

MINUTES, GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING, 9 & 10 NOVEMBER 2023
SUDIMA CHRISTCHURCH AIRPORT HOTEL

DAY 1 - Governance Training - Training opened 2pm, 9 November 2023

Council Members present: Grant Dodson (Chair), Steve McFall, Eugene Rewi, Kevin Eastwood, John Cook, Sharon Salmons, Melissa Jackson, Callum Sheridan, Andrew Simpson and Tui Keenan (via Zoom).

Also in attendance: Jenny Wotten (Executive Administrator), Kaylyn Pinney (Policy Advisor), John Page (Boardworks)

Part attendance: Tim Gale (General Manager)

- 1. Welcome, Apologies, Karakia:** Karakia to start meeting – Councillor Eugene Rewi. Apologies received from Peter Swann. Grant Dodson moved that apologies were accepted. Tim Gale and Tui Keenan joined the meeting via zoom.
- 2. Introduce John Page:** Grant Dodson welcomed Councillors and introduced John Page, Boardworks Ltd.
- 3. Governance Training:** John Page talked Councillors and staff through his prepared slides, providing governance training. Training finished and meeting adjourned at 5pm.

DAY 2 - Council Meeting – Meeting opened at 8.30am, 10 November 2023

Council Members present: Grant Dodson (Chair), Steve McFall, Eugene Rewi, Kevin Eastwood, John Cook, Sharon Salmons, Melissa Jackson, Callum Sheridan, Andrew Simpson, and Tui Keenan (via Zoom). Kevin Eastwood left the meeting briefly at 3pm and returned.

Also in attendance: Jenny Wotten (Executive Administrator), Kaylyn Pinney (Policy Advisor), Ben Reddiex (Department of Conservation).

Part attendance: Tim Gale (General Manager), Larry Blair (Hunter Safety & Education Programme Lead), Hayden Cox, Geoff Kerr were present for part of the meeting.

- 4. Welcome, Apologies, Karakia:** Karakia to start the meeting – Councillor Eugene Rewi. Apologies received from Peter Swann. Grant Dodson moved that apologies were accepted. Tim Gale and Tui Keenan joined the meeting via zoom.
- 5. Chairman's Welcome:** Grant Dodson welcomed Councillors, staff, contractors and guests and outlined the meeting rules. Grant Dodson acknowledged the productive day of training yesterday and constructive meeting with Penny Nelson (Director General DOC) last night.
- 6. Council Only Session - Environmental Scan:** Councillors raised a wide range of issues for discussion around regional and topical issues.

Geoff Kerr provided a quick update for Councillors regarding tahr in MU1. Discussion included project team details, GAC representation, development of a set of actions for Council, responsibilities for various leads, status of DOC community agreement, proposal to put information signs on DOC and adjoining land and in huts.

7. Confirm the Agenda: the agenda was discussed and confirmed.

Motion 46/1: Moved Kevin Eastwood/Andrew Simpson: That the revised agenda is confirmed.

CARRIED

8. Conflict of Interest Register: Councillors were reminded of the requirement to disclose any new conflicts of interest. Advice of conflicts provided out of session have been incorporated in the updated register.

Motion 46/2: Moved Steve McFall/Sharon Salmons: That the updated Conflict of Interest Register is received and noted.

CARRIED

9. Risk Register Review: Councillors reviewed the Risk Register. No changes were suggested.

Motion 46/3: Moved Steve McFall/Sharon Salmons: That the Risk Register is received and noted.

CARRIED

10. Standing Items - Electronic approval of submissions & correspondence received outside of meetings.

Council Discussion about documents finalised and approved between meetings. It was noted that the 2022-23 Annual Report was provided to the Minister on 2 November 2023.

Motion 46/4: Moved Grant Dodson/Andrew Simpson: Council ratifies the acceptance of submissions & correspondence circulated & electronically approved by Councillors between meetings.

CARRIED

11. Minutes of Previous Meeting 18 August 2023: were taken as read with minor changes.

Motion 46/5: Moved Melissa Jackson/Eugene Rewi: That the Minutes of the 18 August 2023 Meeting be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.

CARRIED

12. Action Items Carried Forward from 18 August 2023 Meeting and Matters Arising: Discussion about action items arising and status of each item. Some action items still to be resolved: Risk Register and Health & Safety policy development, 10-year anniversary date, confirm date for Herds of Special Interest (HOSI) online discussion on process and establishment documentation.

13. Conservation Law Reform: Grant Dodson and Tim Gale talked through the paper on Conservation Law Reform and discussion followed. Topics of discussion included the Wildlife Act 1953, outdated legislation and the likely timeframe to change existing legislation, the Environmental Defence Society's discussion document, the roles of Fish & Game and Hunters for Conservation in the process, the protection and management of indigenous and valued introduced species, ownership of wild animals, the extent of GAC resources available to progress this.

The GAC would like to see a balanced outcome with the continued protection of indigenous species, and the recognition and management of valued introduced species for their both their benefits and their effects.

The synergy with F & G was noted as the other statutory body in the hunting sector. Although F & G operate under the Wildlife Act and do not have their own act like the GAC there is an obvious benefit in working together on conservation law reform to avoid duplication of resource.

Motion 46/6: Moved Steve McFall/Sharon Salmons: Council received the paper, considered the points listed, and approved in principle the allocation of funds (for a sub-contractor) to support development of a position paper jointly with Fish & Game New Zealand to recommend the appropriate place for valued introduced species in legislation. CARRIED

14. Annual Audit 2022-23 – Outcomes and Management Letter: Auditors Owen McLeod audited the Council’s 2022-23 Annual Report, completing it on 30 October 2023 and provided their management letter which contained a small number of findings and recommended actions. Councillors considered the Audit Management Letter, noting the recommendations and accepted the risks as outlined. Andrew Simpson outlined how Central South Island Fish & Game has changed its reporting approach to meet OAG expectations that expenses should be relatable back to organisational outputs, and suggested that GAC should consider a similar approach.

Motion 46/7: Moved Grant Dodson/Steve McFall: Councillors received the Auditor’s Management Letter, noting and accepting the recommendations and accepting the risks as outlined. CARRIED

15. Briefing to Incoming Minister (BIM) of Conservation and incoming Minister of Hunting & Fishing: Councillors were provided with a Briefing to the Incoming Minister of Conservation (BIM), and the Minister for Hunting & Fishing (once appointed), for consideration and approval. One new paragraph ‘Other Issues’ is to be inserted and was read out to Councillors for consideration. Initially, this document is to be provided to the incoming Minister of Conservation as GAC’s reporting Minister. In regard to whether there is a Minister for Hunting and Fishing and/or an Associate Minister of Conservation, the GAC will take guidance on this and how it fits within the GAC Act 2013. Discussion about the BIM content with consensus that it is a good document, clear and succinct.

Motion 46/8: Moved Sharon Salmons/Kevin Eastwood: That Council has considered and approved the Briefing to the Incoming Minister(s) (BIM) for distribution. CARRIED

16. Herds of Special Interest: General discussion amongst Councillors and staff and supported by slides provided by Ben Reddiex, DOC. Discussion about the process for establishing a HOSI, criteria that has been established in the past, current engagement, templates, herd management planning, delegations, contracts, best practice, National Park legislation and statutory requirements, implications for GAC and DOC work programs and review process. There is a meeting on 22 November 2023 where these issues will be contemplated further. Councillors requested a dedicated HOSI meeting to take place in December 2023 and subsequently in February 2024.

17. DOC Director National Programmes: Following on from the HOSI discussion, Ben Reddiex from DOC, provided an update to Council covering issues such as:

- the National Coordination Group
 - a forum to prioritise and coordinate actions for effective wild animal management
 - mana whenua, Māori organisations, hunting sector, conservation sector, primary industry and research organisations
 - Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy (ANZBS) goals can only be achieved through collaborative efforts.
- National Wild Goat Hunting Competition
 - good coverage across media and social media

- over 4600 wild goats removed to date
- WARO
 - Independent analysis peer review complete
 - Final changes being made with report due for completion in November 2023
- AATH
 - Interviews underway
 - Workshop 21 November 2023
 - Report due for completion in March/April 2024
- GAC's Better Hunting Programme
 - Promotion on DOC website and via e-newsletter to hunting permit holders
- General
 - Highlights of DOC Wild Animal Team for 2022-23 and overview of 2023-24
 - Operational plans for additional priority sites being developed for consideration for Budget funding.

ACTIONS: Following the dinner meeting with Penny Nelson and noting the priorities of the incoming Government the GAC decided to identify four- five priorities to provide to the DOC Director-General where GAC and DOC could work together to deliver outcomes. It was noted that these priorities were focused on delivering some short / medium term outcomes in the wild animal space and as such did not incorporate all of the longer-term objectives.

The Chair facilitated a white board session incorporating aspects of the GAC Strategic Plan and the current work program. The intention was for this to guide management to prepare a draft list of priorities.

Two Councillors noted that they would prefer a more formal facilitated strategy workshop to decide priorities. The Chair accepted this but noted the value in the exercise for the short-term and that the result of the whiteboard exercise was in line with the current strategic plan as reviewed by Council earlier in 2023. Strategy will continue to be reviewed periodically and it was noted that due to recent appointments not all Councillors were at the last review.

GAC to attend the AATH workshop on 21 November 2023.

- 18. Financial Reporting and variances:** Councillors were provided with the Profit and Loss Report for the month ended 30 September 2023, Balance Sheet as at 30 September 2023 and Financial Reporting and Variances Report documenting income, and expenditure versus annual budgeted figures for 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

Motion 46/9: Moved Steve McFall/Eugene Rewi: That Council receives and approves the Profit and Loss Report for the month ended 30 September 2023, Balance Sheet as at 30 September 2023 and the Financial Reporting and Variances report for the quarter ended 30 September 2023. CARRIED

- 19. Quarterly Performance Report – Quarter 1 2023-24:** As per the Letter of Expectations 2023-24 from the Minister of Conservation, the GAC is required to report against the non-financial performance measures and the financial forecasts outlined in the Statement of Performance Expectations (SPE) 2023-24 and its annual workplan on a quarterly basis. Councillors considered the Q1 report. Suggestion to include achieved/not achieved in the comments column for each measure.

Motion 46/10: Moved Melissa Jackson/Callum Sheridan: That Council receives and notes the Quarterly Report Q1 of 2023-2024. CARRIED

20. General Manager's Report: Tim Gale's General Manager's Report was presented, highlighting:

- The successful launch of the Better Hunting Programme
- Advice provided to the Minister of Conservation.
- Meeting the Statement of Performance Expectations 2023-24 Targets.
- Te Ara ki Mua update.
- GAC's role on the Wild Animal Management Coordination Group.
- Liaison and external engagements
- Council's representation at the Sika Show 2023 and presentations by Staff & Councillors.
- Unlawful hunting
- Herds of Special Interest
- Whakatipu white tailed deer and Dart/Caples 1080 operation
- Council's submission on OSPRI National Aerial Operations Plan 2024 – 28 September 2023
- Tahr Management in Management Unit 1 (MU1)
- Research
- Wild Animal Recovery Operations (WARO) Systems Analysis
- Aerial Assisted Trophy Hunting (AATH) Systems Analysis
- Survey - Valuing White-tailed Deer on Stewart Island/Rakiura
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) review
- Funding Applications
- Official Information Act (OIA) Requests
- Foreseeable Risks

In addition, it was noted that Steve McFall and Kaylyn Pinney attended the Animal Welfare Network Aotearoa (AWNA) meeting in Christchurch in October 2023.

Motion 46/11: Moved Steve McFall/Melissa Jackson: That Council receives and notes the November 2023 General Manager's Report. CARRIED

21. Game Animal Council Research Strategy: The Game Animal Council Research Strategy was discussed in part during Agenda items 16 and 17. Councillors were asked to provide input and advice to management regarding priority areas of research. Council considered its upcoming work program (in association with DOC's priorities in the wild animal space also) and considered which priorities best support a Game Animal Council Research Strategy and progress ideation of research themes.

22. Draft Fraud Prevention Policy: The Game Animal Council's Fraud Prevention Policy was developed early in 2022, after previous year's audit recommendations. The policy has been developed in accordance with best practice guidelines for public organisations issued by the Controller and Auditor General of NZ. The intention was that the draft policy would essentially be 'Version 1' so that we had a working document to use and present to Auditors and that the Policy would be reviewed in the coming year (and reviewed every two years). Version 1 of this policy was provided to Councillors at the GAC

Meeting on 28 April 2022. At that time, Councillors wanted more time to consider the policy and to be certain it aligned with the Auditor General’s guidelines.

Discussion about the proposed GAC Fraud Prevention Policy and minor amendments.

Motion 46/12: Moved Grant Dodson/Melissa Jackson: That Council receives and approves the GAC Fraud Prevention Policy November 2023 incorporating the minor amendments as agreed at the meeting. CARRIED

23. Meeting Planning 2024: Councillors considered the 2024 dates as outlined in the meeting pack. The August 2024 meeting may be pushed back to September 2024. Suggestion to incorporate a 1.5-day strategic planning meeting in February 2024, and possibly a two-day meeting in November 2024. A complete list of important dates will be recirculated to Councillors and staff.

24. General Business:

Review of Policy on the Acceptance of Donations, Gifts, Fundraising, Trusts, Bequests – Councillors were asked to approve an updated version of this policy.

Motion 46/13: Moved Grant Dodson/Steve McFall: That Council receives and approves the Policy on the Acceptance of Donations, Gifts, Fundraising, Trusts, Bequests v1.2. CARRIED

Communications Report November 2023 – Councillors were provided with a communications update. Council received and noted the communications update.

Tokoroa Pig Hunting letter – the correspondence was discussed and an appropriate response was agreed.

25. Meeting Review: Councillor John Cook provided feedback on how the Council performed during this meeting with the following reflections: did we achieve what we need to (yes); did we spend our time on governance (yes); time discipline - lost track a little but spent time well and finished reasonably on time; were we respectful of one another (yes); did we achieve what we needed to (yes).

Karakia to close meeting – Councillor Eugene Rewi. Meeting closed at 4.45pm.