

AGENDA

SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

Tuesday, 12 June 2018

To be held
at the Swan Hill Town Hall
McCallum Street, Swan Hill
Commencing at 12 noon

COUNCIL:

Cr LT McPhee – Mayor

Cr JN Katis

Cr GW Norton

Cr C Jeffery

Cr L Johnson

Cr B Moar

Cr A Young

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SECTION A – PROCEDURAL MATTERS

- **Open**

- **Acknowledgement to Country**

- **Prayer**

- **Apologies**

SECTION B – REPORTS

B.18.39 RECEIVE, HEAR AND CONSIDER SUBMISSIONS TO THE PROPOSED 2018/19 ANNUAL BUDGET

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services
File Number: S15-06-08
Attachments: 1 Submission 1 - Brett Wright
2 Submission 2 - Stephen Davies

Declarations of Interest:

David Lenton - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to enable Council to receive, hear and consider submissions for the Proposed 2018/19 Annual Budget.

At the close of the submission period two submissions were received. The submitters did not request to speak to their submissions.

Discussion

Council advertised for submissions to its Proposed 2018/19 Annual Budget in the Swan Hill Guardian on 4 May 2018 and the Robinvale Sentinel on 10 May 2018.

The Statutory period for making submissions has now passed. As required under the Local Government Act 1989. Council must now formally receive, hear and consider all submissions.

At the close of the submission period two submissions were received. None of the submitters has requested to speak to their submission.

Summary of Submission 1 (Brett Wright)

Mr Wright appears to be making three main points:-

- Dis-satisfaction with the level of the Rate rise which he believes excessively funds Council owned assets.
- He would like to see more support for non-Council owned assets and businesses.
- He wants Council to run a program to enable residents to access cheaper and less carbon intensive energy.

Summary of Submission 2 (Stephen Davies)

Mr Davies wants clarity as to how Council determines its expenditure priorities. Specifically he is seeking additional Council expenditure on the Swan Hill Sport and Recreation Centre (The Stadium).

Officer Response to Submission 1

In developing each annual budget Council always aims to keep rate increases to a minimum. The proposed 2018/19 average Rate rise is below the “Fair Go Rate System” cap that is set by the Victorian Government.

It is essential that Council continue to maintain and replace its own assets at the appropriate time during their life cycle. If this is not done, future repairs or replacement costs are higher than they otherwise would be and/or the community loses access to and use of, the facilities. The maintenance and replacement of Council assets also provides local businesses with the opportunity to gain additional income. Council supports local business with a number of activities through the Economic Development Unit, Marketing and Information Service and the Pioneer Settlement.

Council has recently commenced a study to see if a solar garden is feasible within the Municipality. If feasible, the solar garden will give residents and local business another way to access solar energy. Through its membership of Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance, Council is also investigating a community bulk purchasing scheme for solar panels. Council has also successfully advocated for the provision of reticulated natural gas for Swan Hill and Robinvale to help further reduce energy costs.

Officer Response to Submission 2

Council delivers over 100 services to the community. The range of services is very diverse from aged care to the livestock exchange, from childcare to roads and from recreation to statutory planning. Services are also provided across the entire Municipality and a diverse range of interests from residents to government departments, retail businesses to farming etc.

Due to this diverse range there is no set formula for the allocation of Council resources. Instead Council has to make a series of value judgments based on the economic, social and environmental benefits of all services after considering each service’s ability to attract external funding. External funding is sourced from Government grants, asset sales, user charges and interest earned on short term investments.

In setting each Budget Council attempts to optimize the amount and quality of services that can be delivered with an acceptable subsidy from rate revenue. This principle applies to the subsidy for the operation of The Stadium. The Proposed 2018/19 Budget subsidises The Stadium operations to enable it to continue to operate at an acceptable level within what Council considers is an acceptable subsidy.

The level of subsidy will vary each year based on the relative operational and maintenance needs of every service. In the case of The Stadium, Council has increased the subsidy from zero (several years ago) to a proposed \$40,000 operational subsidy, \$10,000 for insurance and \$117,700 for building and equipment maintenance. Council has and continues to review the management arrangements

for The Stadium with the most recent changes resulting in significantly lower court hire fees. This has been done to help support the use of The Stadium financially as well as encourage additional use.

Council can choose to increase the 2018/19 financial support to the stadium from the proposed \$167,700 however this would require a reduction in support for another service or a further increase in rates.

Consultation

The submission process is part of the consultation process for the budget.

Financial Implications

Nil.

Social Implications

Nil.

Economic Implications

Nil.

Environmental Implications

Nil.

Risk Management Implications

Nil.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

Positive community engagement through appropriate and constructive consultation. - Positive community engagement and inclusiveness.

Options

After considering the submissions Council can choose to adopt or amend the 2018/19 Annual Budget.

Recommendations

That Council:

- 1. Receive the submissions to the Proposed 2018/19 Annual Budget.**
- 2. Consider the issues raised in the submissions and the officer's response.**
- 3. Having considered the submissions, not make any changes to the Proposed 2018/19 Annual Budget.**
- 4. Write to each submitter thanking them for their submission and outlining Councils response.**

To: "David Lenton"
Sent: Monday, 14 May, 2018 3:40:58 PM
Subject: SHRCC-You have been assigned an Incident #73,007

SHRCC-You have been assigned an Incident #73,007

your_say_draft_budget_2018-19_wright

FROM: Brett Terrence Wright

ADDRESS:

FEEDBACK:

Disgraceful budget, another rate rise to facilitate council owned assets and buildings. Cost of living and conducting business in Swan Hill becomes harder and harder. Really should be ashamed as well at how you treat and support the non council asset owned businesses also. Congratulations also on being able to reduce your energy costs by 10% how about you attract or find a council run program to help rural homes and business be able to access energy rebate schemes to offset the carbon emissions and reduce another strangling high cost utility to these homes and the small business that are struggling to meet costs while you float about how good it is for you.

SPEAK AT COUNCIL MEETING: No

CONTACT PHONE:

Dear Council

I am writing this letter to seek clarification on how Council justifies the allocation of rate payers money? I currently sit as a committee member of both Basketball and Committee of Management for the Stadium and obviously are speaking with a slanted view for our Stadium.

I will keep this as short as possible.

After reading through the budget I notice that the stadium has had steady membership of around 36,000 for the past 3 years and is allocated \$1 per head. If I understand this correctly?

If you look at other facilities in this budget such as Leisure Centre, Pioneer Settlement, Art Gallery, Robinvale pool etc it seems significantly under done.

I understand how important it is to have access to all these facilities in our community but as a hands-on volunteer in one of these I know how hard it is to keep programs running at a level that tries not to impact council funding and to operate on its own. With the demand on associations to keep up with game and purchase equipment, uniforms etc all the while trying to keep registrations as low as possible so that it is affordable to everyone in the community and keep our children active, healthy and dare I say out of trouble, it doesn't leave much in the purse to spend on bigger upgrades and maintenance on our facility. I understand this more now than ever given the problems that are current with our Stadium.

Notice that everything here is written as 'our', the reason is that Committee members and families that use this facility treat it like their own and have real passion for their kids to have the best possible chances as their peers from other towns.

In summary what I am submitting is could council please look at the allocation of funds to our stadium in relation to its membership and ratio comparison to the other also wonderful facilities in our community.

I look forward to your explanation and if required I am available to discuss further.

Regards

Stephen Davies