

**MINUTES OF THE HAWKE'S BAY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL MEETING HELD
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE DUE TO THE COVID-19 LEVEL FOUR LOCKDOWN ON
THE 14th APRIL 2020 AT 6:00pm**

PRESENT: Councillors Bates (Chairman), Niblett, Williams, Lumsden, Mackay, Pinker, Elstone, Duley, Bowcock, Nimon, Hern

IN ATTENDANCE:

Jesse Friedlander (Regional Manager)

1.0 WELCOME:

The Chairman opened the meeting at 6.00pm and notified everyone that the meeting would be recorded.

2.0 APOLOGIES:

Cr. Hickmott

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (4 February 2020)

Cr Niblett did not vote on the agenda item relating to the release of gamebirds in Hawke's Bay. This should be noted.

AGREED

3.1 That having previously been circulated to members, the Minutes of the meeting of the Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Council held on 4 February 2020 with the above change made, are a true and accurate record.

Duley/Mackay

5.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

Cr. Bowcock questioned whether the NZ Fish and Game Council had responded yet regarding a meeting with the Hawkes Bay Fish and Game Council. So far there has been no further correspondence from NZF&GC regarding setting a date to meet with the Hawkes Bay Council. Mervyn English (Chief of Governance at Department of Conservation) has rung Cr. Bates to discuss the findings of the audit of the Hawkes Bay Fish and Game Council, however.

6.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

No Conflicts were tabled.

7.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANNUAL OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN

Jesse informed Council that hours had been altered from the 2019/20 OWP to reflect actual hours used and the fact that we now have a full time Field Officer. Everything else had been left the same as it is anticipated that direction will be provided on regional budgets for the 2020/21 year depending on the projected loss of income from this year's licence sales. We will be in a better position to make changes closer to our June Council meeting.

Discussion centred around the Govt wage subsidy that Hawkes Bay Fish and Game have received. We may have to pay this back if we do not have a reduction in income of greater than 30% as forecast.

The contestable fund bid of \$7000 for direct costs for headwater drift diving was discussed and it was decided that now is a time to “Tighten our belts”. Therefore, this application should be withdrawn before the next NZC meeting.

That Council withdraws the contestable fund bid for use of the Hawkes Bay non-resident levy fisheries reserve and would prefer the money to be spent at a later date on a project assessing the effect of beach raking on the trout fishery in the Hawkes Bay region.

Williams/Duley

8.0 Angler Notice Review

No submissions have been received. This will be reviewed again at the June meeting.

9.0 Liaison Officer Reports

Nothing Received

10.1 Management Report

The nature of Peter Wilson’s work for the Hawkes Bay Region was discussed. Peter is still working for us even though he is now based out of Marlborough.

Arrangements for the kids fish out day were discussed. This will be held in August subject to a fall in Covid-19 alert level which allows events of this nature.

10.2 Health and Safety Report

Cr. Nimon suggest staff look at the health and safety policy and procedures and this is updated to include specific information/procedures to be followed in the event of a pandemic such as the current situation.

That staff review the current health and safety manual, and this is updated with information/procedures necessary in a pandemic and that the health and safety report is received.

Pinker/Williams

10.3 Finance Report

That the finance report is received

Lumsden/Nimon

10.4 Licence Report

That the licence report is received

Nimon/Williams

11.0 Public Excluded Meeting

That the public are excluded from the following parts of this meeting for Council to discuss options for the upcoming game season.

Duley/Mackay

The public excluded section of this meeting commenced at 6:37pm.

12.0 Options for the upcoming game season

Cr. Duley provided Council with some background from NZC. The NZC meeting to discuss recommendations for the game season to the Minister will be held on the Wednesday following the Govt announcement on Covid-19 lockdown levels. It is pointless to discuss this until we have the details from the Govt on what each lockdown level will mean for hunting and the timing of this.

Cr. Duley had circulated an email with his views on the upcoming game season to NZC and this had also been sent to Hawkes Bay Councillors.

Right now the only information NZC needs from us is whether Council would prefer to leave the gazette notice as is and let hunting restrictions be dictated by Govt or defer the season as Cr. Duley has suggested until all of New Zealand can have an opening weekend and hunting can be carried out in a normal fashion. It is unknown at this point what restrictions will be put in place on hunting at a Level 3 alert level. In Cr. Duley's opinion, a staggered opening day on a regional basis should only be considered if we have already tried to have a deferred national opening weekend and this has not been able to happen due to Govt restrictions.

Councillors were asked for their opinions on a staggered start to the season as opposed to a Country-wide opening weekend. Cr. Williams felt that the recommendations from Fish and Game managers did not take into account the safety of all New Zealanders and agreed that a deferred season would be a much safer option. We have a responsibility to conduct our hunting season in a manner which is safe for hunters and the rest of the community.

Cr. Niblett stated that Fish and Game should be supportive of the government and therefore we did not need to become overly involved. The season should be left as is and it should be left up to the Govt to decide whether hunting is able to take place.

It is the first time that a lot of landowners have their kids home and if allowed, they will be able to hunt in their 'bubbles'. Maybe this is an opportunity to promote the family aspect of hunting.

It was discussed that it is unfair for landowners to be able to hunt if people that normally hunt our public rivers etc won't be under a level 3 alert level.

Cr. Hern stated that we have a responsibility for our hunters and if we allow hunting to occur under an unchanged gazette notice as suggested by some, they might not be able to buy ammunition, have time to feed dams etc. Delaying the season is a better option.

Cr. Lumsden pointed out that in order to have a hunting season, we may have to promote it differently i.e not as a social occasion. There are also lots of other gamebird hunting activities such as upland game on our rivers which can be done while social distancing. If we give away our right to hunt, we may find that our rights as hunters get taken away and so we need to try to have a season of some sort this year.

Cr. Bates is in favour of a staggered start to the season if it means we are maximising the opportunity for hunters. Until we know what Level 3 alert level, it is difficult to decide.

It is clear that all Councillors would like a hunting season, but we need to do so safely.

It was decided that another meeting should be held via videoconference after the NZ Council meeting on Wednesday the 22nd April.

Cr. Duley questioned whether Councillors would prefer a staggered opening weekend (different for each region) during May or a universal opening weekend for all regions on the 30th May.

4 Councillors preferred a staggered opening weekend and 5 would rather a universal opening on the 30th May. (Cr. Hern had left the videoconference at this point and Cr. Duley did not vote).

Communication with our licenceholders will be very important once we have clear direction of how the season will pan out.

That the minutes of this public excluded meeting are to be brought out of committee.

Nimon/Williams

That the public meeting of the Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Council resumes

Williams/Duley

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7:10pm.



Bruce Bates

Chairman



Date