

Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority

Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting

In Head Office, Downpatrick

Monday 26 February 2024 at 10.00am

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| Present: | Stephen Welch (SW) – Chairman of Board Kevin Quigley (KQ) - Chief Executive Davey Hill (DH) – Board Member Siobhan McCauley (SMcC) – Board Member Robert Ryans (RR) – Board Member |
| In attendance | Belinda McCaughey (BMcC) – Accounts Administrator David Lindsay (DL) – Project Manager (Item 10 only) |

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| 1. Welcome & Apologies | |
| SW welcomed all to the meeting. No apologies received. | |
| 2. Declaration of Interests | |
| DH confirmed owner of guard duty vessels and director of SeaSource. Possible conflict with item 9 – price increases. | |
| 3. Minutes of Meeting held on 23 November 2023 | |
| Minutes were agreed with addition of KQ action re email to DAERA within Section 7. | BMcC |
| 4. Matters Arising | |
| An emergency meeting was organised with regard to the Fish Pass in Kilkeel. Dol are not the owners of the Fish Pass. KQ updated DAERA on the current situation at the Accountability Meeting held on 15 Feb 2024. Joanne McClements has written to Owen Lyttle re the current issues. SW noted that someone will have to take ownership of the Fish Pass and will if required meet with Owen to make this determination. All other matters arising have either been completed or are on todays agenda.. | KQ / SW |
| 5. 2023/24 Management Accounts and Cash Position – nine months ended 31 December 2023 | |
| Report in pack is taken as read. Kevin gave an overview of the figures. | |

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| <p>Disappointed at the negative results on Revenue and hits on the expenditure side.</p> <p>Dredging is non stop at the moment due to build up at the Pier Head.</p> <p>Fishing is down. DH noted this is compounded by crewing issues and a change in the way fishermen are working. Fishing is now concentrated on the Apr to Sept period. Prices were good but have fallen significantly. They seem to be on the rise again – but slowly.</p> <p>It should be noted that 90% of the fleet fish for prawns within the Apr to Sept period.</p> <p>KQ advised that crewing visas may change to seasonal visas. The PO's are actively looking into this with the Home Office and Border Control.</p> <p>KQ – We are looking at a much smaller fleet in the future. In the past fishing was passed from father to son. This is no longer happening – when the father retires the boat is sold.</p> <p>In the past boats used all of the available quota – this is no longer the case. There is plenty of quota for the number of fishing vessels.</p> <p>SW advised that DAERA will attend the March Board Meeting to update the Board on FSDP.</p> <p>KQ confirmed that current £80k has been spent on Capital Works in 2023/24.</p> <p>Ice Plant Costing – Summary presented in Pack showing pre and post depreciation figures.</p> | |
| <p>6. Current Forecast – 2023/24</p> | |
| <p>Kevin discussed the Cash forecast and noted the amount DAERA had provided up front to fund payments in regard to the Portavogie Slipway Project. Any monies paid up front will be returned at the end of the Project.</p> <p>KQ also discussed the Year end forecast in detail and covered adjustments made at this time. Pelagic landings have been strong so far this year but we are not certain of the year end outturn.</p> <p>Anticipated spend on decommissioning of abandoned vessels by year end should reach the budget figure of £90k.</p> <p>KQ raised the issues around abandoned vessels at the DAERA Accountability meeting; DAERA need to look at the licencing arrangements for Fishing Vessels and what happens at their end of life.</p> <p>Last years conservative budget, was rejected by DAERA. We prepared a more optimistic one which is no longer valid in todays circumstances.</p> <p>The Committee had a general discussion around budget allocation and NIFHA's budget.</p> | |

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| 7. Aged Debtors | |
| BMcC gave an update on the changes to the debt profile since the last meeting and advised amounts which have subsequently been paid since this report was provided. | |
| 8. Addressing the Deficit | |
| <p>KQ discussed possible options around addressing the current forecasted deficit.</p> <p>Budget for 2024/25 is static and during the year we will need to focus on what possible actions are available to NIFHA to reduce the deficit.</p> <p>Business Plan will need to look at all three options for raising revenue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase Charges - Increase Ad Valorum Rate - Introduce a new levy. <p>KQ and SW will make arrangements to meet with DH and others in the offshore industry to explore future options.</p> <p>NIFHA will need to work out the best way forward through planning for the next 12 months.</p> | KQ / SW |
| 9. 2024/25 Budget inc Pricing | |
| <p>KQ presented the proposed budget for 2024/25 and discussed the key assumptions made when compiling the figures.</p> <p>After a full and frank discussion on figures and increases to charges it was decided to amend the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harbour Dues in respect of pmpw vessels to be increased by £20k - Landing and Market Dues to be increased to £700k <p>Subject to these amendments being made the budget was approved to be taken to the March Board Meeting.</p> | <p>BMcC</p> <p>Board</p> |
| 10. Capital Works Update | |
| <p>DL joined the meeting at this point and took questions from the Committee.</p> <p>DL updated all on the condition of the Fish Pass in Kilkeel and advised our Consulting Engineers are preparing options for consideration. This is a fast evolving picture.</p> <p>DL also gave an overview of the current stage of the FSDP.</p> <p>KQ confirmed DL has worked through the Ardglass documents which have been returned to DAERA with his comments. DL recognised risk within the tender and has passed this onto DAERA.</p> | |

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| <p>Fish Market Remedial Works will need to be undertaken in Kilkeel and could amount to £30k. The walls are coming apart. It cost estimates exceed £30k then CPD would have to carry out the procurement. This may have to be included in next years planned works. The EHO in Kilkeel is supporting us as much as he can.</p> | |
| 11. Estate Management and Development | |
| <p>Kevin discussed current estate issues across all three harbours.</p> <p>It is proving difficult to get valuations for some of our Lease agreements. LPS have been engaged to carry out these valuations.</p> <p>The owner of a development site in Kilkeel who holds a lease noting a right of way, is looking to secure right of passage on the harbour roads.</p> <p>This was discussed in detail and KQ has been tasked to get this independently valued before approval.</p> <p>All other estate issues are as detailed in the papers.</p> | KQ |
| 12. Any Other Business | |
| <p>SW discussed moving the Finance Committee into the main Board of the Authority. There are two reasons for this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Important that all Board Members are au fait with the financial position . - £1.6M budget is a small budget. There is a need to apply fiscal governance. Proportionality is important. <p>A separate meeting is not a good use of Board members time.</p> <p>This will be taken to the Board Meeting later today for confirmation.</p> | SW |
| 13. Date of Next Meeting | |
| <p>This will be determined at the Board Meeting.</p> | |