

South Taranaki District Council

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the South Taranaki District Council held in the Council Chamber on Friday 12 June 2009 commencing at 10.00am.

PRESENT: Mayor R Dunlop, Councillors I Armstrong, A Ballantyne, A Beccard, A Hickey, P Johnson, G Lawson, S Rangiwahia, I Smith and I Wards.

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive (Mr Stevenson), Group Manager Environment and Information Services (Mr Young), Acting Group Manager Community Services and Development (Ms Greenhill), Group Manager Engineering Services (Mr McCann), Support Services Manager (Miss Cox), Communications Officer (Miss Murphy), Support Services Officer (Miss Malin), various members of the public throughout the day and three members of the media.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Bourke, Packer and Powell.

RESOLUTION

(Cr Rangiwahia/Cr Smith)

79/09 **THAT the apologies from Councillors Bourke, Packer and Powell be received.**

CARRIED

1 **TEN YEAR PLAN HEARING**

(a) **Mayor**

(i) Ten Year Plan Hearing

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the hearing and outlined the process for the day. He noted that all councillors had read the submissions and there was no requirement for the submitters to re-read each submission. He highlighted that the councillors and Council staff were able to ask questions, however, this was not a debate. A number of late submissions had been received and these would be accepted by the Council.

Mr Brian Thomas

Mr Thomas raised his concerns regarding the proposed increase in dog registration fees particularly for rural properties. Mr Thomas supported a \$10 fee per rural dog adding that most of the issues arose from the unregistered dogs. He suggested those that required the services of the Animal Services Officers should be charged accordingly.

Mr Drew Rafferty

Mr Rafferty had been unable to attend the hearing. His submission was tabled and taken as read.

Ms Ailsa Aiken

Ms Aiken referred to the Council's partnership with local Iwi and the rationale in the Ten Year Plan for enhancing the capacity for Iwi to contribute to the Council's decision-making. She supported the continuance of building a relationship between Iwi and the Council, however, in view of the budget constraints within the Council she did not support the position of an Iwi Liaison Officer. She considered that this position would be a duplication of the current processes in place as there was an active Iwi Liaison Committee.

Ms Aiken provided a number of examples of Iwi and the Patea Community Board working together including the South Taranaki District Museum project, protection of the Patea River, commissioned art works and sculptures and involvement in the PaePae in the Park celebrations.

Ms Aiken suggested that the Council could implement the objectives set out to enhance partnerships with Iwi and revisit the proposal for an Iwi Liaison Officer in the future.

Councillor Ballantyne commented that each community board had a dedicated Community Development Officer and asked whether the Iwi Liaison Committee should be entitled to the same benefit by having an Iwi Liaison Officer. Ms Aiken did not support this.

Mr David Honeyfield

Mr Honeyfield considered that the Council's main function was to provide services not to be a tax collector. He considered that rates should be set at a fair and equitable rate to all sectors of the community and should be set on their ability to pay.

Mr Honeyfield noted the difference between urban and rural rates and commented that while historically farmers had been high income earners this had changed and he considered that wealthier people lived in the towns.

Mr Honeyfield asked why urban rates were increasing by 41% in ten years and rural rates were increasing by 61% over the same time. He considered that the UAGC increase was too low and should not be linked to the CPI especially when the general rate component showed a 95% increase over ten years which was well above inflation.

Mr Honeyfield recommended that the UAGC be linked to the general rate increase as he considered this to be fairer and more equitable.

Mr Honeyfield referred to the water supply system and noted that water fell into three categories: metered users (40%), non metered users (40%) and unaccounted water (20%). Mr Honeyfield considered that the metered users were subsidising the non metered users of water. He recommended that non metered water users paid the full amount and that metered users should see a reduction in the proposed costs. He considered that the lost water needed to be accounted for and suggested that all properties should be put on water meters. Even though this would be a significant outlay, it would provide a cost recovery situation within five years.

Councillor Beccard asked for clarification around the unaccounted water in other districts. Mr McCann confirmed that 15% was regarded as *normal* for unaccounted water in New Zealand.

Councillor Wards asked for clarification that Mr Honeyfield did not support the UAGC being linked to the CPI when rates were not and whether this would not rise to the same extent of the projected rate increases. Mr Honeyfield confirmed this.

Taranaki Arts Festival Trust – Ms Suzanne Porter

Ms Porter advised that she was the Chief Executive of the Taranaki Arts Festival Trust (TAFT). She acknowledged the Council's support, via the Council's annual community funding grants for TAFT events that benefited the South Taranaki region.

Ms Porter noted that the TAFT needed the continued support of the Council to help meet the costs of running the three festivals being the Taranaki Festival of the Arts, Taranaki Rhododendron and Garden Festival and WOMAD.

Ms Porter commented that the festivals created vibrancy in the communities and the festivals assisted economically to the region.

Councillor Hickey commented that there were no events being held for the Festivals around the coast. Ms Porter replied that they had attempted to have two events in the coastal area but there had not been much response, however, the TSB Community Trust had provided a grant for youth which was being used to bus children from Opunake through to New Plymouth to attend a number of events being held in New Plymouth.

Councillor Beccard asked how much the New Plymouth District Council funded the TAFT annually. Ms Porter replied that they provided a grant of \$180,000 for the Arts Festival and then a further grant for major events and this was unable to be discussed.

Councillor Johnson asked if there was any way that the Rhododendron Festival could encourage more South Taranaki gardens. Ms Porter replied that the strongest garden region was in the South and there were a number of new gardens. She undertook to provide this information to the councillors.

Patea Community Board - Mrs Shelley Dew-Hopkins

Mrs Dew-Hopkins spoke on behalf of the Patea Community Board submission. They had a number of items that had been considered and their main points included the UAGC annual increase being linked to the general rate component not the CPI, the general rate component should be limited to the CPI increase, did not support the pan tax charge as it restricted new businesses, they did not support removing the rates differential during the time of economic hardship. The Board opposed the 300% increase in water meter charges from \$50 to \$200, however, supported the cemetery fee increases. The Board did not support the excessive increase in hall fees and considered that this was excessive and detrimental to hiring the halls.

Mrs Dew Hopkins advised that the Board opposed the rural dog registration fee increases which were considered to be excessive for the struggling rural community, however, supported the proposed increase of 50 cents per user at the Powerco Aquatic Centre. The Board opposed the increase in transfer station fees as low fees encouraged residents to keep the towns tidy.

The Board supported consideration being given in future to splitting the areas in the Patea Ward North and South of the Whenuakura River for elective representatives for the Council and the Community Board. The Board supported the South Taranaki District Museum upgrade, the Patea and Waverley swimming pool upgrades and the Patea Sea Moles upgrade.

The Board did not support the removal of the Patea Motor Camp upgrade from the ten year plan. The Board considered that the district waste bylaw was the responsibility of the Taranaki Regional Council.

The Board supported the continuation of the Waverley LibraryPlus extended opening hours on a Thursday evening. The Board also supported the creation of a part time position for a person to maintain the town gardens and pavements of the CBD area in both Patea and Waverley.

Councillor Rangiwahia asked if the Board supported the Iwi Liaison Officer position. Mrs Dew-Hopkins replied that the Board did not support this position as it was not considered that the \$75,000 was affordable.

Councillor Armstrong commented that a number of items that the Board supported were *expense* items and asked if the Board supported a rates increase to cover those capital expenditure items. Mrs Dew-Hopkins confirmed this.

Mrs Maree Liddington

Mrs Liddington supported investigation into the heavy traffic going through the township of Eltham via the State Highway. She commented that the section of road through the township was narrow. She suggested that a bypass could be constructed alongside the railway lines for north travelling trucks which she considered could be a good compromise for the existing situation.

Councillor Ballantyne commented that this would rely on trucks heading north voluntarily going along the bypass route. Mrs Liddington considered that it would be an easier route and trucks would be happy to take this option rather than pass through the township area.

Eltham Community Board – Mrs Maree Liddington

Mrs Liddington spoke on behalf of the Eltham Community Board submission. She advised that the Board did not support charging community based groups to use the Eltham Community Building. She noted that the groups were funded by grants and donations.

Mrs Liddington advised that the Board supported upgrades to Taumata Park. She noted that this had been included in the 2003 Community Development Plan and had not proceeded to date. Taumata Park had been poorly maintained, the grandstand required painting and the toilets required an upgrade. It was noted that the 125 year celebrations were being held in Eltham and it would be good to see the Park upgraded for those celebrations.

The Board supported the replacement of the one lane bridges namely the ones located at Kaponga and on Skeet Road. The Board also supported an upgrade to the corner of Collingwood and Bridge Streets which were heavily utilised and was part of the western bypass. The streets often broke and needed to be wider to accommodate the truck and trailer units.

Councillor Beccard asked if the Board supported a targeted rate for the Eltham ward to pay for groups to be able to use the Eltham Community Building at no charge. Mrs Liddington was unable to comment for all residents in the Eltham ward.

New Zealand Motorvan Association – Mr Joe Kirk

Mr Kirk requested that the Council consider allowing motor-home owners to park for two nights in the 50 or 70 kilometres per hour areas provided that they were not interfering with traffic or residents.

The Mayor questioned if motor-home owners were being asked to move on in South Taranaki. Mr Kirk replied that they had not been asked by councillors but some residents had requested them to move.

Mr Young confirmed that there was no bylaw that controlled motor-homes parking in the 50 or 70 kilometre per hour zones and he was unaware of any issues.

It was noted that in the freedom camping policy the freedom campers were able to park anywhere except for the urban areas of Hawera and Opunake where a commercial motorcamp was located. The councillors agreed that this policy could be reviewed.

Mr Kirk acknowledged that the motor-home owners ensured that they did not park anywhere close to an existing motorcamp facility.

Hawera Foodbank – Mrs Hazel Robinson

Mrs Robinson requested that the Council consider granting the Hawera Foodbank \$10,000 to cover their running costs such as rent, power and food purchases. She noted that the Foodbank had been required to relocate their premises and were now required to pay rent at their new facility.

Mrs Robinson noted that there were two other food-banks operating in Hawera located at the Salvation Army and the Presbyterian Church, however, it was not possible to amalgamate due to differing criteria.

Councillor Ballantyne asked how much rent the foodbank was required to pay. Mrs Robinson replied that it was \$125 per week which included a \$25 rates component.

Councillor Beccard asked how much room was required for the foodbank and whether there was any other room that the Council owned that could be utilised. Mrs Robinson advised that they currently had three rooms and one reception area. They had two fridges and two deep freezers.

Mr Robert Smith

Mr Smith advised that he was a greyhound trader and breeder and he did not support the proposed increases in dog registration fees. He considered the increases to be unfair particularly for his business which could result in a cost of around \$1,000 per annum to register his greyhounds.

Mr Smith advised that his greyhounds did not leave his property unless they were going to the races or to the vets. All of the greyhounds were tattoo identified and registered with the greyhound racing authority and none were bred to sell to the general public.

Mr Smith considered that the owners of the dogs who caused an offence should be seriously fined.

Hawera Business Association – Mr Blair Johns

Mr Johns spoke on behalf of the Hawera Business Association who supported a targeted rate of 1.75 on all businesses within the commercial and industrial zone of Hawera to fund the position of a full-time Town Co-ordinator who would co-ordinate projects and activities to enhance the physical, economic and social environment of Hawera.

Mr Johns advised that 202 businesses had been surveyed in town which included a large cross section of businesses along Glover Road, South Road and High Street. Of the 202 businesses, 139 provided written support, 16 verbal support and 33 were opposed to the suggestion.

Councillor Beccard asked if the position could be run by the Hawera Business Association. Mr Johns replied that they would prefer to see the position being under Council, as the Business Association had only been formed for one year and was not a legal entity or GST registered. He noted that the Business Association did not have the manpower to employ the town co-ordinator and he considered that the position could sit within the Council's Economic Development and Tourism unit.

Councillor Beccard commented that a number of the projects that had been identified by the Business Association were projects that should be undertaken by the Council and asked if the businesses should be funding those projects. Mr Johns replied that the projects listed were just ideas and the Business Association would be lobbying the Council to undertake some of those projects.

Mr Colin Greaves

Mr Greaves spoke in support of the Coastal Walkway and expressed some concern that the Council had removed this project from the ten year plan. He considered that the walkway would be an attractive tourism project for South Taranaki. He acknowledged the feasibility study undertaken by Mrs Diana Reid which had received a large amount of support from the councillors, public and media.

Mr Greaves considered that parts of the walkway could be undertaken with very little cost and some could include sign-posted tracks along the beaches of South Taranaki which could be walked during the right tide times. He suggested that there could be opportunities to raise funding for the walkway such as selling rights to tourism operators to take guided tours.

Mr Greaves suggested that \$50,000 to \$100,000 could be set aside to start working on the walkway project in stages .

St Mary's Anglican Church – Ms Patricia Scaife

Ms Scaife spoke on behalf of the St Mary's Anglican Church who did not support the proposed *pan tax*. She advised that for non profit and voluntary organisations such as churches the proposed pan tax would be inequitable. Ms Scaife advised that the number of toilet pans were often dictated by the licence to operate a hall or a church.

Ms Scaife indicated that a number of churches had been built a long time ago and utilisation had been based on the larger numbers attending church. There had been a considerable decline in numbers attending churches, however, there was still the same number of toilets in these facilities.

Ms Scaife noted that a number of voluntary organisations would struggle to meet the costs for the proposed pan tax.

Inaha Water Liaison Committee – Mr Alan Marx

Mr Marx spoke on behalf of the Inaha Water Liaison Committee (the Committee) who were concerned about some conflicting information relating to the proposal to transfer excess water from the Inaha scheme to another scheme.

Mr Marx advised that the owners of the Inaha scheme were the land owners who contributed to 50% of the capital cost of the scheme.

The Committee considered that there were looming water deficits in the future as water consumption increased and it was imperative that the water rights were protected for the owners of the scheme. Mr Marx indicated that there was scope within their own scheme to hook up more properties without exporting to another area.

The Committee considered that the cost of the water was becoming increasingly expensive and noted that there were no urban areas being supported by the Inaha scheme and the water was only servicing farm property houses. The proposed increase was projected at around 100% which was considered to be unacceptable especially when a small minority of water was used for human consumption.

Mr Marx indicated that the Inaha scheme was a reliable good quality water source and there was a proposal to put in an ultra filtration plant which was considered to be a huge capital investment considering the main intent for the water. He noted that farmers were now considering alternative water supplies due to the rising costs for water from the scheme.

The Mayor asked if the Committee had an issue with diverting water to another scheme if there was a genuine surplus. Mr Marx confirmed that this was not supported by the Committee.

Councillor Beccard asked who the owner of the scheme was. The Mayor replied that the Council was the legal owner of the scheme.

Mr Neil Crowley

Mr Crowley advised that he was one of 14 Kaponga farmers linked to the Waimate West Water Supply Scheme. Mr Crowley questioned why the Waimate West farmers paid 43 cents per cubic meter yet the Kaponga farmers paid 62 cents per cubic meter of water. Mr Crowley considered that the additional cost to the Kaponga farmers was excessive and the proposed increases were even higher than present.

Mr Stevenson clarified that this was an historic arrangement when the scheme was first put in place. It was noted that the Kaponga farmers were included in the scheme at a later date and were not required to pay the initial 50% capital investment into the scheme.

Eltham Athletics Club – Ms Jocelyn Carter

Ms Carter spoke on behalf of the Eltham Athletics Club who was dissatisfied with the standard of the Taumata Park grandstand. She noted that the Athletics Club used the facilities on a regular basis and were required to use the toilets under the grandstand. She considered that the toilets were dirty and the lights did not work. The Athletics Club supported the grandstand being upgraded including painting, removal of broken glass, grandstand seats being fixed and a shop back by the front door to the grandstand.

Ms Carter advised that the Athletics Club did not have any funds that could be put towards the upgrade, however, they would be willing to assist with a working bee if required.

Venture Taranaki Trust – Mr Stuart Trundle

Mr Trundle spoke on behalf of Venture Taranaki Trust who acknowledged the intelligent balance between vision, action orientation and pragmatism in the current economic climate.

Mr Trundle advised that current forecasting showed that it was now 2011 before the economy was proposed to show any positive growth.

Mr Trundle commented that the Plan showed an investment of \$70,000 towards the Rugby World Cup in 2011, however, it had not shown any revenue which should certainly increase during the time of the Rugby World Cup.

Hawera Water Ski Club – Mr David MacLeod

Mr MacLeod spoke on behalf of the Hawera Water Ski Club (the Club) who had highlighted a number of issues at Lake Rotorangi.

The Club acknowledged that Lake Rotorangi was a popular destination as it was a deep gorged river converted into a dam which provided excellent shelter from the wind. The Club was concerned at the state of the existing Tangahoe Valley Road which still had 13 kilometres of unsealed road. The Club supported further sealing of the remainder of the road. Mr MacLeod indicated that there was a lack of visibility on several corners which was aggravated by the growth of vegetation at banks. The Club requested that the road be mowed at least monthly especially during the water ski season.

Mr MacLeod referred to the Pukekino Landing boat ramp which often became obstructed by large logs. The Club requested that the Council consider providing an ongoing timely service, including after hours, to address the instances where boat owners could not address the ramp blockages themselves.

Mr MacLeod indicated that the reserve was enjoyed by the increasing number of people and up to 300 could be camping at any time which puts some stress on the minimal facilities that were available. The Club suggested that temporary toilet facilities were provided over the Christmas/New Year period and that serious consideration should be given to installation additional permanent facilities.

Mr MacLeod advised that mowing on the reserve was undertaken by the Club and the Club was seeking a contribution from the Council towards the cost of the mowing of the reserve.

Mr MacLeod acknowledged the assistance by the Council to felling a number of trees along the reserve that were a safety hazard.

Mr MacLeod indicated that the road through the reserve consisted of extremely coarse metal which made it difficult to walk in bare feet. The Club requested that the Council consider paving the road.

Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust – Ms Jenny Steven and Mr Joe Menzies

Ms Steven acknowledged the Council for their previous support of \$950,000 towards the Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust (the Trust).

Ms Steven outlined the progress to date with the Trust and their success in the pest eradication.

Ms Steven advised that the Trust was seeking a contribution of \$55,000 towards the operating costs at Rotokare. She noted that operating costs for the year was proposed to be \$297,880, however the \$55,000 would cover promotion (\$10,000) and the site manager position (\$45,000). The funding was sought for a three year period.

Mr Menzies thanked the Council for the funding that the Trust had received to date and outlined some of the current projects that were underway at Rotokare.

Mr Colin Thomson

Mr Thomson asked if the Council was able to undertake some monitoring of the contractors cutting box thorn hedges on the side of a road. Mr Thomson had received a number of flat tyres from box thorn where the road had not been satisfactorily cleared. He suggested that the farmer should be required to apply for a permit to cut their hedge and then a requirement would be for the road to be swept afterwards. Mr McCann confirmed that if the Council was made aware of the issue then they would be able to contact the contractor to ensure that the road was swept to a suitable standard.

Mr Thomson asked if the Council was able to police disability signs on private property such as at the Countdown carpark. Mr Young replied that the Council did not have the ability to police private property. It was up to the property owner to enforce their own car parking area, however, the Council would be happy to assist by speaking with the owners if required.

Mr Terence Whelan

Mr Whelan spoke regarding the proposed changes to the UAGC. Mr Whelan considered that those who were using services should be targeted to pick up the cost of those services. He considered that services not caused by property or capital valuation should not carry the burden.

Mr Whelan commented that those residing in the townships had greater access to cultural services along with parks and reserves whereas the farmers who live further away are expected to pay a higher rate and do not have such an easy access to those services.

Mr Whelan asked the Council to consider a better match for the services and to target the rates accordingly. Mr Whelan considered that the capital value based system was not fair and applicable.

Councillor Ballantyne asked for clarification that Mr Whelan wanted to transfer the rating burden from the rural residents to the urban residents. Mr Whelan replied that his focus was on the parts of the Council services that were people based services. He commented that roading could be supported under a capital rating system.

Taranaki Garden Trust – Mr Michael Self

Mr Self thanked the Council for the funding that the Taranaki Garden Trust had received last year.

Mr Self highlighted the number of people who came to Taranaki through the Taranaki Garden Trust Fringe Festival. Mr Self referred to the partnership with the More FM radio network who had promoted the festival well beyond the promotional budget.

Mr Self also highlighted the Festival's relationship with the Weekend Gardener of which 37,000 copies of their brochure would be sent out in September along with a further 20,000 to i-SITE's, garden centres and private homes throughout New Zealand.

Mr Self asked the Council to continue with their funding towards the festival which was a highlight throughout Taranaki bringing a number of visitors to the region.

Mr Self advised that the Council had funded the Festival \$5,000 in the previous year.

The meeting adjourned at 1.05 pm and reconvened at 1.35 pm.

Parihaka Management Trust – Andrea Pikikore Moore – Te Miringa Hohaia

Mr Hohaia spoke on behalf of the Parihaka Management Trust and acknowledged the positive support for the Parihaka Peace Festival. He noted that a major element of the success of the Festival had been due to the support that had been received. He noted that they had not been able to obtain a significant amount of public funding particularly from some of the major funding bodies who had declined to assist with the Festival from the start.

Mr Hohaia considered that the Festival was positive for South Taranaki and significantly benefited a number of businesses throughout the district.

Mr Hohaia highlighted that the Parihaka office was now fully functional at Parihaka and the Trust ensured that they used as much infrastructure from the South Taranaki district as possible.

Mr Hohaia urged the Council to continue funding the Festival which had previously been \$25,000 per annum.

Councillor Hickey asked how many volunteers were involved leading up to the Festival. Mr Hohaia replied that originally they had around 1,000 volunteers, however, this had been scaled down to around 300 for the most recent festival .

Ms Marianne Archibald

Ms Archibald asked the Council to consider providing a multi sports surface in Waverley adjacent to the Border Rugby Clubrooms. She acknowledged the Hub facility, however, noted that it was a 100 kilometre round trip to visit the Hub facility. She suggested that the Border Rugby Club could be responsible for the bookings for the multi sport surface.

Ms Archibald acknowledged the free internet at the LibraryPlus facility which had been very successful. She suggested that the LibraryPlus could be open on weekends and potentially a local person could be trained as a librarian in some sort of apprenticeship capability.

Ms Archibald suggested that the Waverley Swimming Pool desperately required sun shades and some wind shelter. She suggested the wind shelter could be some PVC sheeting similar to that in a garden bar.

Ms Archibald supported the retention of the nappy subsidy. She noted that a number of new parents in the Waverley area used the nappies which she considered to be of a very high quality.

Ms Archibald suggested that the transfer station required some improvements as she considered that the recycling area was generally unusable.

Ms Archibald asked the Council to consider a *spruce up* for the Dallison park playground. She noted that there were always broken bottles and graffiti around the area. The seats needed to be waterblasted and cleaned.

The Mayor asked if the community could assist with fundraising for any of the projects. Ms Archibald replied that the community could undertake some fundraising for a multi sports surface.

Councillor Armstrong asked if the Waverley community would be happy with a rise in rates to fund the suggested projects. Ms Archibald was unable to answer this on behalf of the community as she noted that a number of people were unable to afford the rates increases.

Councillor Rangiwahia left the meeting at 1.56 pm.

Egmont Community Arts Council – Mrs Carol Marshall

Mrs Marshall advised that she was the chairperson of the Egmont Community Arts Council (the Arts Council) which had been part of the community for 30 years. She noted that the Arts Council had supported and facilitated many arts related events, Opunake's murals, the Peter Snell sculpture, and the Taranaki Art Awards.

Mrs Marshall advised that Creative Communities had now advised that grants could only be applied for every six months and that the Arts Council were now unable to receive the funding to allocate as they were not a district-wide organisation. She noted that the Arts Council was not restricted to the Egmont Plains ward only.

Mrs Marshall asked the Council to consider the Arts Council being allowed to continue to fund small local projects that required a rapid response, on a district-wide basis, which would complement the work that the Council's Creative Communities Committee did in funding projects that could be dealt with on a six monthly basis.

Wanganui Federated Farmers – Mr Brian Doughty & Mr Tim Matthews

Mr Doughty spoke on behalf of the Wanganui Federated Farmers who supported around 70 farmers in the southern end of South Taranaki.

Mr Matthews considered that the Council's Ten Year Plan was hard to read and understand. He would prefer to see a consolidated statement of the Council's overheads and the internal administration expenses which was not evident in any information available to the Federation Farmers. Mr Matthews said that he was unable to know how efficient the Council was as an organisation or whether the Chief Executive was running an efficient organisation.

Mr Matthews said he did not consider that rates were a property tax and there was nowhere within the Local Government Act 2002 that said that rates should be a property tax.

Mr Matthews advised that there was no information within the Ten Year Plan that showed whether dog registration fees would double in two years time and there had been no ability to access that information. He suggested that if the farmers were required to pay more in rates then there should be reasons highlighting why this was fair and reasonable.

Mr Matthews advised that Wanganui Federated Farmers did not support the Council's Revenue and Financing Policy. They considered that it was insufficient under the Local Government Act 2002. He noted that their submission rewrote the Policy on what they considered to be a fair basis for the district to charge people for the services that they received. He suggested that the Policy should be fair and reasonable to everyone. Federated Farmers offered to work with the councillors and staff to ensure a fairer rating system.

Wanganui Federated Farmers suggested that the UAGC could be renamed as the Community Facilities rate.

Councillor Ballantyne asked how committed Federated Farmers was to user pays. He noted that a review was being undertaken on roading and how it was funded and it could result in rural residents using the roads to a higher proportion to urban residents. Mr Matthews supported this and suggested that roading should be a national charge.

Taranaki Federated Farmers - Mr Neville Wallace, Mr Terrence Whelan & Mr Tim Matthews

Mr Wallace thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak to the Taranaki Federated Farmers submission.

Mr Wallace suggested that the Council should consider deferring some maintenance or spread it over a longer period of time in an effort to reduce rates. He noted that farmers were unable to afford the increased rates which in turn would reduce spending in the community affecting the businesses.

Councillor Johnson commented that while rates were focused on the capital value of the property, he noted that the farmers had been paying exorbitant prices for the farms. Mr Matthews acknowledged that this was correct.

Normanby School BOT – Mr Hamish McCook

Mr McCook spoke on behalf of the Normanby School Board of Trustees. He advised that Normanby School was a decile 4 school and had 150 pupils. Mr McCook stated that the Normanby pool had been built by the community 25 years ago and was currently in desperate need of repairs. The cost for the basic repairs was approximately \$25,000 and the Board of Trustees would undertake fundraising to assist with the required repairs.

Mr McCook noted that to obtain quotes to repair the pool it needed to be emptied then refilled immediately to ensure that the cracks do not get worse.

Mr McCook commented that the pool was a good asset for the school and the community. He requested the Council consider a partnership with the Normanby School. He suggested that one possible solution could be a reduction or nil charge for water fees which would be much appreciated.

Manaia Primary School – Mrs Tracey Judd

Mrs Judd spoke on behalf of the Manaia Primary School and their opposition to the proposed *pan tax*. She considered that schools should be exempt from the pan tax as schools already paid a large amount for water rates and provided low costs or services to the community. She noted that students were only at the school between the hours of 9.00 am to 3.00 pm.

Mrs Judd commented that when fixed costs such as a pan tax became high it reduced the amount of funds that were available to spend on the education of the children. School budgets were set in advance and there was little room for additional expenses. The new proposed tax would equate to approximately \$5.00 per pupil.

Councillor Wards asked if the school was able to obtain any additional funding from the education department. Mrs Judd replied that the school could apply for additional funding, however, it was not guaranteed that they would be successful.

Former Patea Hospital – Ms Pam Peacock

Ms Peacock spoke on the state of the old Patea Hospital building which had become an eyesore in the community. She noted that it was continuously vandalised.

Ms Peacock suggested that the Council could be involved in forcing the owner to remove the old buildings and replace the area with a park. She noted that a number of the previous staff members at the hospital could be involved in contributing seats or benches to a park facility.

The Mayor acknowledged the concerns, however, stating that it was a privately owned building and the Council was unable to force the owner to take any action at the property.

Mr Craig Russell

Mr Russell advised that he was the manager of the Opunake Beach Holiday Park and was opposed to the proposed pan tax charge. He noted that his increase would be up to a \$1,600 charge for a facility that did not run for 12 months of the year. He suggested that a formula could be developed which could charge on a per head basis.

Mr Russell noted that the \$170,000 funding for campgrounds had been withdrawn from the Ten Year Plan and supported that this be included back into the Plan.

Opunake Business Association – Mr Craig Russell

Mr Russell spoke on behalf of the Opunake Business Association who expressed concern at the public toilets located in Opunake. He noted that the toilets were old and dirty and needed to be upgraded. He also noted that there was inadequate signage showing where the toilet facility was located.

The Opunake Business Association supported the visitor centre in Opunake being open seven days a week and requested that better signage be installed directing visitors to the centre.

The Opunake Business Association also supported the feasibility study undertaken by Diana Reid regarding the coastal walkway and the implementation of this project. They considered that this project should be included back into the Council's Ten Year Plan as it would attract people to the district.

Mr Robert Shaw

Mr Shaw advised that he had purchased a batch in Opunake and considered that Opunake was under-marketed. He considered that there was scope to undertake further marketing to bring people to the area.

Mr Shaw acknowledged the work undertaken by the Council on *fixing* the water issues and providing residents with bottled water when required.

Mr Shaw suggested that there was an opportunity for the Council to plant native trees in the area bounded by Allison Street, Whitcombe Road, Ihaia Road and Gisborne Terrace on the old railway land. He considered that this could become an asset for the community.

Mr Andrew Larcom

Mr Larcom advised that he was a farmer at Ararata and on Turuturu Road and considered that the proposed rate increase that was higher than the CPI was unsatisfactory.

Mr Larcom considered that the submission process was a *farce* and it was poor planning to hold the hearing on the same day as the National Fieldays. He suggested that the feeling in the community was that the Council had already made up their mind in regard to the Plan and there was no point in making a submission.

Councillor Beccard commented that all councillors took all submissions seriously and listened to all points raised throughout a hearing process.

Sport Taranaki – Mr Ross Fulton

Mr Fulton acknowledged the amount of work the Council had undertaken especially with the construction of the Hub facility, the upgrade to the Powerco Aquatic Centre and the rural swimming pools.

Sport Taranaki suggested that the Council should recognise the regional and district community outcomes that international, national and regional events being held in the Taranaki and specifically South Taranaki District can assist to achieve. Sport Taranaki suggested that the Council consider using Venture Taranaki as a regional vehicle to financially invest in to attract events.

Mr Fulton noted that Sport Taranaki supported the development of the Hub as a premier facility. He acknowledged that South Taranaki was rich in assets and facilities and Sport Taranaki was committed to ensuring people can use those facilities to the maximum provided that it aligned back to the regional and district sport and recreational strategies.

Sport Taranaki supported the user contribution for the Powerco Aquatic Centre being 20% of the total cost rather than the proposed 20-25%.

Opunake Community Baths Society – Mrs Judith Armstrong

Mrs Armstrong spoke on behalf of the Opunake Community Baths Society (the Society). The Society requested that the Council consider ways to include the Opunake Swimming Pool complex in the latter part of the Ten Year Plan.

Mrs Armstrong acknowledged that the Society did receive some funds from the Council to contribute to the annual running costs, however, this was comparatively smaller to the other rural pools in South Taranaki yet the Opunake pool was open for 28 to 30 weeks per year which was double to any other rural swimming pool.

Mrs Armstrong advised that the Opunake community required a longer swimming season as there was a large number of children enrolled in the pre-school lessons and the swimming club learn to swim groups.

Mrs Armstrong supported the proposed 25% user fee proposal for the Powerco Aquatic Centre noting that Opunake users paid approximately 45% of the running costs for the 2008/09 season which she considered to be inequitable.

Mrs Armstrong asked that the Council be prepared to invest in major capital items when required at the Opunake pool. She suggested that this could be included in the latter part of the Ten Year Plan.

The meeting adjourned at 3.30 pm and reconvened at 3.40 pm.

St Georges Church Patea Restoration Committee – Mrs Marie Dwyer

Mrs Dwyer spoke on behalf of the St George's Church Patea Restoration Committee.

Mrs Dwyer advised that the Church was designed by Frederick de Jersey Clere and built in 1885 and was a Category 1 building registered with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust.

In February 2004 a major storm resulted in the bell tower and steeple becoming unstable and needing to be removed. Since then the Committee had restored and replaced the bell tower. This was at a cost of \$280,000.

Mrs Dwyer advised that stage two of the project was to restore the windows, re-piling and re-cladding which would finish the restoration of the exterior of the Church. Mrs Dwyer advised that the cost for stage two was approximately \$312,000 of which \$20,000 was now outstanding. She noted that the Committee was unable to apply for funds from the TSB Community Trust as this was outside the TSB's funding area. She asked the Council to consider funding the \$20,000 that was outstanding.

It was noted that the Church had become a tourist attraction as it was an historic building and a number of overseas visitors stopped to view the Church. The 125th anniversary was due to be celebrated over next years' Anzac weekend and it was hoped that the project would be completed by that date.

DLA Phillips Fox – Mr Craig Stevens

Mr Stevens spoke on behalf of Trustpower Limited. He congratulated the Council on the excellent Ten Year Plan summary.

Mr Stevens advised that Trustpower was concerned with the removal of the current differential for the Patea Hydro Electric Scheme. He noted that the extent of usage by Trustpower along the road to the Scheme was one vehicle visit per week on average.

Mr Stevens advised that the previous owner who had built the Scheme had formed the road and then gifted it to the Council. He noted that a number of campers used the campground at the dam and were the predominant users of the road. He added that Trustpower also provided financial assistance towards the operation of the campground.

Mr Stevens commented that due to the higher capital value of the property the rates increase would generate around \$65,000 for the Council from this one property.

Mr Stevens highlighted that the Scheme was isolated and was an unmanned station. He noted that the capital investment for a back country farm would have been significantly less than for a power station.

Mr Stevens urged the Council not to remove the differential for the Scheme as he considered it to be unreasonable and unfair.

Mr Jeff Ward

Mr Ward expressed concern about the proposed rate increase of 9.5% over the coming year.

Mr Ward considered that the Council had maintained large cash reserves of around \$5 to \$6 million, some of which was available to be used to minimise the amount ratepayers were expected to contribute towards expenses budgeted in the Ten Year Plan.

Mr Ward commented that staffing levels were not disclosed in the Ten Year Plan and suggested that this information should be included in the Plan. He referred to a meeting where there were ten members of a committee attending along with ten Council staff. He considered that there was a number of staff that should not have been attending that meeting.

Mr Ward supported the increase in the hall fees and suggested that the Council set hall charges that represented a fair commercial return.

Mr Ward referred to the events programme for 2010 and asked what the \$65,000 that had been included in the budget related to.

Mr Ward considered that it would only cost the Council around \$10 to register each dog. He considered that those whose dogs caused a nuisance should be charged accordingly.

Mr Ward expressed concern at two footpaths along Wallscourt Place and Ketemarae Road that *led to nowhere*. He considered that this was a waste of funds and footpaths should be prioritised according to high foot traffic areas.

Mr Ward considered that the Revenue and Financing Policy required amendment and serious consideration should be given to the financial contributions policy.

Mr Hugh & Mrs Cynthia Cunningham

Mrs Cunningham supported the continuation of the cloth nappy subsidy scheme which she considered would reduce the amount of disposable nappies that would fill up the landfills.

Mr Cunningham suggested that the Council approach the TSB Community Trust trustees to amend their trust deed to encompass the full New Plymouth, Stratford and South Taranaki areas.

Mr Cunningham did not consider that there should be any GST charged on rates. He noted that farmers and commercial businesses were able to claim GST compared to the residential property owners who were unable to claim the GST portion of their rates.

Mr Eric Broomhall

Mr Broomhall acknowledged the rezoning project that the Council had undertaken in the Hawera/Normanby area.

Mr Broomhall supported the Council bringing forward projects and helping the economy of South Taranaki. He suggested that the only way to get out of a recession was by continuing to spend.

Mr Broomhall supported the coastal walkway and considered that this should be included in the Plan.

Councillor Johnson asked if the Council should be using contractors from outside the district if they were the lowest tenderer for projects. Mr Broomhall confirmed this adding that 80% of his business was from outside of the district.

Hawera Repertory Society – Mrs Donella Weir

Mrs Weir asked the Council to consider undertaking some upgrades to the Hawera Memorial Theatre. She noted that Hawera Repertory was in its 64th year and had produced over 1,000 productions. Hawera Repertory was one of the main users of the Hawera Memorial Theatre and she considered that it had not been maintained to the standard that it should have been. She noted that there were a number of general maintenance items that should have been undertaken by the Council.

Hawera Repertory had asked that the flashing/guttering that had been missing off the building be fixed over one year ago, however, this had still not occurred. She noted that Hawera Repertory had been required to completely scrub the theatre for their current production rehearsals and had to replace 23 light bulbs. The heating was non-existent and the theatre was always cold.

Mrs Weir noted that some basic equipment was required which included a new lighting desk which was a board operated by one lighting person during a production. She asked that the exit lights be serviced and upgraded as they currently did not work. Hawera Repertory also requested that the heating system be upgraded, two new dimmer packs be purchased, repair the holes and tears in the cyclorama, provide cutlery and crockery in the *green* room and provide a cleaning and maintenance regime for the theatre.

Councillor Beccard commented that a number of items should be maintenance items and should be undertaken by the Council on a regular basis.

Councillor Armstrong commented that the Opunake Players group had purchased and maintained their own theatre building and asked if Hawera Repertory would be in a position to do the same. Mrs Weir replied that Hawera Repertory had refurbished all of the seats in the theatre and also assisted other groups with lighting and other functions within the theatre on a voluntary basis.

Mr Maurice Boyd

Mr Boyd spoke on behalf of Greypower who were opposed to the significant increase in the dog registration fees. He considered that this was an unfair increase as many Greypower members had a dog for companionship and security. He noted that a number of Greypower members were selected owner holders and their dogs did not cause any nuisances.

Mr Boyd suggested that there could be a gold card discount for Greypower members. He considered that the current dog registration fees would be a satisfactory charge for the Greypower members.

Mr Boyd supported the changes to the UAGC as it was fairer to the low income residents to link it to the CPI.

Mr Boyd did not support the proposed wastewater charge as he considered this to be unfair and possibly unworkable. He did not support the water meter minimum charge increase. He suggested that all water usage should be metered and charged accordingly.

Egmont Plains Community Board – Mr Brian Vincent

Mr Vincent spoke on behalf of the Egmont Plains Community Board. The Board raised some concerns regarding the Opunake Transfer Station and asked that it be upgraded so that users bringing greenwaste can get it into the large bins easily and safely. The Board suggested that the bins be lowered by up to 1.2 metres. It was suggested that the Opunake Transfer Station set up could be altered so that it was more user friendly.

Opunake Artificial Reef – Mr Neil Walker

Mr Walker provided the Council with an update on the progress to date with the Opunake Artificial Reef.

Mr Walker advised that there were currently two outstanding bills to be paid to local tradesmen at a cost of \$10,000. He noted that the Opunake Artificial Reef Trust had negotiated with ASR that they would not be receiving any further funding until such a time as the reef was working satisfactorily and had been completed.

Mr Walker asked that the Council provide an advance of \$10,000 to clear the outstanding accounts.

Annie Brydon Complex – Mr Calvin Kerrisk

Mr Kerrisk spoke as the owner of the Annie Brydon Complex Limited. He was opposed to the proposed *pan tax* charge which he considered to be unfair. He noted that some businesses in the district used a significant amount of water yet they were not charged on this basis. Mr Kerrisk commented that the increase from \$400 to the proposed \$1,600 was a significant increase for his business.

Mr Kerrisk commented that the Annie Brydon Complex had contributed a significant amount to the urban upgrade loan of which businesses within the main street had the most benefit.

Mr Kerrisk considered that every ratepayer should be funding the pan tax.

Mr Kerrisk did not support the differential proposed by the Hawera Business Association towards a town co-ordinator. He noted that the Annie Brydon Complex would receive very little benefit from a town co-ordinator.

Mr Lyn Attrill

Mr Attrill spoke in opposition to the Hawera Business Association's proposed rates differential. Mr Attrill advised that while he had initially supported the proposal he had spoken with the tenants of his properties who had said that given the hard economic times they would rather have lower rates than a town co-ordinator.

Mr Attrill advised that some of his tenants were either charitable or welfare groups and struggled to obtain funding to run their organisations. The reduction in rates had been well supported by the tenants with the removal of the current differential from the urban upgrade loan.

