

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE DHUN NA nGALL  
DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL**

County House  
LIFFORD

23<sup>rd</sup> December 2009

**TO: EACH MEMBER OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL**

Notice is hereby given that the Budget Meeting of Donegal County Council will be held in the County House, Lifford, at 10.00 a.m. on Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2009 to:

- (1.) consider the Local Authority Revenue Budget as circulated for the Local Financial Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009, prepared by the County Manager in accordance with Section 102 of the Local Government Act, 2001
- (2.) adopt, with or without amendment, the Local Authority Budget for the Local Financial Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009
- (3.) determine, in accordance with the said Adopted Budget, the Annual Rate on Valuation to be levied for the Local Financial Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009
- (4.) adopt the amounts to be demanded from the Town Councils by way of a County Charge for the services of the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009

You are hereby summoned to attend this meeting.

I enclose copy of County Manager's Report, Head of Finance's Report incorporating Directors of Services' report for each Directorate and Draft Budget for 2009, together with Statutory Tables A, B, C, D, E and F.

Yours sincerely,

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E. SWEENEY  
MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR

MINUTES OF BUDGET MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY  
COUNCIL, HELD IN THE COUNTY HOUSE, LIFFORD ON 09<sup>th</sup>  
JANUARY 2009

C/1/09      MEMBERS PRESENT

Clr G Crawford, Mayor, Clrs D Alcorn, L Blaney, A Bonner, E Bonner, J Boyle, C Brogan, B Byrne, F Conaghan, P Doherty, R Donaghey, J Harte, C Harvey, J Kelly, J Kennedy, D Larkin, N McBride, S McEniff, I McGarvey, D McGonagle, P McGowan, B McGuinness, P McLochlainn, B O Neill, T Pringle, S Slowey

C/2/09      APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Clrs. M. T. Gallagher, G. Reid and M. McDonald.

C/3/09      OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Michael McLoone, County Manager, Mr Aidan McNicholas, Head of Finance, Mr Liam Kelly, Assistant County Manger, Director of Housing, Mr Francie Coyle, Director of Planning & Economic Development, Mr John McLaughlin, Director of Roads & Transportation, Mr Michael Heaney, Directory Community, Culture & Enterprise, Mr Seamus Neely, Director, Water Environment & Emergency, Mr Liam Ward, A/Director of Corporate Services, Mr Declan McAleer, Financial Accountant, Mr Michael McGarvey, Senior Engineer, Mr Vincent Lynn, Senior Engineer, Mr Gerry Richards, Senior Planner, Mr Eunan Quinn, Senior Executive Planner, Mr Eunan Sweeney, Meetings Administrator, Mr Bartley McGlynn, Senior Executive Officer Mr Garry Martin, Senior Executive Officer, Mr Joe Peoples, Senior Executive Officer, Mr S Flynn, Senior Executive Engineer, Ms Patricia McIntyre, Administrative Officer, Ms Ann Marie Quinn, Administrative Officer, Mr Eugene Devenney, Staff Officer, Ms Kathleen Browne, Staff Officer, Ms Pauline Smyth, Assistant Staff Officer, Ms Marie Quinn, Assistant Staff Officer, Ms Marie Guthrie, Assistant Staff Officer, Ms Miriam Browne, Assistant Staff Officer

C/4/09      PHOTOGRAPH

The Council, at the request of the Mayor, agreed to allow the media to take photographs at the commencement of the meeting

C/5/09      MAYORS INTRODUCTION

The Mayor advised that the running order for the meeting would be as follows:-

Finance Officers Report  
Managers Report  
Lunch Adjournment  
Discussion of the budget and resolution by Members

C/6/09      PRESENTATION BY HEAD OF FINANCE

The Head of Finance gave a presentation setting out in detail the budget for 2009. He advised that the objectives of his presentation were as follows:-

1. To provide the members with:
  - (a) An overview of the finance issues for income & expenditure presenting in relation to balancing the 2008 requirement
  - (b) Details of how 2009 figures related to 2008 and changes therein
  - (c) Strategies implemented to balance the 2009 Draft Budget, as required
  
2. To provide, inter alia, details and various analyses to underline Donegal County Council strategies in achieving a balanced Budget in terms of managing costs and dealing with income shortfalls and income adjustments that were deemed necessary in the current economic climate.
  
3. In the final analysis, consider, in some detail, the provisions of the Draft 2009 Budget for each Directorate, by Division, to meet statutory requirements

In conclusion, the Head of Finance thanked the Members for agreeing to have the budget meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> January. He thanked the County Manager, Senior Management and his own staff in Finance for their work in preparing the Budget.

C/7/09

## PRESENTATION BY COUNTY MANAGER

Mr County Manager thanked the Head of Finance, B. McGlynn and the Finance team for their work on preparing the budget. He also thanked the Directors of Service and Members for their input to the preparation of the budget.

He submitted for the Council's approval and adoption the draft budget for revenue purposes in the sum of €178,818,287 for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009. He advised that the 3 year Capital Budget 2009 – 2011 of €709,165,273 was presented on December 4, 2008. Mr McLoone stated that the planned capital expenditure in 2009 was €14.951m and the total planned expenditure, revenue and capital, was €383.769m.

The County Manager went on to set out the overall budgetary strategy and advised Members that the four key objectives of same were as follows:-

1. Revenue Expenditure – To maintain and improve existing assets and services.
2. Capital Expenditure – Invest in infrastructure and deal with revenue consequences of capital schemes
3. Reconfigure our modernisation agenda in line with Government Statement on Transforming the Irish Public Service
4. Reposition Donegal County Council to lead out on County/Regional Development Initiatives

C/8/09

## ADJOURNMENTS

On the proposal of Clr F Conaghan, seconded by Clr T Slowey, the Council resolved to adjourn the meeting for lunch until 3pm.

When the meeting resumed, it was resolved, on the proposal of Clr Conaghan, seconded by Clr E. Bonner, to adjourn the meeting until 3.30 pm to allow members to consult in relation to the Budgetary issues.

On resumption, on the proposal of Clr Slowey, seconded by Clr Brogan, it was resolved that the meeting be further adjourned until 4pm to enable the completion of ongoing discussions.

ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS

Upon resumption, the Mayor proposed that one representative from each political party and one representative of the independent members would address the meeting, and this was agreed.

Clr F. Conaghan spoke on behalf of the Fianna Fail members, Clr T. Slowey spoke on behalf of Fine Gael members, Clr P. MacLochlainn spoke on behalf of Sinn Fein and Clr I. McGarvey spoke on behalf of the Independants. The following issues were raised by the members:-

- Welcomed the reduction in water charges and landfill charges and no increase in rates.
- Priority be given to retention of frontline basic services.
- Expressed concern in relation to the low rate of collection of water rates. Clr. Conaghan proposed that the County Manager should not sign the Order in relation water charges until a meeting was held with farming representatives to clarify the position in relation to same. This proposal was supported by Clr. Slowey, Clr. MacLochlainn and Clr. McGarvey.
- That €900,000 of the €4.2m own resources for roads be at the discretion of members.
- Clarification was sought in relation to what changes in work practices.
- Clarification was sought in relation retention of Litter Warden positions.
- Details of provisions made to advance planning and design of major road, water and sewerage schemes throughout 2009.
- Queried the position re:- timescale and negotiations with staff in relation to re-organisation of electoral areas and service delivery.
- Sought clarification that the €9.5m expenditure under Machinery Yard - Contractors and Machinery Hire etc represented value for money.
- That Donegal County Council actively pursue the purchase of houses at a time when house prices were favourable.
- Requested that if a member so decided their budgets for Lighting, Members Development Fund and Members Discretionary Fund could be amalgamated and spent on any heading under revenue at that member's discretion.
- Called for a reversal of the decision to include the €200 charge on non-principal residences in the Local Government Fund

allocation, and that the money collected go back to the Council as additional funding.

- Called for the opening of the new civic amenity sites as soon as possible.
- Highlighted the importance of road maintenance.
- The need to examine the Council's Committee Structure and restructure same prior to the Local Elections in June.
- That the administration of Higher Education Grants and VEC pensions be transferred to the VEC.
- That the Council examine if there were any savings possible in the servicing of current loans.
- Clr McGarvey raised a number of local issues in relation to Milford Electoral area, including the opening of the civic amenity site in Milford, the funding of Donegal Ancestry Milford Town Renewal, Rathmullan Pier.

C/10/09

#### RESPONSE FROM COUNTY MANAGER TO ISSUES RAISED

The County Manager responded to the issues raised by the spokespersons.

He clarified the issues raised in relation to work practices, and advised that the Council would be reviewing front line services to ensure resources were prioritised and, where required, staff redeployed.

In relation to water charges, he advised that he had worked with the Chamber of Commerce, Fishery Organisations and farmers to negotiate these charges. These meetings caused a delay in the issuing of the 2008 bills. He appealed to community and farming groups to come and talk to the Council about paying the water rates and confirmed that he was happy to meet the farming groups again before signing off on the charges, as requested by the members.

In relation to Road Maintenance, the County Manager advised that decisions on the maintenance programme would be deferred until discussed with the members. He confirmed that, in the meantime, Mr J. McLaughlin, Director of Roads Services was happy to ringfence €900,000.

The County Manager advised that the, Director of Service, Housing and Buildings, would prepare a more detailed report in

relation to how the service was trying to maintain the service with a reduced budget. He confirmed that the Council were committed to buying houses.

In relation to the reorganisation of staff as a result of electoral area changes, he advised that he needed more time to examine this matter.

The County Manager stated that he was happy to talk to the members in relation to the cost and impact of machinery hire and any changes which could be made in the operation of the Machinery Yard.

The County Manager advised that he would request the, Director of Water Environment & Emergency services to bring a report to the Council in relation to pipe replacement for 2009.

Mr McLoone stated that he was happy to have a special meeting with the members to discuss how to reform and deal with the problems facing the Council.

In relation to the restructuring of the committees, Mr McLoone advised that he was happy to discuss these changes with the Council.

Mr McLoone advised that the Council would welcome the VEC taking over the administration of Higher Education Grants and VEC pensions.

Mr McLoone confirmed that the Head of Finance was examining the restructuring of the Council's loans.

Mr McLoone responded to Clr McGarvey on each of the local issues he raised.

C/11/09

#### MAYORS ADDRESS

The Mayor addressed the meeting and acknowledged the work of all who had contributed to the preparation of the Budget.

He highlighted the issue of roads and the Council's struggle to receive adequate funding for same. He paid tribute to the work of the emergency services staff in recent weeks.

C/12/09 ADOPTION OF BUDGET

On the proposal of Clr. Conaghan, seconded by Clr. MacLochlainn, it was resolved:-

“That Donegal County Council hereby adopt for the Financial Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2009, the Budget set out in the Tables A and B resulting in an Annual Rate in the Valuation of €74.46, as shown in Table A, and the budget of money demanded for the Town of Ballyshannon, as set out in Table C, resulting in an Annual Rate in Valuation of €3.57 as shown in Column 7 of Table C.”

C/13/09 DETERMINATION OF THE ANNUAL RATE IN VALUATION

On the proposal of Clr. Conaghan, seconded by Clr. Slowey, it was resolved:

“That Donegal County Council hereby determine, in accordance with the Budget now adopted, the rates set out in:-

Table A	=	€74.46
Column (7) of Table C	=	€3.57

to be the Annual Rate in Valuation to be levied for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2009, for the purpose set out in Table A and in Table C.”

C/14/09 COUNTY CHARGE

On the proposal of Clr. Conaghan, seconded by Clr. Slowey, it was resolved:-

“That the sums set forth hereunder be demanded from the Town Councils by way of County Charge for the services of the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2009

Buncrana:	€55,944
Bundoran:	€84,000
Letterkenny:	€2,200,000”

This concluded the business of the meeting.

