

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of a meeting of the Executive Committee

held at the Offices of the Board on
14th January 2015 at 2pm

Members

Chairman - * Mr M J Scott

* Cllr P Bedford

* Mr R Leggott

* Mr J R Wray

* Cllr M Brookes

Mr K C Casswell

* Member Present

In attendance: Mr I Warsap (Chief Executive)
Mr D Withnall (Finance Manager)

670 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr K C Casswell. Mr J R Wray joined the meeting at Agenda Item 4.

671 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Minutes of the last meeting held on 29th October 2014, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was agreed that they should be signed as a true record.

672 MATTERS ARISING

(a) 2014/15 Budget - Minute No 619(b)

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that S T Portess & Son have been appointed to complete the building of the secure storage area. They are due to complete next week; the Chairman viewed the works before Christmas.

The Architect had no active contract with Mowbray's, as agreed at the previous meeting the Architect and Structural Engineering drawings were purchased for £500.

(b) Black Sluice Strategy following the Tidal Surge - Minute No 619(c)

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that an agreement has been reached with FCC Environmental Company regarding the works specification. The works to protect the culvert will be commencing on the 19th January 2015.

The Environment Agency have issued £240k of FDGiA "recovery" funding for works to be completed by 30th June 2015 on the Wyberton and Kirton catchments. Contractors will be contacted to tender for the culvert replacement works as the workforce is unable to complete these within the set period without detriment to the Board's planned drain maintenance.

The Chief Executive stated that due to the simplified "LITE" format application for FDGiA he was able to complete them within the short time frame to secure funding for the schemes.

(c) Rechargeable Works - Minute No 619(d)

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that the contract has been secured with Calders & Grandidge, programmed to commence 2nd February 2015.

(d) Data Transparency Web Page - Minute No 619(f)

The Finance Manager stated that the Internal Auditor stated at the Audit & Risk Committee meeting that the Black Sluice IDB is an example of good practice.

(e) The EA Asset Transfer Report - Minute No 620

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that the meeting is to be held on 3rd February 2015.

(f) Lone Worker Devices - Minute No 626

The Chief Executive stated that the devices are due for delivery by 26th January 2015.

(g) Board Members - Minute No 628(a)

The Chief Executive stated that the Land Drainage Act quoted in the minutes refers to elected Board Members. Boston Borough Council rules regarding Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies applies to the appointment of their Councillors onto the Board.

673 TO RECEIVE THE PERIOD 9 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS - Agenda Item 4

The Finance Manager presented to the Committee the Period 9 management accounts and stated that everything appears to be heading towards budget for the year end.

He made further reference to the following items:

- Drain Maintenance is adverse against budget but the additional £240k FDGiA for schemes is to be spent and then will reduce the overspend by year end.
- Interest rate with the Natwest has reduced to 0.15%.

674 TO CONSIDER THE 2015/16 BUDGET AND TEN YEAR PROJECTIONS - Agenda Item 5

The Chairman reviewed the conversations from the last Executive Committee meeting which concluded in requesting the Finance Manager to construct the budget with a moratorium in the rate for two years.

As reported at the subsequent Board meeting this resulted in unacceptably low balances in six years time and with this consideration the Finance Manager had calculated the minimum regular level that would sustain a General Reserve to Expenditure level of 20% over a ten year period. This was based on a base increase of 1.75%.

The Chairman stated that it was his opinion that this level of increase, given the austerity measures the local Councils are contending with, was unacceptably high. The Chairman asked Cllr Bedford in his role as the Leader of Boston Borough Council what they had included in their budget to which he replied 1%, noting that Central Government had reduced their budget by £660,000.

The Chairman proposed reducing the increase in the rate to 12.48p (1.46%) by reducing the budget for Drain Schemes from £135,000 to £115,000 for the next two years. The Chief Executive requested caution in reducing these budgets as the Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) money was not likely to be available at the same levels as the current year and ideally inflationary increases need to be factored into both Drain and Pumping Station Schemes. This was acknowledged by the Committee and a review of the ten year schemes budget was undertaken to identify any urgent schemes.

The Committee AGREED to reduce the Drain Schemes budget to £115,000 for 2015/16 and 2016/17, to be reviewed after period 9 accounts in each year with schemes planned in reserve if the funds were available from alternative budgets.

The Chairman confirmed with the Finance Manager that inflationary increases had been included in Drain Maintenance at a rate of 2%. Mr Leggott also reflected on the impacts that reducing Drain Maintenance could potentially have.

The Committee AGREED to recommend to the Board that the Board adopt a policy of maintaining the General Reserve at a level of 20% of the annual expenditure.

The Committee further AGREED to recommend the budget in its current form with the amendments detailed above and a penny rate of 12.48p.

675 TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSALS FOR THE PLANT ACCOUNT 2015/16 - Agenda Item 6

The Chief Executive presented to the Committee proposed purchases including three pickups. The Committee discussed the option of leasing 4x4 pickups highlighting the importance of the Black Sluice organisational status, which would reduce the capital allowances to the leasing company and annual high mileage penalties. The Committee RESOLVED to recommend the three pickups be purchased rather than leased.

675 Cont.....

The Committee AGREED to the recommendation presented for the plant purchases 2015/16 in conjunction with the Eight Year Plant Plan agreed by the Executive Committee on 20th October 2014.

676 TO CONSIDER THE DEVELOPMENT CONSENT FEE ACCOUNT - Agenda Item 7

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that the reconstruction of the culvert at Wyberton Roads will be covered by FDGiA.

The Chief Executive stated that with the continued use of SUD's, this will decrease the amount of contributions to the Development Consent Fee account. Potential schemes will be considered and if identified for funding from this account brought to the Committees' attention.

677 TO CONSIDER ESTIMATES FOR BOURNE FEN FARM ACCOUNT - Agenda Item 8

The Finance Manager presented his report which included an estimated value of the investments and cash for 2015/16.

The Committee RESOLVED that the rate alleviation for 2015/16 should be the same rate as 2014/15, which is 2.4p in the £.

678 HUMAN RESOURCES - Agenda Item 9

It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to exclude the public from the next part of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

679 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION AND REVIEW 2015/16 OBJECTIVES - Agenda Item 10

The Chief Executive explained to the Committee that the annual business plan is effectively the same document each year. All the information pertaining to purpose, delivery and objectives has been uploaded onto the Boards website.

He recommended that instead of this document a list of "targets" are produced and published for each year.

The Committee agreed to the recommendation not to produce a Business plan. The Committee recommended that the list of targets be signposted onto the website under the section pertaining to Business Plan.

Proposed 2015/16 Targets

- control expenditure in line with this year's budgets
- develop the Board's public engagement
- develop the Assistant Pump Engineer (three year programme) in line with the Pump Engineer's retirement plans
- hold a full Board inspection in June
- hold successful members elections in November
- develop our PSCA with the EA
- develop the possibility of an EA asset transfer (main river and BSPPS)
- assist in the actions of the BSCS
- continue involvement with the Boston Barrier plans
- appoint an Apprentice Administration Assistant
- review the resilience of the Board (plans/systems)

The Committee discussed the proposed targets above and highlighted the following recommendations:

- (a) Place the targets in an order of importance, or traffic light system.
- (b) Explanation of how these can be achieved and reports ongoing to final completion.
- (c) Responses from the Public, questions which might be raised, consider a range of answers.
- (d) Explaining the acronyms or avoid them. Giving a basic understanding of the issues and how each authority affects these ranges of targets.
- (e) In addition general ongoing training for employees rather than pointing to a specific course.
- (f) The Environmental Asset Transfer, break it down into defined areas ie South Forty Foot Drain, Black Sluice Pumping Station. How it affects us and what benefits will be achieved.
- (g) Break down the wording and definitions to give a general understanding of what we are doing, how we are going to achieve this and why it is important.

680 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - Agenda Item 11

(a) Wyberton Marsh Improvement

The Chief Executive presented to the Committee a map showing the Wyberton drain, recommending a minor cutting/re-routing of this drain that would also offer a small attenuation facility. This scheme would incorporate rate payers land and be subject to negotiations and purchase.

The Committee AGREED that the Chief Executive could negotiate with the landowner regarding purchase of the land/ land loss, reporting to the Chairman.

(b) Drainage Rate Brochure 2015/16

The Chief Executive asked the Committee if the Drainage Rate Brochure was required now that the Boards website was kept up to date with information.

The Committee discussed and felt not all rate payers were computer literate and the cost involved in advertising the Board and its programmes warranted a brochure.

(c) Pumping Station Valuations

The Chief Executive stated that he had received the reports from Jackson Civil Engineering, if time permits he will review these and report to the Board at the next meeting.

(d) ADA White Book

The Chief Executive stated that the ADA White Book which is used as an advisory on wages, salaries and terms & conditions required updating. The Pay & Conditions Committee have advised that some matters are dealt with at individual Board level.

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that Unison had sent a letter regarding standby rates during Holidays. The workforce generally volunteer for standby over any closed period and they are paid a standby rate whether called out or not. Over the Christmas 2014 period none of the workforce volunteered to be placed on a standby rota therefore only the call out rate is paid when called out.

The Committee recommended that ADA be contacted to review and update the White Book.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 16:25.