



Miontuairiscí/Meeting Minutes

Statutory Budget Meeting **17th December 2012, Council Chamber**

An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Niamh McGowan, presided.

Members Present:

Councillors Joseph Bonner, Sirena Campbell, Willie Carey, Shane Cassells, Eugene Cassidy, Jimmy Cudden, Francis Deane, Ann Dillon –Gallagher, John V Farrelly, Jimmy Fegan, Brian Fitzgerald, Joe Fox, Oliver Fox, Wayne Harding, Jim Holloway, Eoin Holmes, Suzanne Jamal, Nick Killian, Noel Leonard, Tracy McElhinney, Jenny McHugh, Maria Murphy, Gerry O' Connor, Bryan Reilly, Joe Reilly, Tommy Reilly, Catherine Yore.

Officials in Attendance:

County Manager: Brendan McGrath

Directors of Service: Kevin Stewart, Fiona Lawless, Tadhg McDonnell, Des Foley, Joe Fahy (A).

Meetings Administrator Shane Donnelly

Senior Executive Officers: Michael Griffin, Larry Whelan,

Finance Staff: Paul Timoney, Pat McHugh, Sheila Harkin, Michael Murtagh, Ger Soady.

Administrative Officer: Olive Falsey

Apologies: Councillor Arian Keogan

1. That Meath County Council adopts for the financial year ending 31st December 2013 the Annual Budget set out in Tables A – F.

The Cathaoirleach opened the meeting and it was noted that the Statutory Budget book including Tables A-F had been circulated to the Members in advance of the Preliminary Budget meeting. The County Manager addressed the meeting, referred to his address at the preliminary budget meeting and reiterated that the budget has had to be prepared against a most difficult economic situation, nationally and locally.

"I am pleased to advise the Council that it is anticipated that the council will again achieve a balanced budget in 2012 despite the fact that we are now in a situation where our revenues, under almost every heading, continue to decline and as we seek to continue creating a business-friendly environment in Meath.

There are very particular challenges and expectations on us as the local authority in a county and we have, in my view, achieved a fair and reasonable budget that seeks to deploy reduced resources carefully to the benefit of those we serve across the county.

*By the end of 2004, the Council had accumulated a deficit on its revenue account of **€10.76m**. Since 2005 to 2012 inclusive, the Council has operated balanced budgets or achieved small surpluses. Consequently, the accumulated deficit on the revenue account has reduced to **€6.85m**. at the end of 2011. While further work remains to*



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completely eliminate the accumulated revenue account deficit, it is reassuring that the status quo has been preserved during 2012.

Significant internal restructuring and efficiencies have already been achieved across Meath Local Authorities. However, there is limited scope for seeking further efficiencies in the absence of a re-configuration of service across all of the county's authorities.

In 2013, the Council must initiate the actions, processes and procedures that will be required to effect the new policies set out in "Putting People First".

An overriding concern and challenge for this budget will be the identification of all opportunities for reducing expenditure or raising opportunities to develop new forms of income. Priorities must therefore take account of the statutory and regulatory obligations placed upon the council.

In preparing the 2013 budget, the management team undertook an extensive process of re-examining, re-focussing and re-prioritising the challenges for 2013.

The highlights of this budget include:

- No increase in commercial rates. For the fourth consecutive year, commercial rates in the county are to remain unchanged.*
- Contracts to lease 97 residential units from private landlords for use as social and affordable housing;*
- €5.4m to be invested in regional and local roads, public lighting, street sweeping and road safety;*
- €50,000 to be provided in support of the Boyne Valley Gathering 2013 as part of the wider national programme;*
- 100 people to be engaged through the Social Employment Scheme with €50,000 of Council funding provided towards supervision and training costs;*
- Expenditure on Meath Fire & Rescue Services to be maintained at 2012 levels with additional focus on fire prevention;*
- Library services to be fully maintained with almost €4m. allocated for library and arts services;*
- Council to continue to vigorously pursue prosecutions against operators of illegal landfills;*
- No increase in water and waste water charges;*
- County Economic Strategy to be developed in first half of the year;*
- County Economic Marketing Programme to be launched in second quarter of the year;*
- An increase of €1 per week in the rent for all properties. No changes to minimum rent.*

I wish to take this opportunity to compliment the hard working, dedicated and committed Management Team of Meath County Council,

They and their staff are all committed to delivering the highest quality of services.

I would particularly like to thank Ms Fiona Lawless, Mr Paul Timoney, Mr Pat McHugh, Ms Sheila Harkin, Mr Michael Murtagh, Mr Ger Soady and all their staff for the tremendous work they have done not only in relation to preparation of this Budget but also for their dedication in putting Meath County Council finances in good order. Finally, I would like to thank you Cathaoirleach, your predecessor and



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the members of this Council for your support in driving forward and supporting the vision for this county with quality policies and initiatives.

This is a positive budget that contains a programme of key actions that will deliver for this county, while building on the excellent progress and initiatives that have been forged and developed in recent years.

The County Manager stated that this budget represents good value for money and commended it to the Members.

Following the County Manager's address, Councillors debated the pertinent issues, which included contributions both in favour of, and in opposition to, the proposed budget.

The proposed Budget as presented and the terms as set out in Items 1, 2 and 3 of the agenda was adopted on the proposal of **Councillor John V. Farrelly** and seconded by **Councillor Eoin Holmes**, following a role call vote:

Councillor	Vote
Cllr. Joseph Bonner	For
Cllr. Sirena Campbell	For
Cllr. William Carey	For
Cllr. Shane Cassells	Against
Cllr. Eugene Cassidy	For
Cllr. Jimmy Cudden	For
Cllr. Francis Deane	For
Cllr. Ann Dillon-Gallagher	For
Cllr. John Farrelly	For
Cllr. Jimmy Fegan	Against
Cllr. Brian Fitzgerald	For
Cllr. Joe Fox	For
Cllr. Oliver Fox	Against
Cllr. Wayne Harding	Against
Cllr. James Holloway	For
Cllr. Eoin Holmes	For
Cllr. Suzanne Jamal	For
Cllr. Arian Keogan	Absent
Cllr. Nick Killian	Against
Cllr. Noel Leonard	Against
Cllr. Tracy McElhinney	For
Cllr. Niamh McGowan	For
Cllr. Jenny McHugh	For



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Cllr. Maria Murphy	For
Cllr. Gerry O' Connor	For
Cllr. Bryan Reilly	Against
Cllr. Joe Reilly	Against
Cllr. Tommy Reilly	Against
Cllr. Catherine Yore	For

Result: For= 19, Against = 9, Absent = 1

2. That Meath County Council determines in accordance with the Budget as adopted the rate as set out in Table A and Column (7) of Table C to be the annual rate on valuation to be levied for the financial year ending 31st December 2013 for the purposes set out in Table A and Table C.
Approved on the proposal of **Councillor John V. Farrelly** and seconded by **Councillor Francis Deane**.
3. That Meath County Council approves of the transfer to capital account of the sums provided for various capital purposes in the Annual Budget for 2013 as adopted.
Approved on the proposal of **Councillor John V. Farrelly** and seconded by **Councillor Willie Carey**.
4. That Meath County Council approves the estimated over expenditure for financial year 31st December 2012 as set out in Table A – F and outturn details.
Approved on the proposal of **Councillor John V. Farrelly** and seconded by **Councillor Jim Holloway**.

This concluded the business of the meeting.