

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 201<sup>st</sup> MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND  
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW  
ZEALAND ON THURSDAY 6<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2023 AT 1.04PM (11.30AM)**

**PRESENT**

Crs. Murray Ferris (Acting Chair), Debbie Oakley, Lindsay Lyons, Mike Jarvie, Mark Sceats, and Ken Coombes. Alan Simmonds joined at 1.04PM

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Arash Alaeinia, Eben Herbert, Matt Osborne, Mark Sherburn, Anthony van Dorp, Eden Mutton (Eastern Fish & Game); James Barnett (Doc Tongariro/Taupo), Ken Raureti (TALT), and Barry Roderick.

**1.0 WELCOME AND KARAKIA**

- 1.1 Cr Murray Ferris opened the meeting at 11:35am, and welcomed all attendees, and invited a karakia from Ken Raureti.
- 1.2 Murray Ferris outlines that a quorum is not present at the start of the meeting at 11.35am, so no resolutions will be able to be passed. The meeting agrees to document resolutions and send out to absent Councillors for confirmation at the next Council meeting. However as 2 resolutions are critical, a Councillor will be contacted via electronic means to allow quorum and thus enable the 201<sup>st</sup> Eastern Fish and Game Council meeting to recommence. This was done at 1.04pm.

**2.0 APOLOGIES**

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Crs. Jay Tapsell, Ngahi Bidois, Kevin Coutts, Geoff Thomas and Scott Nicol.
- 2.2 *Agreed (Mike Jarvie/Lindsay Lyons) that the apologies for the 201st meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained.*  
*Note: Resolution to be reconfirmed at Council meeting scheduled for 8 June 2023.*

**3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (9 FEBRUARY 2023)**

- 3.1 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Debbie Oakley) that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2023 be confirmed as a true and correct record.*  
*Note: Resolution to be reconfirmed at Council meeting scheduled for 8 June 2023.*

**4.0 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY**

- 4.1 No items were identified for inclusion in Council policy.

**5.0 MATTERS ARISING**

- 5.1 Cr Lindsay Lyons commented that public excluded parts of meetings must be notified
- 5.2 Cr Debbie Oakley – Lead shot in .410 update is in PFI Pg 67

**6.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS**

- 6.1 Lindsay Lyons – Evaluating Council and Chair Performance  
Barry Roderick – Water quality in Lake Rotorua  
Ken Coombes – Family licence for Game Bird hunting

**7.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER**

- 7.1 Councillors were asked to inform the chair of any conflicts of interest. No conflicts of interest were recorded.

## 8.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

- 8.1 *Health and Safety Report* – Report taken as read. Arash Alaeinia – Highlighted an incident which was a light sprain. No further work required in that space.
- 8.2 *Agreed (Mike Jarvie/Ken Coombes) that Council receives the Health and Safety report. Note: Resolution to be reconfirmed at Council meeting scheduled for 8 June 2023.*
- 8.3 *Finance Report* – Cr Lindsay Lyons outlined that the Capri Club had donated \$300 to F&G for the use of the grounds last year and it had not been documented. He would like it documented in the minutes that Capri Club had donated \$300. Lindsay also queried a cost of \$1,300 for tractor recovery from Awaiti. Arash Alaeinia confirmed that the tractor had got stuck due to extremely wet conditions encountered during normal reserve work and required some heavy machinery to retrieve it.
- 8.4 *Agreed (Debbie Oakley/Mark Sceats) that Council receives the Finance Report and approves payments for January and February 2023 totalling \$429,476.19. Note: Resolution to be reconfirmed at Council meeting scheduled for 8 June 2023.*
- 8.5 *Management Report* – Taken as read. Arash Alaeinia highlighted that the team has been under more than normal pressure over the last two months due to the weather events that we have had. This has led to normal work programmes being compressed into periods of breaks in the weather. Arash wanted to note his thanks to the team for working extra days and long hours to get jobs done. However, he said we are still tracking behind on some work compared to where we would normally be.

Cr Murray Ferris reported that, with regards to the East Coast fisheries, he had heard that the Ruakaturi had recently fished well, with trout in good condition, and plenty of food present. Other anglers reported that they had fished poorly in the Waioka, well in the Motu, and someone had caught a fish in the Hangaroa.

Arash Alaeinia outlined that our approach for dealing with East Coast fisheries is to wait through the wetter seasons of Autumn and Winter, then implement a strategic data review in summer to go to specific areas to look at habitat, spawning areas, and the general state of the waterbodies to assess the effects on those fisheries. In the interim we have asked for feedback on conditions from anglers, and others.

Barry Roderick outlined that the Waiari River recently had the biggest rainfall recorded since 1968. Queried whether staff know what our rainfall intensity was at the hatchery during recent events, how the infrastructure stood up, and whether the current processes and systems are still appropriate. Arash Alaeinia commented that there were no major events at the hatchery, rainfall intensity and accumulation didn't create any major slips, and we do have processes in place to deal with such circumstances. Barry Roderick questioned what the state of the vegetative cover around the spring at the moment is. Arash Alaeinia stated that it is still there, that there were no slips, and nothing has changed since a year ago.

- 8.6 *Licence Sales Report* – Arash Alaeinia advised that the Licence Sales Report was updated to the 20th of March, and as of the 31st of March we are now tracking at 2.6% down on last year as opposed to 2.9% in the report. Cr Lindsay Lyons felt the report didn't give a true indication of the decline in sales as the increase in fees increased revenue and which masked the decline in sales. Lindsay is concerned that if you have a business and your

clientele drops off, then putting fees up is only putting a band aid on the problem, which is not the right way to do business. He said we must stop the decline in licence sales. Arash Alaeinia confirmed that the increased licence fee did have a bearing on it but highlighted that the report refers to a 2.9% decline in licence sales, not the revenue derived from those sales. Additionally, costs are going up for everything, and licence prices need to increase to reflect increasing costs to the organisation. Arash agreed that the decline in sales needs to be addressed but suggests that a 2.6% decline is not bad considering the environmental situations we have experienced this year.

Cr Lindsay Lyons queried James Barnett about what was happening in Taupo in this regard. James stated that no licence fee increases had been made for the Taupo fishery, driven partly by their angler demographics (low income), but they will be increasing fees in the future due to increasing costs. They have also looked at higher fees for non-resident anglers, but modelling showed that this wouldn't have a significant financial benefit for them due to the low non-resident participation in Taupo. They are also having a look at the licence sales categories that they offer. Arash Alaeinia highlighted that the Taupo fishery is supported by DoC, which is a fully funded Government agency, whereas Fish and Game is not. They therefore have a better ability to hold fees and absorb costs, that Fish and Game cannot. Barry Roderick queried James Barnett about how their licence sales are tracking. James Barnett confirmed that generally sales are down a similar amount to the Eastern region.

## **9.0 2023-2024 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN**

9.1 Arash Alaeinia introduced the OWP and highlighted the main changes to it.

9.2 Cr Mike Jarvie suggested that we should go all out in the area of niche marketing because the current media options of Facebook, Instagram etc have generated an absolutely abysmal following. He felt we needed to target a new audience through T.V. advertising. Arash Alaeinia outlined our current marketing streams and acknowledged that marketing/communications is a weakness of the organisation in general, and that it is an area that is being addressed. Within Eastern we operate in this space at the best level we are able to considering our resourcing, via e-magazines, magazines, emails, social media, other options such as billboards were also being considered, however TV is not a realistic option considering our financial resources.

9.3 Cr Mark Sceats identified a lack of face-to-face interactions with licence holders as a significant issue leading to the licence holder disconnect. Arash Alaeinia confirmed that lack of communication had been identified by licence holders in the Gisborne area as an issue. However, he advised that we do provide a lot of communication avenues through 9 Reel Life e-newsletters a year, 2 x printed magazines a year, 3 x Both Barrel's and numerous pre-season e-reminders/updates. Plus, our Council minutes and agendas and our OWP are on our website which is available for those that are interested. He also noted that the low population density in the area means that while rangers do visit, contacts may be lower. EF&G staff also have regular contact with the Gisborne District Council on a regular basis. Arash was trying to work out what the best way forward is to address this issue. Anthony van Dorp outlined that in the last approximately 15 years, we have had staff and honorary rangers present in the Gisborne/East coast area on the opening

weekend of the game season on around 12 occasions. We also have 4 honorary rangers based in Gisborne.

- 9.4 Cr Lindsay Lyons spoke of the issue around ongoing difficulties with access through Kaingaroa Forest to the Rangitaiki River, and the cost to Fish & Game in licence sales. It has been identified that equity with the access arrangement for the Maori landowners is a problem and suggested that we work with the owners to find a solution. He understood that insurance was a significant stumbling block during negotiations and finding a solution around insurance like a \$6 access insurance premium would solve the problem. Arash Alaeinia noted that this access issue remains a part of his and Anthony van Dorp's work schedule, and work is ongoing. Also, that anglers only require access through the forest, whereas hunters are undertaking their activities within the forest. Ken Raureti informed Council that he is a part of the CNI access subcommittee and hunters and fishermen were not considered in the same category. He said that trespassers and poachers are a significant issue and are considered in a very negative way by the subcommittee. Access issues for Iwi are the same as those faced by Fish and Game. General discussion ensued around trespassers, poachers and forest security.
- 9.5 Cr Debbie Oakley raised the issue of standing orders regarding approving contestable funding applications and the OWP included within this agenda item at this meeting. She advised that with NZ Council standing orders, a meeting must lapse if a quorum is not present (such as is the case here).
- 9.6 Cr Debbie Oakley offered to contact Dr Jack Kos (Senior Policy Advisor to NZ Fish & Game) to determine whether a quorum can be organized for the current meeting via virtual attendance (zoom/phone).
- 9.7 At 12:53 pm Cr Murray Ferris adjourns the meeting until 1:05pm
- 9.8 Cr Murray Ferris re-opens the meeting at 1:03pm.
- 9.9 Cr Debbie Oakley advised that she had spoken to Dr Jack Kos and ascertained that; a meeting can be held with member/s attending by zoom or phone, providing recommendations are repeated for adoption as a council resolution at its next meeting. Acting chair Cr Murray Ferris agreed with this approach and Arash Alaeinia contacted Cr Alan Simmonds by phone at 1:04pm and puts him on speaker.
- 9.10 Arash Alaeinia outlined details of the proposed contestable funding applications.
- 9.11 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Mike Jarvie) that Council approves the six contestable fund applications as detailed on pages 1-12 of the Papers for Information. [23/04/9.11]***
- 9.12 Cr Alan Simmonds leaves the meeting at 1:06pm
- 9.13 Discussion about whether a quorum is needed again to approve the Operation Work Plan in whole. It was decided that it is, and Arash Alaeinia contacts Cr Alan Simmonds by phone. Cr Alan Simmonds re-joins the meeting via speaker phone at 1:14pm.
- 9.14 *Agreed (Ken Coombes/Lindsay Lyons) that Council approves the draft Operational Work Plan for the 2023-2024 year. [23/04/9.14]***
- 9.15 Cr Alan Simmonds leaves the meeting at 1:17pm.
- 10.0 2023-2024 ANGLER'S NOTICE**
- 10.1 Arash Alaeinia raises the Anglers Notice review. Cr Murray Ferris asks for comments. No further discussion. Council supported the recommendation to hold the conclusion of the Anglers Notice process for the 2023-2024 Season until 8 June 2023 Council

## **11.0 WAIKAREMOANA SPORTS FISH HABITAT ENHANCEMENT FUND**

11.1 On the issue of the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Fund, Barry Roderick queried the geographic area, and applications covered by the fund. Matt Osborne clarifies that the \$6,500 funding application is for operations within the Waikaremoana area, and that the fund is applicable to the Wairoa system.

11.2 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Mike Jarvie) that Council approves funding of up to \$6,500 from the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Fund as submitted.*

*Note: Resolution to be reconfirmed at Council meeting scheduled for 8 June 2023.*

## **12.0 SPECIES MONITORING REPORTS**

12.1 Council received the Species Monitoring reports. Cr Mark Sceats requested that sub-region data be recorded during future game bird hunter surveys. Cr Murray Ferris added that we used to collect the sub region data but could not remember why it had been stopped. Arash Alaeinia said that he would look into the reason why it had been stopped and appropriateness to collect the sub-region data moving forward. Barry Roderick stated the opening day angler surveys give a strong connection with our stakeholders.

## **13.0 FUTURE F & G REPORT**

13.1 Cr Debbie Oakley outlined plans for futureproofing the organization at a National level. She advised NZC have established two working groups, Future Finance and Future Structure. Two NZC members and two chairs are on each group. The purpose is to consider what can change within the organisation under the current legislation. Finally have a draft terms of reference. It also looks at processes for budgeting and assessing funding applications in the future.

13.2 Discussion occurred about governance changes, and how they may benefit the organisation. Cr Lindsay Lyons stated that the ministerial review began as a governance review.

13.3 Cr Debbie Oakley informed Council that NZC have employed a new HR person to assist all regions and will be employing a finance expert.

13.4 Arash Alaeinia introduced the Future F&G Report and says that the main takeaway is that we need to be mentally prepared for change. We are a 30-year-old organisation that was set up to fail. The report is designed to generate discussion around positive change. Cr Lindsay Lyons stated that F&G was originally formed of 12 regions that were outside of Government influence. It was a strength at the time but is now a weakness.

13.5 Cr Debbie Oakley stated that the meeting would have a quorum if the number of councillors was reduced to ten. Cr Mark Sceats questioned whether the Council is wasting their time because half the Council is missing. The subjects are all going to have to be re-litigated in the future when a quorum is present.

## **14.0 FISH & GAME, LICENCE HOLDER DISCONNECT**

14.1 Moved for discussion at 8 June meeting.

## **15.0 LIAISON OFFICER REPORTS**

15.1 *Report from the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board.*

No Report

15.2 *Report from the Department of Conservation*

No Report

15.3 *Report from the New Zealand Council*

Arash Alaeinia stated that the report from NZC was moved to the discussion on Future F&G. Cr Debbie Oakley advised that Corina Jordan now also provides a NZC update which is included in PFI.

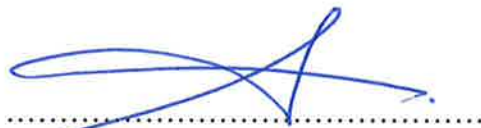
#### **16.0 GENERAL BUSINESS**

- 16.1 Cr Murray Ferris raised the question of whether the meeting should have an update from James Barnett, then move to General Business. Council discussed whether it is worth discussing General Business in the circumstances, and how that might be done. Cr Ken Coombes was happy to move his discussion on Family Game Licences until the following meeting.
- 16.2 Cr Lindsay Lyons stated that we are overdue for a Council Performance Review. Papers should be sent out prior to the June meeting. Discussion about whether this should occur. Agreed that Arash Alaeinia is to organize sending out the evaluation templates.
- 16.3 Barry Roderick stated that Council needs to seriously consider the Future F&G report and start making some progress.
- 16.4 Cr Debbie Oakley suggested that Council should involve the new HR Manager in the 360 review. Murray Ferris clarified that the questionnaire has traditionally been shared to NZC, but not the results. Arash Alaeinia proposes to discuss the review with the new HR manager and create a process going forward. Barry Roderick suggested that Council should be getting input from other organisations such as DoC. Arash Alaeinia stated that there are different levels of review. It is important to get feedback from other organisations and stakeholders, but not for personal employment reviews. Cr Murray Ferris confirms that Arash Alaeinia is to talk to the NZC HR manager regarding establishing a suitable review process going forward and bring those recommendations back to the next Council meeting. Cr Mark Sceats considers that Cr Geoff Thomas is still a member of Council as his meeting apologies have been accepted at meeting/s within the preceding 4 meetings. This has the effect of granting a leave of absence.
- 16.5 Arash Alaeinia stated that any agenda items that have not been covered in this meeting will be carried through to the next agenda, including items of General Business.

#### **17.0 *Report from the Department of Conservation (Tongiroto/Taupo)***

- 17.1 Murray Ferris invites James Barnett to provide a brief update on the Taupo fishery.
- 17.2 James Barnett made a presentation, and answered several questions to the effect that;
- Last winter the Taupo fishery was exceptionally good. Fish were caught in good numbers and sizes. The expectation is that catch rates and fish size would settle to around 2019 levels this year, based on lake productivity surveys.
  - Lake Otamangakau regulation changes this year, which have been received pretty well by anglers.
  - The Anglers Notice is being reviewed.
  - Licence fees are being reviewed.
  - There has been no obvious effects on the fishery from recent earthquakes.
  - The hatchery is owned by Tu Whare Toa. DoC remains integral in its management.
  - The hatchery is breeding specifically for the fish out, but also supplying fingerlings as a food source for a particular threatened bird species.
  - Catfish seem to have had a limited impact on the Stump Bay trout fishery.
- 17.3 Debbie Oakley informed Council that she now sits on the Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee, by Ministerial Appointment and was congratulated by all present.

- 17.4 Arash Alaeinia reminds Council that we currently have a sum of funding for a project looking at lake productivity in Rotorua, which is based on work done by Michel Dedual on Lake Taupo.
- 17.5 Murray Ferris thanked James and extended an open invitation for DoC staff to attend F&G Council meetings.
- 18.0 MEETING CLOSED**
- 18.1 The meeting closed at 1.17pm (2.05pm).



**Murray Ferris**  
**Acting Chairman**

## Summary of Resolutions

### 9.0 2023-2024 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN

9.11 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Mike Jarvie) that Council approves the six contestable fund applications as detailed on pages 1-12 of the Papers for Information. [23/04/9.11]*

9.14 *Agreed (Ken Coombes/Lindsay Lyons) that Council approves the draft Operational Work Plan for the 2022-2023 year. [23/04/9.14]*