

MINUTES of Meeting held on Monday 11th March 2024 at Pike Hills Golf Club, Tadcaster Road, Askham Bryan, York

PRESENT

Mr S E Jackson (In the Chair)
Mr A P Sykes
Mr C E Mills
Mr R F Hildreth
Mr J Sanderson
Mr A Percy
Mr P Bramley
Cllr M Nicholls
Dr H Ferguson

The Clerk – Mr W Symons

Engineering Assistant – Mr N Culpan

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J B Blacker, Mr C Clayton, Cllr C Steward, Mr S Wragg, Mrs S Wiseman, Cllr A Paraskos and Cllr A Warneken.

City of York Council's Flood Risk Engineer

The Clerk noted Mr S Wragg had been promoted in the City of York Council so was unlikely to attend Board meetings in the future. At this stage no announcements have been made as to his replacement.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

The Clerk informed Members that with nine Members in attendance, a quorum of ten Members was not present.

The Clerk informed Members that the Board needs to consider the purchase of a new pickup truck in this financial year. In view of this Members could consider suspending SO 4(a), which can be invoked by resolution of at least 75% of the Members present.

Members UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by resolution to suspend SO 4(a), from the Boards standing orders so formal decisions can be made.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

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

MINUTES OF MEETING

It was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 15th January 2024, a copy of which had been sent to all Members, be taken as read and approved and that they be forthwith signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

The Clerk reported that no matters were arising from the Minutes of the last meeting which were not covered on the Agenda.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Clerk advised that there have been no reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive (RIDDOR) since the date of the last meeting.

RATES

The Clerk reported that the total rates collected up to the 8th March 2024 are as follows:

(a) Special Levy	-	£353,943.17	(100%)
(b) Direct Levy	-	<u>£ 71,210.98</u>	(97%)
		<u>£425,154.15</u>	

The Clerk having a list of accounts with sums outstanding at the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that any outstanding rates will be pursued for payment and any remaining sums or credits at year-end will be included in next year's rate demands.

Drainage Rating Software Replacement

The Clerk noted that work was ongoing giving consideration on how the Board's Drainage Rating Software (DRS) could be developed and replaced as noted at the last meeting of the Board.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

The Engineering Assistant had circulated a report with the Agenda for Members consideration. This included an electronic web link to the Board's GIS maps showing the locations of this work carried out. He further ran through the items included in the report. It being noted the Board's activities had been restricted because of wet ground conditions and high-water levels.

North Field Drain

Mr R F Hildreth noted Mr C Spence who lives next to North Field Drain. The bank of which is deteriorating and potentially impacting on his property's drive.

The Engineering Assistant reported he had spoken to various members of this family over several years. At the current time the bank piling is getting tired and older. Its current condition has not failed and it is not hindering flows. He noted a fence previously installed on the bank has fallen over. The bank however is still stable and the Board currently does not need to carry any work out. He further noted that the Works Supervisor has recently inspected the bank and the Board's position of this matter remains the same.

Flailing Work Tenders 2024

The Engineering Assistant informed he had discussed the Board's tenders with potential contractors for flailing. The contracts currently being awarded on an annual basis. These discussions have highlighted that greater interest in the work would be achieved if the tendered work ran for a longer period. He therefore recommends the Board tenders the 2024 flailing contract for a two-year period with rates also being provided in the tender for a third year. The final year remaining optional for the Board to accept depending on the rates provided. A longer-term commitment by the Board is believed to give a greater opportunity to the contractors to invest in plant and manpower with a greater surety of work.

Mr A Percy informed he believed two years with rates provided for a third year would be a good approach and worth trialling.

Mr C E Mills recognises the pricing of longer-term contracts is harder because of uncertain risks such as the varying price of fuel. He however believes if in the tendered period one of these factors dramatically changes the Board should work with the contractor so the work can still be delivered.

The Engineering Assistant agrees but with the contract length say of five years is possibly too long so the middle ground is proposed and the Board can see what happens.

The Chairman agreed that a longer-term contract award, if it can be managed, helps the contractor to make bigger commitments to equipment and staff.

The Clerk believed the Board could trial the approach suggested and see how it progresses. He also noted on another Board with a five-year contract award, some of the contractors become complacent in the work they carry out and the standard is not so good. It was noted in this period of time a fuel prices escalator is included and used, if necessary, on top of the rates tendered. This reducing higher rates being tendered in later years to cover perceived uncertain risk.

The Engineering Assistant informed that the two years plus one was the favoured approach by the contractors. The pricing of the third year could be a problem as it is more difficult to price because of the uncertainty and possibly could be higher.

Dr H Ferguson believed the proposed approach was appropriate. The option allowing either the contractor or the Board to decide if they wish to conduct the works in the third year at the rates tendered. Then if the works are not continued following this period they can be tendered again to start a new contract.

Members UNANIMOUSLY AGREED for the Board's flail mowing contracts for the forthcoming maintenance season to be tendered on the basis suggested by the Engineering Assistant.

Pickup Replacement 2023/24

The Engineering Assistant explained the approach for changing the Board's pickup truck and part exchanging the old truck in. The part exchange allowance is £9,500.00 (ex VAT).

Members discussed potentially keeping the old truck (2018) rather than part exchanging it. They however agreed to part exchange the old truck in because of the additional costs of insuring and maintaining an additional vehicle. The options to purchase a new truck were as follows as detailed in the report circulated at the meeting:

- 1) Isuzu D-Max double cab 4x4 pickup to purchase £34,559.00 (ex VAT) for the truck and accessories. The price after part exchange, tax and VAT to change is £30,445.80;
- 2) Ford Ranger XLT 2.0 TD 4x4 double cab pickup to purchase £35,450.00 (ex VAT) for the truck and accessories. The price after part exchange, tax and VAT to change is £31,515.00;

- 3) Toyota Hilux Icon 2.4 icon double cab AWD pickup £36,445.99 (ex VAT) for the truck and accessories. The price after part exchange, tax and VAT to change is £31,515.00.

The VAT element in the price to purchase cost is recoverable.

The Engineering Assistant recommending the purchase of the Isuzu D-Max double cab 4x4 pickup and part exchange of the Board's 2018 pickup with a cost to change after part exchange including road tax and VAT in the sum of £30,445.80.

Members UNANIMOUSLY ACCEPTED the Engineering Assistant's recommendation to purchase an Isuzu pickup. This at cost to change after part exchange including road tax and VAT in the sum of £30,445.80. This action was then UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by the Board.

Sale of Old Habbig Tree Shears

The Engineering Assistant asked if the Board could consider selling its old tree shears (1998). These were replaced with a new set in 2021. The Board being unable to part exchange these at the time of replacement. The old ones now being surplus to requirements. It was suggested that the Board could enter them into a machinery auction site such as the one located in South Yorkshire. The funds achieved could then be added to the Board's Plant Reserve Fund. He however noted it was very difficult to value them.

Members UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to pay the entry fee for the auction and sell the shears and be open to negotiation on the price.

Health and Safety Item

The Engineering Assistant highlighted the cable strike prosecution and the importance of safe working practice.

The Engineering Assistant informed a laminated reminder is available in the cabs of the Board's machines and training is carried out for the workforce and the Board's contractors. This keeping them up to date with the Board's Code of Practice requirements. The training also covering the actions to be taken in the event of a cable strike occurring.

Mr R F Hildreth noted a similar recent event which had happened with a farmer and his tractor with a cable strike in Poppleton.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

PRECEPT

The Clerk advised that the Environment Agency had written to the Board confirming the Board's Precept is set at £43,272.47 (the same as last year) for financial year 2024/25. The recommendation of the Precept required by the Environment Agency being made and accepted by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC).

HIGHLAND WATER CONTRIBUTION

The Clerk informed that it was highly unlikely any further contribution from the Environment Agency would be made to the Board's Highland Water Contribution. This is because the Environment Agency is unlikely to have been able to make any efficiency improvements in its revenue programme. This along with the extremely wet weather and ongoing storm conditions increasing operations costs to which these funds contribute. The Board having been paid £40,604.07 which was 62.7% of the Board's eligible claim.

CONSORTIUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

The Clerk reported that a Consortium Management Committee meeting was held on 6th February 2024. The meeting was attended by Mr S E Jackson and Mr A P Sykes. A copy of the Consortium Agreement is available with the Clerk for Members to view if they wished. The meeting confirmed and agreed the Consortium staffing levels for financial year 2024/25 and the resources to provide the service.

The Clerk running through the items covered at the meeting. This including the potential to consider increasing the number of Boards in the overall Consortium and the administration efficiency in relation to the wider resources should an appropriate opportunity arise. This requires a reasonably sized Board for efficiencies to be achieved.

Committee Members gave the Clerk an open mandate to call a meeting of the Consortium should any appropriate opportunities arise.

The Clerk further highlighted the opportunities across the Consortium for partnership working under Public Sector Cooperation Agreements (PSCA) with our partners which this Board is clearly progressing.

The Clerk noted that the Committee considered the commercial estimate for the annual rent for the Board's office at Derwent House. The office being owned by the Ouse and Derwent IDB. A new lease being signed for an agreed sum which will run for the next three financial years with no further increase in cost.

Mr A P Sykes noted that a new Consortium Meeting attendee was an experienced human resource advisor and he was offering to help potentially put a staff appraisal scheme in place. This was an action he would support.

Consortium Staff

The Clerk further reporting on the shared resources of the Consortium which had been increased from last year. This including the Board's part-time provision of Graphical Information Support (GIS). This along with recruiting a Field Works Officer for the three Boards in the York area.

The Chairman supporting the ongoing increased resource proposals for the Consortium.

The Clerk further updated the Committee on the progress being made in consideration of how to progress the rewriting of the Drainage Rating Software (DRS).

STAFF

Workforce

The Clerk reported the Board had recruited a new excavator driver following the promotion of Mr J Fenton to the position of the Board's Foreman.

ADA NATIONAL

London Conference

The Clerk informed that the ADA National Conference is to be held on 13th November 2024 in London.

ADA National AGM

The Clerk informed that this meeting will be held virtually away from the National Conference. This is being organised on 3rd December 2024. Details and joining instructions can be provided by the Clerk if requested closer to the time.

ADA NORTHERN BRANCH

ADA Northern Branch Summer Meeting and Trip

The Clerk informed this is likely to be on 7th June 2024 at venue to be decided.

ADA Northern Branch AGM

The Clerk informed the AGM will be held on 22nd November 2024 at Yorkshire and Humber IDB offices.

ELECTION

The Clerk informed that the election programme agreed at the Board's Annual General Meeting in January was advancing. As the Board's September meeting has been cancelled Members will not be able to complete nomination forms at this meeting. The forms however will be posted out in the normal way for completion.

CORRESPONDENCE

BBC Countryfile

Mr C E Mills noted the BBC Countryfile programme over the weekend on which Mr I Thompson of ADA (Chief Executive) had been interviewed over the weekend. This was an interesting interview and several current matters were covered.

NFU Conference Announcement of IDB Flood Funding

The Clerk informed that he had become aware of possible government flood recovery and asset repair funding for IDBs. This was announced at the National Farmers Union Meeting. To date limited details have been provided on how to claim and what items would be eligible for inclusion. In relation to this funding the Board may be able to attract it for slipped bank repairs. This usually happening when water levels drop with saturated banks following the wet conditions.

Mr C E Mills noted that this funding was coming out of the Defra agricultural budget so not new funding.

Review of IDBs Rating and Re-Rating Consultation

The Clerk noted a current Defra consultation on rating or re-rating of an internal drainage boards district. This being consulted on by Defra for advancing formally so new drainage boards can be created or give existing boards the opportunity to extend the drainage district if they wish. This not being possible unless adequate historical information is available or this proposal is advanced.

The Clerk reported there was no further correspondence of significance received since the date of the last meeting.

PLANS

The Clerk referred to the list of planning applications commented upon since the last meeting of the Board, which had been circulated to all Members with the Agenda.

The Clerk reporting that all this information was now digitised and a copy can be provided at the meeting on a laptop computer instead of the paper records.

Mr C E Mills noted the planning application reference 7680 for remediation of agricultural land at the old airfield at Acaster. It was noted the significant vehicle movements that will be required through the area to bring the material required into the location.

Members discussed a number of the applications with a particular interest into controlling surface water run off.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

CONSENTS

The Clerk referred to the list of consents granted since the last meeting of the Board, which had been circulated to all Members with the Agenda.

The Clerk reporting that all this information was now digitised and a copy can be provided at the meeting on a laptop computer instead of the paper records.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

BANK STATEMENTS

The Clerk produced the Bank Statements for the Board's Current Account with a credit balance of £373,120.68 with Barclays Bank as at the 16th February 2024.

The Board also having £200,000 in a Barclays Treasury Fixed Term Deposit Account which is achieving 3.08% gross per annum.

The Virgin Bank account has an additional credit balance of £307,105.59. The Board placing funds into a twelve-month deposit account which is achieving 4.3% gross per annum.

The Nationwide Building Society account has an additional credit balance of £77,576.23. The Board placing funds in a 95 day business saver account which is achieving 4.25% gross per annum.

The total balance of the Board's funds held in these accounts is £957,802.50.

The Clerk confirmed that Barclays Bank continue charging for its banking services.

ACCOUNTS FOR
CONFIRMATION

The Clerk referred to the list of accounts paid since the date of the last meeting, which had been circulated to all Members with the Agenda.

Mr A P Sykes asked why the Kubota windscreen had been paid for rather than being claimed on insurance.

The Engineering Assistant informed he would look into it to see if it was covered but was uncertain as it is not on a vehicle road use policy which usually provides this cover. He also informed how it had happened which was discussed.

Members UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that payment of these accounts be confirmed.

(SEE APPENDIX TO MINUTES)

DATE OF NEXT
MEETING

It was directed that the next meeting of the Board is due to be held at Pike Hills Golf Club, Tadcaster Road, Askham Bryan, York, YO23 3UW on **Monday 17th June 2024** commencing at **6.30pm**.

DATES OF FUTURE
MEETINGS

Monday 11th November 2024

ANY OTHER
BUSINESS

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.58pm as there was no other business.

(APPENDICES TO FOLLOW)