

MINUTES OF THE GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING 28 SEPTEMBER 2020

New Zealand Deerstalkers Association Head Office, 3 Collina Terrace Thorndon Wellington

Present: Grant Dodson (Chair), Stephen Hall (Deputy Chair), Tim Gale (General Manager), Rachael Dean, Steve McFall, Sharon Salmons, Don Hammond (immediate past Chair), John Cook, Erin Garrick (via Zoom), Don Patterson, Bruce Warburton, Jenny Wotten (Executive Officer)

In attendance: Minister Eugenie Sage (Zoom), Ngaire Best (DOC), Geoff Kerr (ex-Councillor, Zoom), Roger Duxfield (Ex Councillor, Zoom), Mark Beardsley (DOC), Steve Taylor (DOC), Gwyn Thurlow (NZDA)

Apologies: nil

1. Minutes of previous meeting 29 July 2020, matters arising and action table update.

Motion 30/1: Moved Sharon Salmons/Steve McFall: that the Minutes of the 29 July 2020 Meeting be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.	CARRIED
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2. Minister's Address to Council (via Zoom):

- Minister Eugenie Sage welcomed the new Chair and Councillors to the Council.
- A discussion was had on the Council's annual letter of expectation and priorities for the year ahead.

New Chairman Grant Dodson presented outgoing Chairman Don Hammond with a gift to recognise his huge contribution to Council over the past 7 years.

3. Chairman's Report:

- Tahr plan discussion – DOC's time frames and level of engagement around this year operational plan has caused frustration amongst the hunting sector. DOC is now engaging with the GAC to represent the sector and assist in operational planning.
- Export Tag Levy – Encouraging the Minister to progress this is a priority for the GAC, this would be additional to the base vote conservation funding of \$250k per annum and is one component of the Council's overall diversified funding strategy.
- Te Mana o e Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020 - The Chair acknowledged the Council's involvement in this important strategy. For the first time in NZs Biodiversity Strategy game animals have been recognised as a valued introduced species that are important to New Zealanders.

4. General Manager's Report

a. Strategic Plan: The Game Animal Council has recently formulated its Strategic Plan and associated annual plan & budget, which form the basis of the Council's Statement of Service Expectations (SoPE) and Statement of Service Performance (SSP) as required for reporting and auditing purposes. If any Councillors have feedback on any of these documents, please provide this to Tim before the next meeting.

The Minister of Conservation has also provided the Council a letter of expectation setting out streams of work she would like to see carried out over the coming year.

- b. Workplan and budget:** The Minister has via the DOC made an appropriation of \$250,000 for the 2020-21 year. The Council's 2020-21 Draft Work Plan and Budget was approved by Council at the 27 May 2020 meeting. Due to a number of factors including the impact of COVID-19, increased reporting and auditing requirements, and revised alignment of workstreams and associated activities, amendments have been made to the Work Plan seeking to ensure it aligns with the Statement of Performance Expectations (SoPE) and is relevant.

Proposed changes to workplan approved as recommended by the General Manager. An additional \$130k grant received from DOC on 20 May 2020 and paid to the GAC in June 2020 was not able to be included in Council's 2020-21 Budget so the revenue is to be recognised in the 2021-22 budget.

The Council is working with the Ministry of Social Development to seek funding to continue the FWF Venison Mince Project and the GAC has received excellent feedback from Foodbanks and the Salvation Army who distributed the mince to those in need.

General Manager has met with DOC in relation to the deer 'Discussion Document'. This will be a significant project and the GAC will seek funding for a Policy Advisor to assist with ongoing liaison with DOC and policy development.

Work is also occurring around Jobs for Nature, investigating opportunities for professional hunting guides who have been impacted by COVID-19 to be employed in other areas, such as biosecurity initiatives, wallaby control etc.

- c. 2019-20 Annual Report and Audit:** Tim Gale provided an update on the progress of the Annual Report and audit which is nearing completion. The GAC is on track with legislated guidelines regarding timelines for completion and compliance.

Parliament decided on 5 August 2020 to extend statutory reporting time frames for public organisations with a 30 June balance date to address system wide issues presented by COVID-19 therefore the finalisation date for the GAC Annual Report and Annual Audit of Financial Statement timelines have been pushed back. The impact of COVID-19 is addressed in the Service Performance Report. Their main impact has been:

- GAC budget and forecast has been affected due to no incoming funds from the proposed trophy export levy – and ongoing closed borders continue to affect the proposed levy.
- development and delivery of an education module delayed.
- increased demand on the Council to provide policy assistance and communications.
- working with government agencies and the hunting sector to deliver timely and relevant advice throughout the lockdown period

The General Manager is working with DOC and Audit NZ to finalise details including the Statement of Performance Expectations (SoPE) and Statement of Performance. The SoPE workflow falls from, in part, the Letter of Expectation. All planning and implementation milestones as agreed were met during the year.

Motion 30/2: Moved Grant Dodson/Stephen Hall: That the Council approves proposed changes to the workplan approved as recommended by the General Manager. CARRIED

Motion 30/3: Moved Sharon Salmons/Rachael Dean: That the Council accepts the General Manager's Report. CARRIED

Motion 30/4: Moved Stephen Hall/Rachael Dean: That the Council approves the amended Budget as proposed by the GM noting there is further review required to respond to work plan challenges. CARRIED

Motion 30/5: Moved Grant Dodson/Rachael Dean: that the Council ratifies the expenditure to-date and approves the financial reports. CARRIED

Motion 30/6: Moved Grant Dodson/Steve McFall: that the Council approves the expenditure on the credit card as set out in the Board Pack. CARRIED

Motion 30/7: Moved Stephen Hall/Sharon Salmons: That the Council approves that Grant Dodson as new Chairman, will replace Don Hammond as signatory on the GAC Bank accounts. CARRIED

Motion 30/8: Moved Grant Dodson/Rachael Dean: that the Council approves the General Manager to have a GAC credit card. CARRIED

For administrative purposes, the GAC agrees to a change in registered postal address. DOC Governance Advisor to provide advice on archiving and storage of documents.

5. Statutory Processes: Ex Councillor Geoff Kerr provided an overview, via Zoom, to new Councillors on the GAC's statutory responsibilities under the Game Animal Council Act 2013, as set out in Section 7 Functions of Council. The presentation covered the main statutory process entities the GAC engages with, the main legislation, policies, plans, regulations and issues as well as background and an update on tahr management and the tahr app.

a. Himalayan Tahr – Over the past few years the GAC as a Statutory Authority, has made significant submissions on tahr management, assisted with plan development, advocated for the hunting community and attempted to strike the right balance between game animal numbers and conservation. The aim has been to ensure sufficient tahr are available for recreational harvest, in popular recreational hunting locations and for DOC control to leave identifiable male tahr for recreational hunters. The GAC has acknowledged the role of WARO and AATH for managing animal numbers in more challenging terrain.

6. Resolution on GAC's position on Forest & Bird vs MOC: General Manager Tim Gale outlined the GAC involvement in the recent legal proceedings; Royal Forest & Bird Society and the Minister of Conservation. Forest & Bird served several parties including the Game Animal Council. Council engaged Morrison Mallett to represent the GAC. This has now been withdrawn by F&B and there is nothing further the GAC needs do in relation to this matter.

Motion 30/9: Moved Grant Dodson/Steve McFall: that Council accepts the recommendation of the General Manager and that the Paper on this subject as contained in the Board Pack, page 70 and 71, be approved and taken as read. CARRIED

7. Communications Report and update/Briefing to Incoming Minister (BIM): The communications strategy continues to be implemented with engagement continuing to increase, particularly on social media. It was agreed that a Briefing to the Incoming Minister (BIM) would be prepared by the Council.

8. Firearms Update: Roger Duxfield, ex Councillor, addressed the Council via Zoom, providing an overview of the GAC involvement with firearms legislation review under statutory role Section 7 of the GAC Act, covering changes to the Arms Act and the changes that have recently come into effect,

restrictions on visitors bringing firearms into NZ and the other upcoming changes, GAC representation on the Firearms Community Advisory Forum (FCAF), the role of the Firearms Ranges Working Group, development of best practice standards & guidelines for civilian shooting ranges, pest management with semi-automatic rifles, ongoing work regarding storage of firearms, including in vehicles, online applications and referees, unintended consequences.

A number of outstanding firearms related action items are still on the GAC agenda from August 2018 and February 2020. The GAC to pursue representation on the Minister of Police's Arms Advisory Group (AAG).

Motion 30/10: Moved Grant Dodson/Steve McFall: that Council endorses Roger Duxfield as the GAC representative to the Firearms Ranges Working Group and continuing his work on behalf of the Council in relation to other developments resulting from changes from the Arms Act. The Council will reimburse his travel expenses. CARRIED

Outstanding action item 26/7 from February 2020 re sending trophies through international channels was raised in the GAC Submission on the Review of the Trade in Endangered Species Act in October 2019.

- 9. Permit Reviews, Visitor Risk Management System:** It was agreed the GAC should seek representation on this forum and further engage with policy development. The GAC General Manager has recently met with Mark Beardsley to map out the next steps.

DOC staff made a presentation and the GAC undertook to write to Mark Beardsley with any questions and GAC's future involvement. Some outstanding questions relating to access permits for bowhunters require resolution.

- 10. Governance Training and Relationship Matters/Letter of Expectation:** for the benefit of new Councillors, Ngaire Best recapped her governance presentation as provided at the last GAC Board Meeting. Ngaire Best expects the GAC will get the next Letter of Expectation by about mid-March 2021 and this will help with meeting statutory timeframes better and allow us to set our budget by mid-year.

- 11. Update from NZDA:** Gwyn Thurlow, CEO NZDA addressed Council providing an update on the activities of the NZDA and the Heritage Trust.

- 12. Administrative Matters:** Tim Gale referred to the Council Paper in the Board Pack regarding Board positions and GAC representation externally. Stephen Hall is confirmed as Deputy Chair, Rachel Dean as Chair of the Finance Committee, Steve McFall to represent the GAC at Animal Behaviour and Welfare Consultative Committee Meetings and NAWAC (Bruce Warburton can also attend if Steve is unavailable) and Roger Duxfield has already been confirmed as the GAC representative on Firearms Community Advisory Forum (Rachael Dean can also attend if Roger is unavailable).

Motion 30/11: Moved Grant Dodson/Bruce Warburton: that the Council Paper on page 118 of the Board Pack be approved and GAC representatives are confirmed. CARRIED

Meeting Planning will be confirmed by email and Councillors will be polled for their availability.

Council Paper re acceptance of donations – discussion about acceptance of donations policy. Remove the section on sponsorship. Councillors to provide any extra feedback via email. Councillors agreed to use the provisions and principles of the draft policy as it stands (if we receive donations) until such time as the final policy is ratified.

The GAC will seek to register our interest in the Exhibition in Budapest and talk to the NZPGHA to see if they are planning to have representation at the Exhibition and could take some information about the GAC.

Any comments on SSP or SoPE please feedback to Tim Gale. As the meeting agenda was very full and did not allow much time for discussion, some future items may be covered by Zoom Meetings.

Meeting closed 4.17pm.