staff that were worked at the Shire during the period and made special mention of Keith Woodward, who filled the role as Acting Chief Executive Officer. Keith endured all the stress, terminations and chaos, and from a governance point of view the Shire and community are very fortunate to have Keith as part of this Council.

The Shire President went on to say the current Councillors were all very proud to be elected at the last election. The role of Councillor has been taken very seriously as they are going to move forward as a Council.

Through the deficiencies identified during the CCC enquiry, probity reports and audits undertaken since all Councillors are undergoing training sessions through the Department of Local Government which was negotiated through Royalties for Regions, and bear no cost to the rate payers. All Councillors are arming themselves with the tools and the knowledge to go forward.

The Shire President invited the public to ask questions:

Question by Brian Gurney

*What are you putting in place to encourage people to stay in town, to encourage business to encourage anything?*

The Shire President advised:

*"Council is in the phase of cleaning our own back yard with the focus on instilling faith back into the council which in turn will lead to investment and opportunities to come along. Once we clean up what has been done in the past then we can work out what we can start spending money on. We are working on a 10 year long term plan and a 5 year financial plan to work out where we are going to spend the money and how we are going to fix the position we are in".*

*The old regime must have had a plan?*

The Chief Executive Officer advised the gallery the long term financial plan inherited relied heavily on Royalties for Regions, with very little money put in from rate payers, He advised it is not sustainable and the Ningaloo Centre has been inherited without a reserve account to pay for the renewal of the building.

The old regime was very much building new and not looking after the old. This Council has inherited a Long Term Financial Plan with the key indicators going south instead of going north, meaning this community would go broke if it keeps going this way. He advised Council cannot afford to build anything new, there is no money in the budget.

Council to date is focusing on where the biggest pressure points are, and working out where the opportunities are

Question from Rene Schwengeler

*Have you made a decision about the aquarium?*

The Shire has a preferred candidate for the Senior Aquarist position recently advertised. The Shire has decided to take this role on instead of employee consultants. The job of the Aquarist will be to get the Aquarium running of which the State Government is holding back \$1million, and a condition of the Shires funding agreement with the Royalties for Regions funding.

The Shire is very excited and are aiming for it to be opened in July this year with live coral and live fish, as it was intended. There is enough money left in the budget to make that happen without seeking additional expenditure from rate payers. This will complete the whole experience for the visitors.

At the last OCM council adopted to bring into place a Regional Price Preference Policy for local contractors put forward.

Question from Sylvia Lerch

*The Milerying Visitors Centre operates like a retail shop, does the Shire get anything like rates from that Department, or do they operate like a church or mosque rent free?*

CEO response:

The gate takes park fees and they take a percentage of every whale shark tour operator. The Council maintains the roads in the park and does not receive any rates from State Government through DPaW from the camping sites or Milerying Centre.

This has been recently taken up with with the Minister for Environment and the Exmouth Chamber of Commerce has written to Parliament and put forward some questions on notice around how unfair this is for our community and rate payers.

From the gate to the National Park the rate payer is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the road all the way through to Yardie Creek. In the event of a flood the repairs have to be completed by the Shire.

The admission fee paid at the National Park gate and camping fees are all paid to the Department of Environment. No funds from these accesses are given back to the Shire. Each person who goes on a Whale shark tour, \$18 per head goes direct to the Department of Environment using Tantabiddi boat ramp, the facility which is maintained by the Shire.

No funds for the accesses within the National Park form the gate to Yardie Creek are given back to the Shire.

Shire President Response:

The Shire is lobbying the State Government at the moment to lessen the burden on Exmouth rate payers as a direct result of seasonal tourism, for example the Shire is subsidizing the running of the visitor center at approx. \$122 per rate payer as opposed to the state average of \$22.

The Shire is has been involved in several meetings with State Government Ministers for Regional Development; Transport and the Environment. We have lobbied and advocated for essential infrastructure upgrades and assistance with the high cost of providing for seasonal tourism that benefits the state gross domestic product. The supporting documentation to support our requests put forward from the Executives is first class.

The Shire has been well received by the relevant Ministers and we feel as if we are making progress with critical coastal infrastructure for cruise shipping and the Tantabiddi boat launching facilities.

These are some examples of what we want to see come to fruition for our community.

The Deputy Chief Executive Officer provided the gallery with the following history in relation to the Tantabiddi and Bundegi boat ramps:

Tantabiddi and Bundegi ramps and our coastal facilities have always been a large interest of the Shire of Exmouth. The Shire of Exmouth pushed the issue of Bundegi boat ramp and Tantabiddi ramp with State Government as they were not showing any interest.

The Shire recognized that Bundegi Boat Ramp was of substantial interest to the residential community for recreational fishing but also to encourage tourism in Exmouth.

The Shire recognized the Tantabiddi boat ramp had a part to play in our community also, in all of the recreation fishing and activities and to support the commercial fishing offshore industry that use the facility.

The Shire is now putting forward a very strong case for the State Government to take over the responsibility of the Tantabiddi boat ramp. The State Government has made available \$80k to undertake the Tantabiddi study. The survey will define who the users of our boat ramps are, what are the commercial and recreational aspects, which part of the government has a greater statutory responsibility for maintaining these coastal assets, where are we going with these boat ramps in 5 years, 10 years and 20 years' time, what are the numbers involved, what are the commercial numbers involved and who is going to pay for these assets?

These issues will be provided in a report within the next few months that will be taken to the State Government.

If the State Government takes over the financial responsibility of maintaining and developing these boat ramps, it gives the Shire the opportunity to reinvest those resources into the preservation of the asset.

#### Statement by Barry Sullivan

Mr Sullivan confirmed to the gallery that the Exmouth Chamber of Commerce (ECCI) has presented some questions on notice to the Minister for Environment, and once a response was received this information will be made public.

Councillor Lake

Councillor Lake advised the gallery that she was very proud to be a member of such an energetic group of Councillors. Despite not having a lot to show at this stage she reiterated the amount of work that has been completed by not only the Councillors but the Executive team and other Shire staff to provide some concrete answers around the current financial position so that it can be looked at to consider strategies for what the community needs in the future.

Councillor Lucas

One of the processes being undertaken by the councilors' is the Strategic Community Plan. After receiving feedback (approx. 20%) from the community the information is being analyzed and will set the strategic directives for the Shire.

He advised the Councillors are aware of the problems and where working towards fixing them. At the last Ordinary Council meeting, Council adopted a new Code of Conduct for councilors and employees. This is a very powerful document which will set the behaviour standards for both shire employees and councilors and will strengthen up what was there previously.

He went on to say that despite the negative sentiment leading up to the opening of the Ningaloo Centre, he was very confident that every tourist that comes to Exmouth will visit the centre.

Councillor Penfold

Councillor Penfold advised he was proud to be part of this council through this challenging time.

There is only one way forward; after 12 months the community will see a little more fruition.

Councillor Mounsey

Councillor Mounsey advised the gallery that Council was taking a conservative approach to the current problems. More thought on how money will be spent in the future is the focus and long term planning is the key message to get out to the community.

He reiterated to the gallery that the councilors are all very approachable, and encouraged all to attend council meetings so problems can be acted up.

Shire President – Councillor Niikkula

The Shire President extended his thanks and appreciation to the gallery for their attendance, feedback, questions and points of view.

He advised that Councillors are the representatives of the community. Issues can be reported via the Shire website and will be recorded and acted upon promptly.

Barry Sullivan

Barry extended his appreciation on behalf of the ECCI. He advised that the ECCI had a great relationship with the new Executives and Councillors and applauded the Executive

Managers and Councillors; effectively there is an open door policy, and we have been delighted for the opportunity to work with this team.

He encouraged the gallery to become members of the ECCI and reiterated that they are heading in the same direction working closely with the Council.

Question from Bill Ruby

*What hurdles do we have to jump through to use the banner sign rails in the Maidstone Crescent to advertise events for not for profit organisations?*

The Shire President advised Mr Ruby this question will be taken on notice to provide an accurate answer.

The Shire President closed public question time.

## **6. CLOSURE OF MEETING**

The Shire President thanked the Executives and Councillors for attending today and for the support over the past months. The meeting was declared closed at 6.50pm.