**NORTHLAND FISH & GAME COUNCIL**

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF A MEETING**

**HELD AT THE NORTHLAND FISH & GAME OFFICE**

**NELL PLACE, WHANGAREI**

**7.00 PM FRIDAY 4th APRIL 2014.**

**PRESENT:**

**Chairman:** Dave Nicholson

**Councillors:** Noel Birchall, Maurice Blyde, Phil Durham, Mason Elliott, Leo Leonard, Chris Lynch, Mike Newson, Wayne Pepper, Cameron Shanks.

**Conservation**

**Board Member:** Richard Robbins

**Department of**

**Conservation:** Darren Jones

**Staff:** Rudi Hoetjes (Manager), Fay Stodart (Office Administrator)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the table.

**APOLOGIES:** Kris Batelaan, Mark Williamson,

**It was moved: *That those apologies are accepted.***

 ***Leo Leonard/Mike Newson CARRIED.***

**Previous Minutes**

**It was resolved: *That the minutes of the meeting held on the 31st January 2014 are confirmed as true and correct.***

 ***Chris Lynch/Mason Elliott CARRIED.***

**Matters Arising**

**Northland Fish & Game Habitat Trust**

The Manager informed Council on the meeting with the Trustees of the Northland Habitat Trust. This meeting was attended by the Chairman, Peter Geddes, Cameron Shanks, and Adelle Allbon, the Auditor. An apology was received from Kevin Evans. The trustees felt that the objectives of the Trust were quite different to the functions and responsibilities of the Northland Fish & Game Council. The Trust instructed the Chairman, Peter Geddes, to write to the OAG, challenging their decision and to seek a review and appeal their decision. At the time of the Council meeting, Mr Geddes had not received a reply from the OAG.

The Northland Habitat Trust has reimbursed $2,070.00 to Northland Fish & Game for the 2013 audit and accounting fees.

**It was moved: *That the future of the Northland Habitat Trust lay on the table till after a reply from the OAG has been received.***

 ***Phil Durham/ Wayne Pepper CARRIED.***

**Governance Policy: Council Performance Review**

The Chairman is waiting on two more performance reviews from Councillors. The Chairman gave a dead line for these reviews to be received by the 11th April. The Chairman will then evaluate the results and bring them to the next Council meeting.

**Complaints Policy**

The NZFG Council developed a complaints policy which was sent out to all regions for adoption to their Governance Policy. At the previous meeting, the Council instructed the Manager to make some minor changes to this policy.

**It was moved: *That the Northland Fish & Game Council adopts the Complaints Policy.***

 ***Chris Lynch/Maurice Blyde CARRIED.***

**Manager’s Activity Report**

The Council considered the operational report on a page by page basis with discussion on

some items.

**1181 Game Bird Dispersal**

The drought on the west coast of Northland is a huge concern to farmers where Paradise Shelduck and other game birds are causing damage to crops and pasture. Last week, the Manager issued a permit to a farmer at Tangowahine Valley to cull some Paradise Shelduck.

**1182 Paradise Shelduck Weekend**

A small number of rangers went out ranging this weekend, reporting little hunting activity in many areas.

**1221 Jack Bisset Wetlands**

The predator control operation has been completed at both the Jack Bisset and the Flaxmill Wetlands. These operations have been funded out of the permit fees collected in the 2013 hunting season. The Manager recorded the number of predators caught within each wetland for the Councillor’s information.

**1224 Borrow Cut Wetland**

Excavation work has been completed at the Borrow Cut Wetland where two new shallow ponds have been developed. This is the first time in over ten years that any major works has been completed at this wetland. The cost of the work has been funded through the dedicated reserves in previous years to supplement the current budget of $1,000.00.

**1228 Wairua Wildlife Management Reserve**

The Manager has overseen major digger and mulching works at the Reserve over the past three weeks. The digger has created a large shallow pond in Zone 2, and three new shallow scrapes in Zone 1. A control structure has been installed to increase holding water for longer periods of time. All this work complies with the resource consents obtained by the Council last year. This work was completed on the 4th April 2014. The Manager presented a series of photos from the start to the finish of the work completed at the Reserve.

**1228.2 Greenheart Development**

Funds have become available through the NZGBHT to develop a site for the National Mallard Research project. The Greenheart property has been identified as a suitable site for this project. This project involves building three ponds, which will be monitored on a regular basis to identify the preferential differences of wildlife species using these ponds. The three ponds will be built the same size but one will be unfenced and left for cattle to graze, pond 2 will be fenced and the third pond will be fenced and planted out with a range of shrubs and trees to provide nesting cover and a food source.

The Manager presented a map of the Greenheart property and indicated where these ponds could be built. A resource consent is not required on the basis that no more than 5000 m3 of earthworks is carried out within a 12 month period and the environmental standards in Section 32 of the RWSP are complied with.

**It was moved:** ***That the Council supports the development for a site at the Greenheart Property for the National Mallard Research Project; and agrees to proceed with works on this property once the funds are approved by the NZGBHT.***

 ***Wayne Pepper/Leo Leonard CARRIED.***

**1228.1 Awakino Wetland**

The Manager will make an application to the NZGB Habitat Trust for development work to commence in next summer.

**1311 Negotiation**

The Council is still waiting on the Matariki/Rayonier Forests and Hancock Forest NZ Ltd to finalise the permit details and access maps for the 2014 game bird hunting season. The Te Karae Landcorp Farm Manager notified Northland Fish & Game that this farm is closed to any game bird hunting this year. The Council discussed this matter and instructed the Manager not to pursue the matter any further.

**1314 Pre Game Season Meetings Sponsorship**

To date, Kaipara Hunting and Fishing Club is the only club to receive sponsorship from Northland Fish & Game Council. A cheque of $350.00 was made payable to the club where $200.00 is for junior hunting development and the remaining $150.00 is to provide sponsorship for a pre-game season event. The club also received one case of steel shot as part of the Council’s sponsorship programme.

**1521 Ranger Training**

All rangers have been advised of the ranger training day on the 12th April 2014 at the Northland Fish & Game office. This year, the focus on the training will be on the changes to legislation in the Search and Surveillance laws.

**1900 Administration**

The Manager informed Council that a confiscated firearm from 2 years ago was sold on Trade Me for $750.00. Arrangements were made to courier the firearm down to Central South Island Fish & Game office and the winning bidder was contacted by the office to pick up the firearm.

The Manager replaced the Hyundai Santa Fe with a later model and the old model was also sold on Trade Me.

**It was moved: *That the Manager’s Activity Report is received.***

 ***Leo Leonard/Cameron Shanks CARRIED.***

**NZFG Council Update**

Councillor Chris Lynch informed Council that he was unable to attend the recent NZFG Council meeting in Methven on the 21st to 23rd March 2014. The minutes had not been completed so he was unable to report on this meeting except Councillor Lynch had heard that the current Chairman of NZFG Council, Mr Peter Robinson, had resigned. The NZ Council will call for nominations of a Chairperson at their next Council meeting.

Councillor Elliott queried the reduction in the National reserves of the NZFG Council. The Council discussed how the national reserves are being spent on legal representation with habitat protection and water conservation orders in various parts of the country. The Council felt that this financial situation is placing all Fish & Game regions at risk and queries what, if any, fiscal management is in place for the future.

**It was moved: *That the Chairman of Northland Fish & Game write a letter to the Chairman of NZFGC with concerns and queries of the reduction in the national reserves of the NZFG Council.***

 ***Mason Elliott/Wayne Pepper CARRIED.***

**NZFGC Papers**

**New Licence Pricing**

The Council noted the new licence categories and pricing to be introduced in the 2014 fishing season.

**Phasing out of Paper Licences**

**It was moved: *That the Northland Fish & Game Council supports the phasing out of paper licences as proposed by the NZ Fish & Game Council.***

 ***Noel Birchall/Mike Newson CARRIED.***

**Draft Budget**

The Manager explained to the Council that the 2014-15 budget is identical to the current year. The Manager advised the Council that the budget level of $389,127.00 is the Councils allocation under current budget policy and any amount exceeding budget needed to be considered as contestable funding bids.

The Manager will make a contestable funding bid to meet salary increases based on CPI.

The Council discussed the delay in receiving their agendas in different locations of Northland and how NZ Post is cutting down on daily postal deliveries.

The Council requested the Manager to make a contestable funding bid for Council to increase courier costs to cover couriering agendas to councillors who do not live locally in Whangarei.

Councillor Lynch asked the Manager to make a further contestable funding bid for professional development.

**It was moved:** ***That the Council approves the draft budget and the Manager will apply for contestable funding for staff salary increases, increased courier fees to send out agendas and staff development costs.***

 ***Noel Birchall/Cameron Shanks CARRIED.***

The Manager informed Council that Field Officer, Nathan Burkepile is currently investigating costs of bringing a wetland specialist, Mr Tom Biepighauser, to New Zealand from USA to instruct on creating and building a wetland from scratch. Nathan is planning to attend one of his lectures at a university in New York when he visits USA later this year.

**Executive Limitations Report**

**It was moved: *That the Executive Limitations Report is received.***

 ***Chris Lynch/Leo Leonard CARRIED.***

**Manager’s Financial Report for period ending 28th February 2014**

The Manager distributed a spread sheet with a breakdown of all purchase prices on various Utes and SUV wagons and detailed change over costs. The Manager asked the Council to keep all information confidential in regards to the contract Fish & Game has with purchasing vehicles through AoG.

**It was moved: *That the Manager’s Financial Report is adopted.***

 ***Chris Lynch/Mike Newson CARRIED.***

**General Business**

The Manager was contacted by a licence holder to inform him of a block of land which has recently come on the market in the Dargaville area on the banks of the Manganui River. The Manager showed a Google map of the farm to the Councillors. The map showed low lying flat land which could be prone to flooding and also has unformed paper road access throughout the property. The Council instructed the Manager to enquire further and to make a visit to the property.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.55pm.

***Noel Birchall***

***Chairman (Appointed)***