

MINUTES OF THE GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING 4 MAY 2023, Deerstalkers House, Wellington

Present: Grant Dodson (Chair), Steve McFall, Bruce Warburton, Eugene Rewi, Kevin, Eastwood, Tui Keenan, Peter Swann, John Cook (via Zoom)

Also in attendance: Tim Gale (General Manager), Jenny Wotten (Executive Officer), Kaylyn Pinney (Policy Advisor), Hayden Cox (Communications), Larry Blair (Hunter Education & Training Lead), Corina Jordan (Chief Executive - Fish & Game New Zealand) attended for part of the meeting, Tui Keenan's two tamariki. Ben Reddix (DOC) and Gwyn Thurlow (NZDA) attended for part of the meeting.

Apologies: Minister Willow-Jean Prime, Sharon Salmons (Deputy Chair), Philip Colquhoun (DOC)

1. Welcome, Apologies, Karakia: Chair Grant Dodson welcomed Councillors, staff and contractors. DOC staff will join us today via zoom for various sessions. Councillor Kevin Eastwood opened the meeting with a karakia. Chairman Grant Dodson noted that Councillor Erin Garrick has resigned from Council effective from 25 April 2023 and recorded a formal vote of thanks to Erin Garrick.

Motion 43/1: Moved Eugene Rewi/Kevin Eastwood: that apologies are received. CARRIED

2. Chairman's Welcome: The Chair welcomed Councillors, staff, contractors and visitors. Grant Dodson recognised the mahi of the management team and good relationships with the hunting sector.

3. Council Only Session – Councillor only session with General Manager Tim Gale discussing Council's budget in relation to employee/contractor's remuneration. Wider 'Environment scan' identification of key matters - Councillors raised current issues for discussion.

4. Confirm the agenda: the agenda was discussed and confirmed.

Motion 43/2: Moved Kevin Eastwood/Tui Keenan: That the revised agenda is confirmed. CARRIED

5. Conflict of Interest Register: Councillors were reminded of the requirement to disclose any new conflicts of interest. The Register has been updated.

Motion 43/3: Moved Steve McFall/Grant Dodson: That the updated Conflict of Interest Register is received and noted. CARRIED

6. Risk Register Review: Management has reviewed the Risk Register and incorporated minor changes as approved at the February 2023 Meeting. Further minor amendments made.

Motion 43/4: Moved Steve McFall/Grant Dodson: That the updated Risk Management Register is received and approved. CARRIED

7. Standing items - Electronic approval of Submissions & correspondence received outside of Meetings. Council Discussion.

Motion 43/5: Moved Grant Dodson/Peter Swann: Council ratifies the acceptance of submissions & correspondence circulated & electronically approved by Councillors between meetings. CARRIED

8. Minutes of previous meeting 16 February 2023: were taken as read with no alterations.

<p>Motion 43/6: Moved Steve McFall/Bruce Warburton: That the Minutes of the 16 February 2023 Meeting be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
--	----------------

9. Action items carried forward from 16 February 2023 Meeting and matters arising: Discussion about action items arising and status of each item.

10. Approval of proposed amendments to the Strategic Plan: The current version of the Strategic Plan was approved at the Council Meeting on 16 February 2023. This was the culmination of a major review and rewrite process. It has subsequently been identified that additional minor amendments need to be made to the Strategic Plan in order to ensure strict compliance with statutory functions. Councillors approved the minor changes to the Strategic Plan. Discussion about the use of the word iwi and suggestion to change to mana whenua instead (has greater focus than tangata whenua) of iwi. Also, Māori to be used instead of iwi.

<p>Motion 43/7: Moved Grant Dodson/Peter Swann: That Council approves the proposed amendments to the Strategic Plan, as presented in the Council Meeting Pack.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
---	----------------

SETTING THE DIRECTION FOR 2023-24

11. Financial Reserves Policy: A reserves policy is required to ensure the financial stability of Council, it's programmes, employment and ongoing operations. The GAC engaged an external consultant as part of our funding stewardship and accountability review and one outcome of this review has been the development of a draft Reserves Policy. The draft Policy specifies that approximately two to three month's average expenditure should be held in reserve. There are also risks related to timing of receiving funds. Councillors approved the draft Financial Reserves Policy.

ACTION – write to DOC Governance Unit regarding Council approval of the draft Reserves Policy. The remaining stewardship funding from 2022-23 is intended to go towards the reserve.

<p>Motion 43/8: Moved Bruce Warburton/Eugene Rewi: That Council receives and approves the Financial Reserves Policy.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
---	----------------

12. Draft Statement of Performance Expectations 2023-24: The draft Statement of Performance Expectations 2023-24 (SPE) has been developed with assistance provided by an external consultant and in liaison with the Department of Conservation. A draft was circulated to Councillors for input on 26 April 2023. The draft SPE reflects our operational priorities, performance targets and forecast financial information for the 2023-2024 financial year (considers the mandate of the Game Animal Council Act, GAC's Letter of Expectations from the Minister & the GAC's Strategic Plan). Development of an SPE is undertaken as part of the GAC's obligations under the Crown Entities Act 2004.

The GAC has taken a different approach in the development of the SPE for 2023-24, with a 'start with the end in mind' approach. 'Our outcomes for New Zealand' section has been introduced as part of the Strategic Framework. These outcomes demonstrate what success would look like at a high level in the medium-term and integrate with our 'Our Strategic Objectives'.

In accordance with statutory deadlines, the draft SPE was provided to the Minister by the end of April. The Minister is to provide comments no later than 15 working days after receipt. The GAC then considers the Minister's comments, amends the draft Statement of Performance Expectations and sends the Council-approved version back to the Minister before the start of the new financial year.

Discussion occurred on the draft Statement of Performance Expectations – Council liaises with hunting organisations and stakeholders on activities, management of hunters & game animals, benefits of our work to the hunting sector and government, value of advice provided to the Minister, past input and value added to policy development, performance measures and output classes, impact on public conservation. Councillors noted the draft Statement of Performance Expectations 2023-24 was sent to the Minister on 30 April 2023 for consideration. Councillors noted the draft Budget 2023-24, as provided in the meeting papers. Discussion about Forecast Income and Expenditure 2023-24 and itemisation.

Discussion about the number of meetings to be held in person during 2023-24 and probably one meeting via zoom.

The Chair welcomed Ben Reddiex of DOC to the meeting and explained the Reserves Policy. Ben Reddiex advised that the Council will receive the Minister's Letter of Expectation shortly.

13. Draft Work Plan 2023-24: The draft Work Plan, similar to the draft Statement of Performance Expectations, has been developed with a 'start with the end in mind' approach. A draft Work Plan was not incorporated into the Council Meeting Pack due to the impacts of COVID. Priorities and proposed work plan were presented by the General Manager for discussion. A draft Work Plan will be developed and presented for approval at the Council's meeting in June 2023. Councillors approved of this course of action.

14. Draft Budget 2023-24: All crown entities and Public Finance Act 1989 schedule 4 and 4A entities must prepare budgets for the coming financial year and comparative actual figures from the previous financial year, as part of their Statement of Performance Expectations. The budget must be approved by Council before the start of the financial year to which it applies. The Minister of Conservation has confirmed for the 2023-24 financial year a funding allocation of \$800,000. The Council has also had additional funding of \$70,000 through Jobs for Nature. Discussion about various funding issues including the launch of Better Hunting, contractors, number of Council Meetings, operating expenses and staffing costs.

Councillors received and noted the draft Budget 2023-24 as provided in the Council Meeting papers. A final Budget will be developed and presented for approval at the Council's meeting in June 2023.

15. Corina Jordan, CE Fish & Game NZ address to Council: Grant Dodson introduced Corina Jordan, Chief Executive, Fish & Game NZ, to address Council to discuss the 'Fish and Hunt Forever' campaign and other forums for collaboration with the Council. Discussion about their proposed campaign followed. It is noted that Fish & Game wishes to collaborate on a future hunter survey and potentially other such research.

16. General Manager's Report: Tim Gale presented his report, including a status update of targets as outlined in the 2022-23 Statement Performance Expectations. Most have been achieved and the

Council is confident of achieving all but one, by year's end. The General Manager's Report covered these issues, plus others:

- Te Ara ki Mua: The GAC has been liaising with the Department of Conservation on the implementation plan for Te Ara Ki Mua – roles, responsibilities, priorities, and progress. Initial online meetings (28 February and 1 March) to share context in the Wild Animal Management space, with ongoing monthly meetings.
- External Engagement with stakeholders
- Funding Stewardship & Accountability - the review documentation will be provided to the Council at the June meeting with progress, commentary and recommendations. Governance Review and sharing feedback with Councillors.
- HOSI Process - monthly meetings with DOC to continue establishing the HOSI process. A workshop is being proposed to run through a mock HOSI process, tentatively in June.
- Hunter Safety & Education Programme (Better Hunting): on target to meet the Jobs for Nature and SPE 2022-23 targets and milestones. Moving into a period of user testing and module refinement. Intended launch is at Sika Show 2023.
- Whakatipu white tailed deer and Dart/Caples 1080 operation - the report to assess the viability of the Whakatipu white-tailed deer as a hunting resource following a predator control operation using Orillion Prodeer deer repellent remains in progress.
- Tahr Control Operational Plan 2022/23 - the draft Tahr Control Operational Plan 2023/2024 has been released and much of the considerations raised in the GAC submission have been incorporated. The TCOP will be finalised after DOC considers all its feedback.
- Rakaia Red Deer Research and Management - through liaison with the Heritage Red Deer Foundation, NZDA and Boffa Miskell representatives, the GAC has provided a report outlining each of their respective projects and how they fit together to provide clarity to agencies on how they might support these projects.
- Research:
 - 1: We have engaged a Crown Research Institute to undertake an analysis of peer reviewed literature on the impact of ungulates and carbon.
 - 2: The GAC has embarked on a project to research the current context on deer meat recovery associated with deer management activity, including development of a final report that supports consideration of key factors for decision-making in future deer management operations.
- WARO Problem – the GAC is liaising with Phoenix Facilitation Ltd and the DOC Wild Animals Team to undertake a WARO problem identification analysis, weekly meetings and interviews with various people who operate within the system.
- Stewart Island/Rakiura – the GAC has continued its work with hunters and the Rakiura Hunter Camp Trust regarding white-tailed deer on Stewart Island/Rakiura. The aim of this project is to raise awareness of the views of the hunting sector around hunting on the island.
- ICT Review - expressions of interest have been received from several providers and it is expected that the GAC will progress this review in Quarter 4.
- Per Diems - The GAC is initiating a review of Councillor per diems. Our current fees are \$333 for the Chair and \$247.25 for the other Councillors. The fees have not changed since 2013-14. The Fees Framework is set by Cabinet. Our review process revealed that the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet lifted all these rates by 10% in October 2022. However, the GAC cannot automatically start using the new rates, as any increase needs to be approved by the Minister.

- Risks and opportunities to the Council, hunting and game animals:
 - 'Access issues' is a common issue that all NGO's and statutory organisations raise. Discussion about access issues and how common it is. Anecdotally, access related issues are becoming more common.
 - The changing of land to forestry for carbon farming and the potential for increase in populations of ungulates. Opportunity also lies in future carbon funding streams.
 - Firearms licencing and the potential for significant increased costs.
 - Funding cuts in the new government budget. There is an opportunity to provide cost effective tools for managing game animals.

ACTION RE: Set up Zoom session for Councillors to view the Hunter Safety and Education course.

ACTION RE: Councillor's per diems - write to DOC governance requesting (1) an increase in Councillor's per diems in line with the Cabinet Office Circular dated 6 October 2022 '*Revised Fees Framework for members appointed to bodies in which the Crown has an interest*'; and (2) a review of the classification of GAC per diems, up from Group 4 Level 4.

Motion 43/9: Moved Bruce Warburton/Steve McFall: That Council receives and notes the May 2023 General Manager's Report. CARRIED

17. Quarterly Performance Report Q3 2022-23: the GAC is required to report against the non-financial performance measures and the financial forecasts outlined in the Statement of Performance Expectations (SPE) 2022-23 and its annual workplan on a quarterly basis. The GAC has achieved or partly achieved many of its 2022-23 targets. Some targets have not yet been achieved due to timing and being only three-quarters of the way through the financial year. Councillors were provided with a Quarterly Performance Report – Q3 2022-23, Statement of Financial Position 31 March 2023 and Statement of Cash Flows 31 March 2023.

Motion 43/10: Moved Eugene Rewi/Peter Swann: That Council receives and notes the Quarterly Performance Report – Q3 2022-23 Council Paper and notes the contents of the Q3 Report. Council also receives and notes the Quarterly Performance Report – Q3 2022-23, Statement of Financial Position 31 March 2023 and Statement of Cash Flows 31 March 2023. CARRIED

18. Financial Reporting and Variances: Councillors were provided with a Financial Reporting and Variances Paper, Profit and Loss Report as at 31 March 2023 and Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023. Discussion around the financial performance and position for the Game Animal Council financial year – 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, income and expenditure versus annual budgeted figures, carrying forward any reserves towards the 2024 budget. The forecast to June 30, 2023, now shows an expected budget deficit of \$72,325 which is \$38,225 down on SPE full year, creating the trend for an end of year surplus to carry over as reserves or towards 2024 budget. The cashflow position is in line with the SPE 2022-23.

Motion 43/11: Moved Eugene Rewi/Peter Swann: That Council receives and notes the Financial Reporting and Variances Report for the month ending 31 March 2023, Profit and Loss Report as at 31 March 2023 and Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023. CARRIED

19. Draft Policy - Vertebrate Toxic Agent Use: At the 16 February 2023 GAC Meeting, Councillors were provided with a redrafted policy, updated to reflect changes and advancements in knowledge

regarding the use of toxic vertebrate agents and the impacts on game animals and hunting. An updated version of the policy was circulated to Councillors for consideration, with the following main changes:

- Separation of policy and operational framework.
- Retained broader application to any vertebrate toxic agents that may impact game animals and their harvest and management.
- Included consideration of 2km buffer zones impacted by use of vertebrate toxic agents where these extend to public land.
- Clarified that policy application extends only to vertebrate toxic agent use that may impact game animals and their harvest and management.

Discussion amongst Councillors, Ben Reddix and Gwyn Thurlow. A revised version to be disseminated outside of the GAC meeting process.

20. Address by Gwyn Thurlow (NZDA): Council representatives will be invited to the NZDA National Conference in July in Ashburton. Gwyn raised his concerns about the impact of new firearms regulations on the recreational hunting sector, and specifically on shooting ranges, and how this coupled with changing firearm user demographics, may affect compliance in the immediate future and the longer term. Grant Dodson thanked Gwyn and the NZDA for allowing the GAC to use Deerstalkers House for Council Meetings.

21.Meeting Planning: Councillors were provided with a list of meeting dates for the remainder of 2023.

22. General Business:

- Animal Welfare & Behavioural Consultative Meeting to be held in Christchurch on 25 October, GAC to be represented. Last meeting was in March 2023 and Steve McFall represented the GAC.
- Steve McFall attended and judged the recent Pureora Forest Hunting Competition.
- Communications Report: Councillors were provided with a communications summary.
- Governance Training – scheduled for the November 2023 Meeting.
- Future meeting dates:
 - 16 June 2023 (Christchurch)
 - 18 August 2023 (Wellington)
 - 10 November 2023 (Christchurch)

Meeting Review: Kevin Eastwood provided feedback on how the Council performed during this meeting. Kevin Eastwood closed the meeting with a karakia.

Meeting closed at 4pm.