



MINUTES
OF THE
SPECIAL MEETING
OF COUNCIL

HELD

13 MAY 2014

5.30pm

Council Chambers Civic Centre
Stuart Highway, Katherine

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL HELD
AT THE KATHERINE CIVIC CENTRE 13 MAY 2014**

1. OPENING PRAYER

2. PRESENT

Mayor Fay Miller
Deputy Mayor Lis Clark
Alderman Steven Rose
Alderman Donald Higgins
Alderman Rob Phillips
Alderman Toni Tapp-Coutts
Alderman Peter Gazey

IN ATTENDANCE Mr David Laugher – Chief Executive Officer
Mrs Neroli Dickens – Director Works & Services, Deputy Chief
Executive Officer
Mr James Rowe – Director Corporate and Community
Services

1 x member of the Katherine Community

Mrs Heather Kirk – Minute Taker

3. APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

File: Local Governance / Council Meetings / Elected Members Leave of Absence
and Apologies

That the apologies of Alderman Toni Tapp-Coutts be noted and accepted.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

File: Local Governance / Council Meetings / Elected Member Disclosure of Interest
and Declared Interest

Nil

5. REPORT OF OFFICERS

5.1 DRAFT MUNICIPAL PLAN – 1 JULY 2014 – 30 JUNE 2015

File: Local Governance / Compliance / Municipal Plan

MOVED: Clark/Higgins

That Council approve the Draft Municipal Plan 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 for public exhibition.

CARRIED: 6 /0

- The CEO advised:
 - The entire “look and feel” of the Municipal Plan this year has been changed from previous formats.
 - We have aimed at a more informative structure, with information about some of the significant influences and priorities that will impact on Katherine in the next year (or so).
 - We have also attempted to make the Plan and the Budget more understandable, so there are diagrams throughout that show where Council gets the money that makes up its budget – and where these resources are spent.
 - There have been a number of pressures on Council’s expenditure demands that has resulted in upwards pressure on costs. In addition there has been an increased emphasis placed on infrastructure management with approximately \$800,000 allocated to road maintenance, reseals and reconstructions. A further \$310,000 has been allocated for resealing or asphalt overlaying sections of the road network as required.
 - The ongoing transfer of street lighting costs from Power and Water has been a constant concern and the impending shift of repairs and maintenance costs has meant there is a need to allocate a further \$150,000 for this expense during the forthcoming year.
 - Depreciation costs for all assets makes up \$3,472,974 for 2014-2015. This is a major component of the overall budget.
 - All budgets have to be developed without planning for a deficit (excluding depreciation) and Katherine Town Council does this. Our operating surplus, and our cash flow projections all assume a positive balance.
 - In terms of “spend”, a total of just over \$4 million is allocated to the Corporate and Community Services expenditure budget. This includes operational costs for the Visitor information Centre, the Library and the administration side of the Waste Management Facility. The balance of funds in this Division is allocated to the administration section.

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- Just over \$7 million is allocated to the Works and Services Division. This includes almost \$4 million for roads, and services. \$1.34 million is allocated to recreation facilities (Showgrounds, Sportsgrounds and the Aquatic Centre; with the balance (approximately \$1.8 million) on plant and equipment and on community amenity (stormwater infrastructure, toilets and litter collection).
- Revenue comes from a relatively small number of sources. Rates are the main area, along with fees and charges. This year saw a revaluation of all properties in Katherine (as required) by the Northern Territory Valuer-General. Council's then base their rates on this UCV (unimproved capital value).
- For this budget Katherine Town Council did not anticipate an increase in the rating strategy (apart from a small increase of 4.5% in the minimum rate (from \$775 to \$810 = \$35). This results in approximately \$63,000 in additional revenue. The (largely) increased property values have pushed up rate revenue by approximately a further \$637,000 without any additional increases in the rate percentages, and so the differential rate has remained fixed at last year's figure. Some property owners may experience a slight reduction in the overall rate bill, but others may well experience an increase. These changes are almost exclusively a result of property valuation movements rather than changes to the rating differential.
- Fees and charges have been increased by 4.5%. Interest revenue has been calculated assuming a rate of 3.8%.
- The plan and the budget, once adopted for exhibition, will be the subject of community information and feedback. These documents are available on the Council website now, and advertisements will be placed in the Katherine Times from Wednesday 21 May 2014. Submissions may be made up to the 12 June 2014 and the final document will be considered again for adoption on Tuesday 24 June 2014.
- Alderman Higgins asked about the flow chart for staff positions – in particular the Contracts Manager. Was this position not to be absorbed?
- The CEO advised a determination had not been made on this. Employees' wages allow for this position. We may be able to outsource some of this position.
- Alderman Higgins confirmed that this is still a draft document and will not be finalized until June, after public consultation. Aldermen are also allowed to make submissions.
- The CEO suggested that if there are still questions about the document, that this be brought forward in a workshop and discussed. All budget submissions will have to have decisions made against each one and the aldermen will have to be in agreement. Not all submissions will be approved.
- Alderman Gazey asked where the document can be accessed. The CEO advised the Library, Civic Centre, and website.
- Alderman Rose likes the new format. It is a lot easier to read, open, accountable and thanked everyone.
- The CEO advised that it is still a work in progress and it still has to be refined. The previous Plans had largely been a schedule of works that did not have a lot of detail. The new plan is at a higher level with strategic direction and shows where expenditure will be. Council needs to be clear that works are done when necessary, not because of a timeframe.

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- The CEO noted that there have been some substantial savings and efficiency gains. Council absorbed about \$550,000 of works in last year's budget, and increases in external costs eg power water, street lighting.
- Alderman Rose commented that it was good to have this happen without a reduction in service.
- The CEO advised that this has brought a lot of work back in-house.

6. MEETING CLOSED

The meeting was closed at 5.50pm.

Fay Miller
MAYOR OF KATHERINE