



MINUTES
of the
SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2020
at
Murrindindi Shire Council
Council Chamber
Perkins Street
Alexandra
11.00 am

** Audio recordings of all Council meetings are taken by Council's Governance Officers and published on Council's website. (Resolution of Council 23 January 2019)

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1. PLEDGE AND RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

The meeting was opened with the Mayor declaring the following Pledge on behalf of all Councillors:

“As the Councillors democratically elected to represent our community as the Murrindindi Shire Council, we are committed to working together in the best interests of the people who live in our municipality, who conduct business here and those who visit.

We would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the Taungurung Nation, and pay our respect to their Elders past and present, and its emerging and future leaders.”

2. APOLOGIES AND REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Present:

Councillors L Dunscombe (Chair), M Rae, R Bowles, J Ashe, E Lording, S McAulay

Apologies:

Councillor C Bisset

In attendance:

Chief Executive Officer: Craig Lloyd

Director Corporate and Shared Services: Michael Chesworth

Director Assets and Development: Vito Albicini

Manager Governance and Risk: Tara Carter

Manager Community Assets: Caroline Lintott

Executive Assistant: Louise Chapple

3. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST OR CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Nil.

4. OUR PROMISE

4.1 TREE SERVICES PANEL EXPENDITURE

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to propose an increase in financial delegation to the Chief Executive Officer in relation to the engagement of contractors under Council's Tree Services Panel, to address two recent storm events.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. authorise an increase in the financial delegation to the Chief Executive Officer for the sole purpose of procuring services under Council's Tree Services Panel (CONT17/31) to a maximum value of \$650,000 (Ex GST) for emergency works to address the damage caused by recent storm events (22 & 24 January 2020 and 1 February 2020)
2. approve the increase in the anticipated total expenditure for Contract17/31 from \$625,000 to \$1,325,000 (incl. GST).

Background

In March 2018 Council resolved to establish a panel for Tree and Weed Services. The panel included the following categories:

- a) Standard emergency response and clean up
- b) General tree works

- c) Tree root maintenance
- d) Tree planting, maintenance and establishment
- e) Pest and disease management.

The Chief Executive Officer is delegated by Council under section 98(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989* to award a contract up to the value of \$150,000 for operating expenses.

Discussion

The municipality has experienced two significant storm events in the last 3 weeks. The first event occurred over two days, 15 January 2020 and 19 January 2020. The second event occurred on 1 February 2020.

Approved contractors engaged as part of the Tree Services Panel have been working to assist Council to assess dangerous trees (arborist works), remove debris, prune and remove dangerous trees. These works are deemed as urgent works.

The expenditure associated with this engagement is being monitored and the CEO has been authorising the works under the panel contract. Due to the extent of the damage caused by the storms the expenditure associated with the two events is anticipated to exceed the amount delegated by Council to the CEO. A variation to this delegation is being proposed to allow Council to minimise risk associated with the damaged trees across the municipality in a timely manner.

Current estimates indicate that the cost for the works associated with these storm events are in the order of \$500,000 - \$600,000.

Council Plan/Strategies/Policies

The *Council Plan 2017-2021* Our Promise theme commits Council to maintaining Council's financial sustainability through sound financial and asset management.

The Our Place theme emphasises Council's commitment to the protection of the natural environment and community safety.

Relevant Legislation

The Chief Executive Officer is delegated by Council under the *Local Government Act 1989* to perform roles on its behalf. The variation to this delegation is being proposed to Council in an effort to ensure that Council can provide a level of service to the community and adhere to its legislated responsibilities.

Financial Implications and Risk

As part of the confidential tender report presented to Council at its meeting on 28 March, 2018, it was estimated that Council would spend approximately \$625,000 over the five year contract period on these works. Due to the two unexpected storm events within a three week period, it is now expected that the estimated spend will be increased to \$1,325,000 (incl. GST).

These emergency works are required to address the significant risk to the public resulting from fallen timber, suspended limbs and trees that have been made structurally unsound.

Funds to support these works will be initially allocated from the current infrastructure operations budget. This is involving a re-assessment of maintenance priorities, and will most likely necessitate a revision to Council's annual budget at the March 2020 quarterly budget review.

A notification of intent to seek Natural Disaster Financial Assistance has been forwarded to Emergency Management Victoria which, if accepted, may help offset some of the additional costs to Council of these emergency works.

Conflict of Interest

There are no declared conflicts of interest in relation to the creation of this report.

Community and Stakeholder Consultation

No external consultation was required in relation to this report.

RESOLUTION

Cr M Rae / Cr E Lording

That Council:

1. authorise an increase in the financial delegation to the Chief Executive Officer for the sole purpose of procuring services under Council's Tree Services Panel (CONT17/31) to a maximum value of \$650,000 (Ex GST) for emergency works to address the damage caused by recent storm events (22 & 24 January 2020 and 1 February 2020)
2. approve the increase in the anticipated total expenditure for Contract17/31 from \$625,000 to \$1,325,000 (incl. GST).

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

There being no further items of Business, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 11:05am.

CONFIRMED THIS

11/3/2020

CHAIRPERSON

