

MINUTES OF THE GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING 11 JUNE 2021

Held at Crowne Plaza Hotel, 93 Beach Street Queenstown

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

In attendance: Jacqui Bassett (DOC via Zoom), Ngaire Best (DOC via Zoom), Sam Green (DOC via Zoom), Ben Reddiex (DOC), James Holborow (DOC), Roger Duxfield (ex-Councillor, via Zoom), Hayden Cox (Contractor), Gerald Telford, Trevor Chappell (NZDA), Mike Knowles (SCI(NZ)), Roy Sloan (FWF), Kaylyn Pinney, Garry Ottmann.

Apologies: nil

- 1. Chairman's Update:** The Chair welcomed Councillors & guests. Councillors were reminded of the requirement to disclose any new conflicts of interest. The Chair circulated his report outlining priorities and areas of current focus.

Motion 33/1: Moved Stephen Hall/Rachael Dean: that the Chairman's Report be approved.

CARRIED

- 2. Minutes of previous meeting 19 February 2021** were taken as read with one minor alteration.

Motion 33/2: Moved Grant Dodson/Bruce Warburton: that the Minutes of the 19 February 2021 Meeting be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.

CARRIED

- 3. Recap of Meeting with Minister Ayesha Verrall:** Grant Dodson and Tim Gale met with Minister Ayesha Verrall via Zoom on 21 May 2021.

- 4. Statement of Performance Expectations 2021-22:** Council has received the Letter of Expectations 2021-22 from Minister Verrall and the Enduring Letter of Expectations from the Minister of Finance and the Minister for the Public Service. Council is required to develop a pathway to sustainable funding and send it to the Minister by August 2021. The Council also needs to provide a comprehensive hunter safety and education programme and a timeline to implementation, to the Minister in July 2021. The annual board evaluation is expected to be undertaken shortly and another governance training module has been scheduled. DOC governance advisors have previously provided two governance training for Councillors.

The GAC has had constructive conversations with Tūhoe and hopes to continue these conversations into the future.

Motion 33/3: Moved Grant Dodson/Erin Garrick: that the Letter of Expectations 2021-22 from Minister Verrall and the attached Enduring Letter of Expectations from the Minister of Finance and the Minister for the Public Service, be received and noted.

CARRIED

A Draft Statement of Performance Expectations 2021-22 was put forward for consideration with ensuing discussions about the current funding model, focus of specific themes, the Strategic Plan,

reporting requirements, game animal management, conservation outcomes, engagement with stakeholders, activities, targets and priorities.

Motion 33/4: Moved Stephen Hall/Sharon Salmons: that Council has received and reviewed the Draft Statement of Performance Expectations 2021-22 activities and targets. A revised document is to be circulated to Councillors, as per the discussion, for approval by email. CARRIED

- 5. Draft Workplan and Budget 2021-22:** Council considered the Draft Workplan and Draft Budget for 2021-22. Both documents will be recirculated taking into account the discussion outcomes and approved by email asap. Discussion with DOC Governance Advisors regarding the timing and deadlines for providing documents (SPE, Budget, Cash Flow Forecast) to the Minister and receiving and incorporating feedback. The short turn-around time from when the GAC received the Minister's Letter of Expectations to finalising the documents means the GAC will have difficulty meeting the statutory deadlines. Two current Councillors are coming up for retirement or reappointment in November 2021– discussion about future Council representation. DOC governance will provide advice on timing.
- 6. Hunter Safety & Education Programme:** A draft Hunter Safety and Education Strategy (HSES) framework was delivered to the Minister in September 2020 and the GAC has continued to develop the concept in the intervening months. General Manager Tim Gale led a discussion about the background of the HSES framework and the recommendations in his paper.

Motion 33/5: Moved Grant Dodson/Steve McFall that Council:

- a) Receives and notes the content of the report.
- b) Notes the Minister's request regarding a development and implementation timeline, and funding options.
- c) Determines that the programme initially does not provide accreditation, but a certificate of completion.
- d) Supports the engagement of a resource to ascertain the possibility of procuring existing and relevant course content.
- e) Considers resourcing options for Hunter Safety and Education Programme alongside approval of the draft budget 2021-22, the Draft Workplan 2021-22 and the Draft Budget 2021-22.

CARRIED

- 7. Progressing a sustainable funding strategy to enable GAC functions:** In March 2021, the GAC presented advice to the Minister of Conservation on funding requirements for the Game Animal Council for 2021-22 and beyond. Council is working to establish a 3-tier equitable funding strategy to enable the GAC to undertake its statutory functions and deliver on its strategic plan.

Trophy Export Levy – A funding allocation of \$150,000 has been provided for progressing the implementation of a sustainable funding strategy, of which the Game Trophy Export Levy is one aspect. Councillors agreed to the development of a Project Plan and Budget to progress the Game Trophy Export Levy Project to implementation stage.

Contribution from the sale of Firearms and Ammunition – Limited progress has been made since the February 2021 Council meeting. A Council Working Group will draft something along the lines of a

Code of Practice (Heads of Agreement), for consideration by Councillors and suppliers. A timeline will then be developed for consideration.

Action: Draft a Heads of Agreement 'Accord' between GAC and relevant hunting sector.

- 8. General Manager's Reports and Quarterly Financial Report:** The General Manager presented his Reports (January 2021 – April 2021) and Quarterly Financial Report. Chair Grant Dodson acknowledged the huge amount of work over many months and conveyed his thanks to General Manager Tim Gale, GAC contractors and DOC staff.

Motion 33/6: Moved Grant Dodson/Rachael Dean: that Council approves the General Manager's Reports for January, February, March and April 2021 and the 3rd Quarterly Report are approved.

CARRIED

Motion 33/7: Moved Grant Dodson/Erin Garrick: that the Council receives the Quarterly Performance Report – Q3 2021-22 and notes the content of the report.

CARRIED

Councillors reviewed the frequency of (monthly) reporting and have agreed to change to a Quarterly Reporting schedule.

Motion 33/8: Moved Grant Dodson/Stephen Hall: that the Council moves towards Quarterly Reporting to Council, by the General Manager.

CARRIED

- 9. Looking After Our Game Animals series:** Tim Gale and Hayden Cox outlined the background to the development of this recently launched hunter educational resource, developed to explain in simple terms how the harvesting decisions made by hunters hunting on public conservation land can positively impact the health of game animal herds and help protect the habitat they depend on.

Motion 33/9: Moved Grant Dodson/Rachael Dean: that the Council receives and notes the *Looking After Our Game Animals* series content.

CARRIED

- 10. Firearms update and Firearms Submission:** Roger Duxfield outlined the GAC's ongoing contribution, providing input the development of policy relating to the New Regulations under the Arms Act 1983 (Phase One). Chair Grant Dodson commended Roger Duxfield for his significant contribution and his input to the development of the GAC's April 2021 Submission on the Proposals for New Regulations Under the Arms Act 1983 (Phase One).

Motion 33/10: Moved Grant Dodson/Stephen Hall: that Council receives the GAC submission: Proposals for New Regulations Under the Arms Act 1983 (Phase One) and has noted the content.

CARRIED

- 11. Tahr Returns App:** The App was launched in late 2019 and was a collaboration between DOC and GAC. Councillors agreed that with the recent low uptake, there are no benefits to continuing with its use. DOC has no objections to the proposed disestablishment and noted that other partners in the App would need to be consulted on this – NZDA and NZ Tahr Foundation.

Motion 33/11: Moved Grant Dodson/Stephen Hall: that Council receives the paper and approves the decision to disestablish the Tahr Returns App.

CARRIED

12. Wild Ungulate University Course: Council heard a proposal for a future Wild Ungulate University Paper. Councillors thanked the presenter, were in support of the concept and noted the idea required further development, within the university environment.

13. Voluntary Certification of Hunting Guides: The Game Animal Council Act 2013, Section 36(1) (d) prescribes requirements for voluntary certification schemes for professional hunting guides and game estates. Discussion regarding the establishment of Voluntary Certification of NZPHGA members. Currently there is no certification or licensing requirements for the approximate 120 hunting guides and membership is voluntary. Voluntary certification for NZPHGA members is a step towards a more formal recognition of professional hunting guides and the guiding industry and the validation that brings to the guiding industry. Certification from the GAC will acknowledge that NZPHGA members are meeting industry standards. There is still more work to be done to establish what the standards are for becoming accredited, administration of the certification process, costs and cost recovery. Councillors supported the concept.

Motion 33/12: Moved Sharon Salmons/Bruce Warburton: that:

- a) Councillors received the NZPHGA recommendations detailed in the GAC Certified Guide Standard - NZPHGA Recommendations, to enable the voluntary certification of NZPHGA members.
- b) The GAC writes to NZPHGA acknowledging receipt of their Certified Guide Standard recommendations.
- c) The GAC invites discussions with NZPHGA to establish certification and cost recovery mechanisms, and any requirement pursuant to that.

CARRIED

14. Draft Workplace Drug and Alcohol Policy and Procedures: Tim Gale provided some background on the legislative requirements for the Council to have this policy, to comply with the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015 and complement the Council's existing Health & Safety Policy.

Motion 33/13: Moved Stephen Hall/Rachael Dean: that Council approves the policy as provided in the Council Papers.

CARRIED

15. Draft Policy on Information Management (Record Keeping): Tim Gale provided an overview of the legislative requirement for the GAC to manage its information and the options the GAC has moving forward regarding the development of this new policy. Due to time constraints this agenda item is to be carried forward to a future meeting. Council approved the transfer of the authority of NZ Archives Executive Sponsor from Jenny Wotten to Tim Gale.

Motion 33/14: Moved Grant Dodson/Steve McFall: that Councillors:

- a) note the requirement for the GAC to have a Policy on Information Management and determine the direction for the Council in relation to governance of our Information Management; and
- b) approve the transfer of the authority of Executive Sponsor from the Executive Officer to the General Manager.

CARRIED

16. Delegations Policy Review: Tim Gale provided an update on the review of this policy following on from the last Council Meeting when a draft was presented for approval and further development. Tim Gale proposed that credit card expenditure be approved by the Finance Committee rather than the whole Council. The new version of the Delegations Policy was discussed and approved.

Motion 33/15: Moved Rachael Dean/Erin Garrick: that

- (a) the credit card expenditure can be approved by the Finance Committee; and
- (b) Council approves the revised Delegations Policy.

CARRIED

17. Annual Reporting Disclosure Requirements: Tim Gale provided an overview of the requirements for disclosure, summarised and slim-lined reporting, and consistency.

Motion 33/16: Moved Rachael Dean/John Cook: that Council approves the Annual Statement of Financial Performance reporting format as outlined in the report.

CARRIED

18. Overspend to the end of April 2021: Tim Gale spoke to the Paper – developed in accordance with the Delegation’s Policy, to obtain approval from Council for any overspends over the Budget for line items, noted line items and approve overspends.

Motion 33/17: Moved Sharon Salmons/Bruce Warburton: that Council:

- (a) receives and notes the content of the report;
- (b) ratifies the budget line items overspend to the end of April 2021; and
- (c) approves the total projected budget line items spend for 2021-22.

CARRIED

19. Financial Reports: Tim Gale provided context for each of the following reports. A balance sheet will be provided in Quarterly Reports from now on.

Motion 33/18: Moved Don Patterson/Bruce Warburton: that Council has considered and approves all the financial papers in the Council Pack:

- a) the Balance Sheet as at 30 April 2021.
- b) the Statement of Cash Flows for the month ended 30 April 2021 and the Forecast Statement of Cash Flows for the Year Ending 30 June 2021.
- c) the Credit Card Expenditure from 9 February 2021 to 3 June 2021 as circulated.
- d) the Profit and Loss Statement for the month ended 30 April 2021.

CARRIED

20. Tahr Control Operational Plan 2021-22 development: Discussion on key points contained in the various papers circulated and the process for Councillors to have input, as timing allows.

Motion 33/19: Moved Rachael/John Cook: that Council receives and notes the content of this report and the:

- a) submission GAC made to the DOC with additional feedback on 1 March 2021 re draft Tahr Control Operational Plan 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022.
- b) DOC’s Tahr Control Operational Plan: 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 as circulated.

CARRIED

21. Deer Management Update: Tim Gale spoke to the Paper providing an update on the following:

Te Ara Ki Mua - The Path Ahead: The GAC has worked closely with DOC, providing input into the document and the latest iteration and is seeking to have a workgroup/think tank type session with DOC staff to discuss the latest update.

Raukumara Restoration Project: The GAC is supportive of this programme and has offered to provide expert advice to support this programme.

Sika Research and Adaptive Management Model: Council has worked with the Central North Island Sika Foundation (CNISF), DOC, Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research, the NZDA, and the Kaweka Liaison Group to develop a proposal for a Sika Research and Adaptive Management Model for the Kaimanawa & Kaweka Forest Parks. The GAC financially supported the development of the “straw-man” proposal to contribute to the Sika Research and Adaptive Management Programme.

Ruahine Deer Management: The GAC strongly advocates for the resurrection of the 2016 cross-party working group to develop a plan to co-ordinate WARO and recreational hunting in the Ruahine Ranges to improve environmental outcomes. The plan is a potential template for application to deer management in other parts of the country.

Motion 33/20: Moved Steve McFall/Sharon Salmons: that Council receives and notes the content of the report on:

- a) Te Ara Ki Mua
- b) the Raukumara Restoration Project
- c) the Sika Research and Adaptive Management Model; and
- d) Ruahine Deer Management.

CARRIED

22. Council’s Submission on the Conserving Nature: Conservation Law Reform Issues Paper: GAC was disappointed to read unfounded comments about it in the ‘Conserving Nature: Conservation Law Reform Issues Paper’, particularly concerning inaccuracies around management of game animals and conclusions not supported by facts. Council made a Submission, stating its objection to the Issues Paper and pointing out the lack of proper engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, the lack of any quantitative analysis, transparency and robustness in the Paper and confusion between issues and options. It is pleasing to note that some of our concerns have been noted and the latest release of this paper acknowledges Council’s contribution to raising awareness of conservation issues.

Motion 33/21: Moved Stephen Hall/Rachael Dean: that receives the briefing paper and notes the significant concerns the GAC has identified with the EDS’ Conservation Law Reform Issues Paper.

CARRIED

23. General Business:

- Discussion regarding sign off process for submissions and policy/project development.
- The next meeting of Council will be held in Wellington in August. Part of the meeting will be governance training.
- Sika Show dates were noted. Councillors will be surveyed to gauge their availability,
- Councillor Steve McFall, along with Garry Ottmann and maybe Geoff Kerr, will make a presentation to NAWAC in August.
- Councillor Rachael Dean had some input to a recently published paper: Industrial Halal hunted game and feral animals’ meat production - Paper published in Meat Science.

Meeting closed at 5.30pm.