

MINUTES of Meeting of Finance Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 12th January 2021 on Microsoft Teams due to the global pandemic.

PRESENT

Cllr J Cattanach (In the Chair)

Mr J Daniel

Mr R E Britton

Mr S Wragg

Mr J Hopwood

The Clerk – Mr W Symons

Finance Officer – Mrs F Bradley

Engineering Assistant – Mr N Culpan

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Clerk reported that no apologies for absence were received and all Members were present.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest related to the items listed on the Agenda.

The Clerk further informed Members that the Register of Members Interests was available for inspection and update as required.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 29th September 2020, were considered at the Meeting, a copy of which had been sent to all Sub Committee Members.

Mr R E Britton proposed that they be taken as read and that they be forthwith signed by the Chairman as a correct and accurate record.

Mr S Wragg seconding the proposal of Mr R E Britton and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by the Sub Committee Members.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes which were not covered under the agenda items.

RATES

The Clerk reported on the current position of this year's outstanding drainage rates. The Board is progressing potentially three court actions from 2020/21 drainage rates and one from 2019/20. One ratepayer has also deceased and has land in probate and no payment made. Any action if taken would be in line with the Boards policy on outstanding rates.

TRANSFERS TO
SPECIAL LEVY AND
WRITE OFF

Land Transfer to Special Levy

The Clerk referred to the list and maps of the locations circulated with the agenda. This along with the write off of drainage rates which cannot be recovered and land transfers to Special Levy from the Boards agricultural rating.

The Sub Committee Members REVIEWED the list and AGREED with the Clerk to recommend the transfer to Special Levy:

1. The land on account 90-0144-0 shown in the circulated list to Selby District Council is being developed as four properties along with the write off of £7.89;
2. The land on account 90-0637-1 shown in the circulated list to Selby District Council is now 2 gardens for two houses with the write off of £1.31;
3. The land being developed by Persimmon Homes at Germany Beck in relation to City of York Council. This was noted in previous years at the Boards AGM as a significantly large development which will potentially take up to 15 years to complete. Sub Committee Members recognising that property completion will be phased over a period of time and much of the site will remain undeveloped initially. The land however will be unable to be used for agricultural purpose as it will be in the early stages of development. In view of this it was recommended for this year 1/15 of the land area is transferred to Special Levy. This also including the remaining land not transferred having its drainage rates written off. The Boards AGM four years ago agreeing to this recommendation. The Clerk suggesting in the enclosed report the Board for the third year considers 1/15 of the land area is transferred to Special Levy. This also including the remaining land not transferred having its drainage rates written off. The details of which were included on the summary sheet.

The Clerk informed the transfers will take place from 1st April 2021 to reflect the land no longer being used for agricultural usage.

Mr R E Britton proposed that the Sub Committee RECOMMENDED to the Main Board that the land should be transferred to Special Levy (Selby District Council and York City Council) as above, this along with writing off the sum of £104.73.

CONSORTIUM ARRANGEMENTS

The Chairman seconding the proposal of Mr R E Britton which was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by Sub Committee Members.

The Clerk confirmed the next meeting of the Consortium Management Committee (CMC) will be held on Tuesday 9th February 2021 via Microsoft Teams.

The Board at last year's meeting was represented by Mr R E Britton and the Chairman (Cllr J Cattanach). They both agreed to represent the Board again at the forthcoming annual meeting if the Board wishes. The arrangements require the Board to nominate two Members with the power to act on behalf of the Board.

The Clerk informed the Sub Committee that the Boards administration costs in this year's estimates are presented on the basis of the costs of the consortium arrangements which will be discussed at the CMC annual meeting.

The Sub Committee's RECOMMENDATION if accepted by the Board is to nominate both Mr R E Britton and the Chairman (Cllr J Cattanach) for them to attend the annual CMC Meeting.

PLANT RENEWALS/ PURCHASE

Proposed Approach to Maintenance Works

The Clerk informed that the Board will again contract out all the flailing works, which will be put out to tender as usual. The Board now has its own two tracked excavators so the Board's workforce can concentrate on sludging and tracked excavator maintenance works.

Plant Replacement Frequency

The Clerk noted that the machinery replacement is reviewed in relation to changing market conditions. The Board seeking to get best value for selling its existing plant whilst purchasing replacements at the best possible price. The timing of the change being intended to make the most of machine warranties provided when new. The Board needing to change the machines to sustain productivity to avoid diminishing reliability and increasing maintenance costs.

The Board currently, with its excavators, is funding replacement after five years of regular usage. This however will be dependent on hours run and market conditions. This however excludes attachments if they can be continued to be used with the replacement.

The Clerk presented the Plant Renewals Schedule, which had been circulated with the Agenda.

2020/21 Plant Replacement

The Clerk informed the Board has purchased an ATV Buggy and will be purchasing some Habbig tree shears together at a cost of £32,145.

2021/21 Plant Replacement

The Clerk informed in financial year 2020/21 it was intended to replace the Boards old 2009 Ford Ranger 4x4 pick-up truck as it is getting older and more expensive to maintain. This will be a similar specification to the old one but new. The Boards 14 tonne Hyundai HX 140 excavator will become 5 years old at the end of 2021 so it is intended to sell it and replace it with a new one at the end of the maintenance season. The existing value will be recovered in part exchange or sale when a new one is purchased, this keeps the Boards excavators updated and reliable. The total expenditure after the sale or part exchange of the existing being estimated to be £81,000.

The Clerk reviewed the Boards plant and equipment on the list and its replacement. This with a view to consider the amounts the Board should be building in its plant reserve funds to be able to replace its equipment when required. It is hoped in this financial year a surplus of £24,413 will be achieved which could contribute towards plant reserves which are intended to include £30,000 annually to sustain the Boards productivity with new and modern equipment.

The Sub Committee discussed the five-year replacement of the tracked excavators.

Sub Committee Recommendation

The Sub Committee Members considered the plant replacement programme.

The Chairman proposed that the Sub Committee to **RECOMMEND** the acceptance of the plant replacement programme and approval to progress as proposed above.

Mr S Wragg seconding the proposal of the Chairman which was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** by the Sub Committee.

BUDGET 2021/2022

The Chairman referred Members to the budget paper and notes, which had been circulated with the Agenda.

The Finance Officer asked if there were any questions on the items in the report.

The Chairman noted he believed the budget notes were very informative.

The Clerk highlighted the out turn budget estimate for the end of 2020/21. This showed a surplus of £24,413. This along with estimates for financial year 2021/22. The budget included for pumping station refurbishment and office repairs and improvement works. The paper being based on the Board sustaining its existing rate.

Mr R E Britton noting the difficulties the Board have had with the invoicing of N Power electricity suppliers recently. The Boards Finance Officer having to sort out the meter readings to have it corrected.

The Clerk explained the Boards position of having to obtain planning permission for the shed extension which had caused a delay and still not granted.

The Clerk noted that RPI at the current time is about 1% to 2% and with the uncertainty of Brexit and Coronavirus could rise further in the future. This highlighting a risk and being indicative of rising costs.

The Chairman asked Members of the Sub Committee if they had any further queries on the paper and supporting table.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

PROPOSALS FOR LAYING OF THE RATE 2021/22

The Sub Committee Members considered the Boards balances held along with the budget proposals and the rate of a sum of 4.38p for 2021/22 with no increase over the rates of 2020/21. The Chairman proposing and Mr R E Britton seconding the proposal which was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to RECOMMEND approval to the Board.

ENGINEER'S REPORT KELFIELD INGS PUMPING

The Engineering Assistant had provided a costed report prior to the meeting concerning the refurbishment of Kelfield Ings Pumping Station. The existing installation appears to be functioning below its design performance. The report highlights three potential options which he ran through and summarised. In relation to funding contributions North Yorkshire Highways did not consider that it would provide any significant improvement to clearing the road if a larger pump was installed. In view of this they did not wish to contribute.

Mr R E Britton believed due to the Highways view the Board should only be looking for a like for like replacement such as refurbishing the existing equipment.

The Engineering Assistant ran through the potential Pros and Cons. This including the problems of refurbishing the existing which would be likely to cost much more than the estimate because of the risk of uncertainties and having to provide temporary pumping when the station is not available. The installation of new equipment being much easier. This to include an updated pump and panel rather than refurbishing the existing.

Mr J Hopwood asked if the Board had reached a tipping point to replace rather than refurbishment as it was likely to last longer and be more reliable so a better investment.

The Engineering Assistant agreeing and highlighting the technical difficulties of refurbishment of the old equipment.

Mr R E Britton proposed that replacement rather than refurbishment was required keeping the discharge rate as close as possible to the existing.

The Clerk informed that he had spoken to the Environment Agency's Mr J Freed about funding. He believed that Flood Defence Grant funding is unlikely to be available as the pumping station is in an area which is designed to be flooded from the River Ouse. This along with the Highways Authority not highlighting any benefits for draining the road with investment in the pumping station.

The Engineering Assistant informed the existing pump refurbished would achieve 151 litres/sec. The proposed Flygt 20kw pump would achieve 185.2 litres/sec but running on inverter so it may be possible to slow the pump down for a lower discharge rate. He further confirmed the estimated cost would be as per Option A which is as follows:

Pump 20kw	£29,830
Electrical Panel on Gantry	£24,400
Installation	£11,675
Total	£65,905

The Chairman noted that possibly the Parish Council might contribute towards the work and contact can be made to see if this is possible but funds are likely to be limited so possibly unlikely.

Mr J Daniels thinks the Board should progress Option A but is disappointed that no contributions for potentially wider benefits can be made.

The Engineering Assistant informed that Mr R Bramley, the local farmer, thinks the pump needs bringing up to date.

The Sub Committee Members UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to RECOMMEND advancing Option A of the Engineer's Report to install the 20kw pump in the sum of £65,905.

RECONSTITUTION
OF THE BOARD TO
REDUCE
MEMBERSHIP
NUMBERS

The Clerk informed that he had recently contacted the Environment Agency and informed the matter still rests with the Environment Agency's legal section. The latest is that they are progressing the reconstitution but no progress has been made to report at the moment. However, it was expected the process will take some time to conclude.

BIODIVERSITY
ACTION PLANS

The Clerk reported that ADA National has released a template to refresh IDB Biodiversity Plans. The original and current plan is prepared to include all the Boards who are Members of the York Consortium so a single plan is developed for application across all five Boards in house. A copy of which is hosted on the York Consortium of Drainage Boards website.

The Clerk asked the Finance Sub Committee if it would recommend preparing the updated plan again in the same way or if the Board would wish to develop it individually.

Mr S Wragg was happy for it to be a broad template but has concerns against how monitoring and delivery against the plan is achieved and reported.

The Engineering Assistant notes the workforce are very good at being aware and monitoring conservation issues. It however is very difficult to highlight how the Boards work complies with all the requirements and how it contributes towards biodiversity. The Board will therefore have to give further consideration as to how to highlight and demonstrate these measures in the updated action plan.

The Sub Committee's RECOMMENDATION is to develop an overall 'Consortium' Boards Biodiversity Action Plan based on the framework of the new ADA National template.

WATER LEVEL
MANAGEMENT
POLICY REVIEW

The Clerk informed the Board that its Policy Statement on Water Level and Flood Risk Management was due for a review. A copy of which had been provided with the Agenda. The Board having adopted it as a policy on 19th June 2018. The document being based on a National template which has been agreed by Defra and the report being populated with the Boards specific data. A requirement is that the document is reviewed every three years.

The Sub Committee were satisfied with the document having reviewed it.

The Clerk informing that the template for the Policy has not changed.

The Sub Committee UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to recommend to the Board that the current adopted policy does not need changing and recommended keeping it as is and adopting it again. The Board then can review the policy again in three to five years' time and update it if necessary.

The Chairman thanking Members for considering and raising the matters in relation to the detail of the Policy.

ACCOUNTS FOR
CONFIRMATION

The Accounts for Confirmation were reviewed by the Sub Committee in detail.

The Sub Committee considered the list of accounts for confirmation and AGREED to RECOMMEND approval to the Board.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

DATE OF NEXT
MEETING

Tuesday 1st June 2021 at 1pm. This being prior to the Main Board Meeting on 22nd June 2021.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday 28th September 2021 at 1pm. This being prior to the Main Board Meeting on 19th October 2021.

ANY OTHER
BUSINESS

The Clerk highlighted a few staff matters which Sub-Committee Members noted.

The Clerk asked to thank the Engineering Assistant for attending and running the temporary pumps at Hagthorpe over the Christmas period.

The Engineering Assistant giving a quick update at the request of Mr J Daniel. This matter will be highlighted in greater detail at the full Board meeting.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the Meeting closed.

(APPENDICES TO FOLLOW)