

LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of Budget Meeting of Longford County Council held in the Council Chamber, Aras an Chontae, Longford on Monday, 12th January 2004 at 3.00 p.m.

PRESIDING: Councillor Gerry Brady, Mayor.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors – James Bannon, Paddy Belton, Seamus Butler, James Coyle, Adrian Farrell, Martin Farrell, Sean O Fearghaile, Donncha Mac Gleannain, Victor Kiernan, Maire Ni Giolla Bride-Harcán, Brian Lynch, Sean O Loingsigh, Luie McEntire, Alan Mitchell, Peadar O Murchu, Michael Nevin, John Nolan and Barney Steele.

N ATTENDANCE: Mr. M. Killeen, County Manager.
Mr. T. McDonald, Head of Finance.
Mr. F. Sheridan, Director of Services.
Mr. R. Timlin, Director of Services.
Mr. J. Kilgallen, Director of Services.
Mr. J. Clarke, Director of Services.

MEETINGS

ADMINISTRATOR: Ms. Anne Lee.

PROGRAMME GROUP 1 - Housing and Building:

The Head of Finance, Mr. T. McDonald, gave a detailed breakdown of proposed expenditure and receipts for Programme Group 1. The total estimated expenditure for this Programme amounts to €4,411,651 and total estimated receipts amounts to €3,784,468.

The members of the Council complimented Mr. James Clarke, Director of Services, and the officials in the Housing Department for the great work which had been carried out during the year in relation to the provision of local authority housing in County Longford.

Councillor A. Farrell asked if there is provision in the Housing Programme to provide housing for people who emigrated from Ireland in the 1940's and 1950's and who now wish to return to live in County Longford.

The Director of Services stated that Longford County Council has an active policy regarding the repatriation of Longford people.

In reply to a query from Councillor M. Nevin regarding percentage of rent collected in 2003, Mr. McDonald stated that it is anticipated that 90% of rents will have been collected in 2003.

On the proposal of Councillor M. Nevin seconded by Councillor P. Belton it was agreed that Programme Group 1 – Housing and Building be adopted with the proviso that the other Programmes are adopted.

PROGRAMME GROUP 2 - Roads and Transportation:

The Head of Finance, Mr. T. McDonald, gave a detailed breakdown of proposed expenditure and receipts for Programme Group 2. The estimated expenditure is €17,005,215 and the total estimated receipts are €12,246,361.

The members were informed that a Special Roads meeting would be held when the Road Grants have been received.

A discussion took place regarding public lighting in the County and the need for regular inspections.

The members also reiterated the need for extra funding to carry out Local Improvement Schemes in the County.

On the proposal of Councillor V. Kiernan seconded by Councillor S. Lynch it was agreed that Programme Group 2 – Roads and Transportation be adopted with the proviso that the other Programmes are adopted.

PROGRAMME GROUP 3 - Water Supply and Sewerage:

The Head of Finance outlined details of the proposed expenditure and receipts in respect of this Programme. The estimated expenditure is €4,392,555 and the total estimated receipts is €2,805,598.

Mr. McDonald informed the meeting that Longford County Council will be responsible for the operation of the Longford Town Sewerage Treatment Plant from the 1st January 2004.

In reply to a query from Councillor S. Farrell regarding the amount spent on Water Collection – Meter Reading, Mr. Timlin informed the meeting that a Customer Liason person had been appointed during the year.

Non-Domestic Water Charges.

Concern was expressed by the members regarding the proposed 37.50% increase in metered charges i.e. €4.00 per 1,000 gallons in 2003 to €5.50 per 1,000 gallons in 2004. They also expressed concern regarding the proposed 40% increase in fixed agricultural charges i.e. €300.00 in 2003 to €420.00 in 2004.

Councillor P. Belton and Councillor L. McEntire recommended that the amount for Fixed Agricultural Charge be decreased to €375 and the amount for Metered Water Charge per 1,000 gallons be decreased to €4.75.

It was noted by the members that the Director of Services would be making a presentation on the Water Metering Project at a future meeting of the Council.

On the proposal of Senator J. Bannon seconded by Councillor M. Farrell it was agreed that Programme Group 3 – Water Supply and Sewerage be provisionally adopted subject to the totality of the Budget.

PROGRAMME GROUP 4 - Development Incentives and Control:

The Head of Finance gave details of the proposed expenditure and receipts in respect of Programme No. 4.

The estimated expenditure is €2,105,012 and the total estimated receipts are €1,117,736

Mr. F. Sheridan, Director of Services, answered questions which had been raised by the members in relation to the Rural Renewal Scheme, Village Renewal Schemes, tourism and sites for industries.

On the proposal of Councillor S. Butler seconded by Councillor M. Nevin it was agreed that Programme Group 4 – Development Incentives and Control be provisionally adopted subject to the totality of the Budget.

PROGRAMME GROUP 5 - Environmental Protection:

The Head of Finance gave details of the proposed expenditure and receipts in respect of Programme Group 5.

The estimated expenditure is €3,592,898 and the total estimated receipts is €527,280.

Councillor L. McEntire proposed and Councillor S. Lynch seconded that an allocation be made available for the provision of footpaths etc. at Legga Cemetery.

The members discussed the need for the co-ordination of emergency services.

Councillor S. Butler proposed and Councillor L. McEntire seconded that the amount for the call out of the Fire Brigade should be claimed against the person's insurance.

The County Manager referred to the contribution of €15,000 to Local Committees in respect of the maintenance of Burial Grounds, as the continuation of the L.J.I. Scheme was very doubtful. Following a request from the members of the Council, the County Manager agreed to make contact with the Local Branch Secretary of S.I.P.T.U. to ascertain if S.I.P.T.U. would give approval so that Longford County Council could request FAS to continue with the L.J.I. Scheme in 2004.

Councillor M. Nevin proposed and Councillor J. Nolan seconded an increase of €8,000 in the allocation for Fire Protection Charges.

Mr. McDonald and Mr. Timlin replied to various questions raised by the members on litter fines, decrease in Fire Brigade hoax calls, C.A.M.C., increase in the cost of a burial plot to €250.

With regard to the provision of Civic Amenity Sites, Mr. Timlin informed the members that the Council advertised for expressions of interest for the provision of Civic Amenity Sites and that this process is still ongoing.

He stated that a survey is being carried out by officials of the Council on the provision and upgrading of Cemeteries in the County and this survey will be presented to the Council in the next few months.

On the proposal of Councillor M. Nevin seconded by Councillor M. Farrell it was agreed that Programme Group 5 – Environmental Protection be provisionally adopted subject to the totality of the Budget.

PROGRAMME GROUP 6 - Recreation and Amenity:

The Head of Finance outlined details of the proposed expenditure and receipts in this Programme Group.

The estimated total expenditure is €1,639,191 and the total estimated receipts is €277,490.

The members of the Council complimented Ms. Marry Carleton-Reynolds, County Librarian and Mr. Fergus Kennedy, Arts Officer, for the excellent services being provided by the Library Service and Arts Service in the County.

Mr. F. Sheridan, Director of Services, informed the meeting that the public planning process for the proposed new Swimming Pool for Longford is being completed, with the detailed design stage commencing shortly.

With regard to the appointment of a Heritage Officer for the County, Mr. Sheridan stated that an advertisement will be placed in the papers shortly inviting applications for the position.

He stated that it is proposed to sell the old Post Office on Main Street, Longford and to ring fence the proceeds from same for the proposed new County Longford Museum.

On the proposal of Councillor M. Nevin seconded by Councillor P. Belton, it was agreed that Programme Group 6 – Recreation and Amenity be adopted with the proviso that the other Programmes are adopted.

PROGRAMME GROUP 7 - Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare.

The Head of Finance gave details of the proposed expenditure and receipts in respect of Programme Group 7.

The estimated revenue expenditure is €3,878,771 and the estimated revenue receipts is €3,334,524.

With regard to the payment of Higher Education Grants, Mr. McDonald stated that it is the Council's policy to pay these Grants as expeditiously as possible.

On the proposal of Councillor M. Nevin seconded by Councillor S. Butler it was agreed that Programme Group 7 – Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare be adopted with the proviso that the other Programmes are adopted.

PROGRAMME GROUP 8 - Miscellaneous Services:

The Head of Finance gave details of the proposed expenditure and receipts in respect of Programme Group 8.

The estimated expenditure is €2,521,407 and the total estimated receipts is €824,343.

The Head of Finance stated that a sum of €25,000 has been estimated for the Local Elections in 2004 – this reflects the fact that the European Elections are being held on the same day, which will help to defray the cost of the Elections.

The members discussed the members' expenses and also entertainment expenses.

On the recommendation of Councillor M. Nevin, it was agreed to reduce the provision for expenses of Members attending conferences and seminars in Ireland by €6,400.

In reply to a query from Councillor J. Nolan regarding the provision of a weighbridge in the County, the County Manager informed the meeting that the Council is making a contribution to the Gardai who are going to purchase a mobile weighbridge and any fees accruing will be paid to the Council.

On the proposal of Councillor V. Kiernan seconded by Councillor B. Steele it was agreed that Programme Group 8 – Miscellaneous Services be adopted with the proviso that the other Programmes are adopted.

Conclusion.

The Members of the Council proposed various amendments to the Budget for 2004.

On the proposal of Councillor S. Butler seconded by Councillor P. Belton it was unanimously agreed that the following adjustments be made to the Budget for 2004:-

Reduction in Non Domestic Water	Prog 3		134,200
Reduction in Fixed Agricultural Water Charge from €420 to €395			
Reduction in Metered Water Charge per 1,000 gallons from €5.50 to €4.95			
Reduction in Rates Income			38,100
Reduction in 2004 Rate from €60.50 to €59.70			
Reduction in House Insurance	Prog 1	25,000	
Increase in Rental Income	Prog 1	10,000	
Grant re Granard Sewerage Scheme	Prog 3	28,500	
Increase in Planning Fees	Prog 4	20,000	
Increase in Litter Fines	Prog 5	10,000	
Increase in Fire Brigade Charges	Prog 5	8,000	
Reduction in Travelling Expenses	Overall	20,000	
Reduction in Survey for Recreational Facilities	Prog 6	6,400	
Reduction in Overdraft Interest	Prog 8	30,000	
Reduction in expenses - non elected SPC members	Prog 8	6,000	
Reduction in Entertainment and Associated Expenses	Prog 8	2,000	
Reduction in Members Expenses	Prog 8	6,400	
		172,300	172,300

		2004	Reduction	Revised
Housing and Building	Prog 1	29,000	1,700	27,300
Road Transportation and Safety	Prog 2	70,000	4,200	65,800
Water Supply and Sewerage	Prog 3	54,000	3,200	50,800
Development Initiatives and Controls	Prog 4	33,000	2,000	31,000
Community & Enterprise Function	Prog 4	25,000	1,500	23,500
Fire Protection	Prog 5	34,000	2,000	32,000
Pollution Control	Prog 5	5,000	300	4,700
Other Environmental Protection	Prog 5	12,000	700	11,300
Central Management	Prog 9	75,000	4,400	70,600
		337,000	20,000	317,000

ADOPTION OF ESTIMATE:

It was proposed by Councillor M. Nevin and seconded by Councillor A. Farrell and unanimously resolved that Longford County Council adopt for the Financial year ending 31st December 2004 the Budget, as amended, as set out in Tables A, B and C.

It was proposed by Councillor M. Nevin and seconded by Councillor A. Farrell and unanimously resolved that Longford County Council determine in accordance with the Budget adopted for Financial Year ending 31st day of December 2004, the rate set out in Column 1 of Table B and Column 2 of Table C to be the annual rate on valuation to be levied for the year for the purposes set out in the Columns of Table B and Table C. The Annual Rate on Valuation for Financial Year ending 31st December 2004 is determined at €59.70.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Anne Lee,
Meetings Administrator.

Confirmed and adopted at Monthly Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 16th February 2004.

Signed: _____
Mayor.