

Minutes of a hearing of submissions on User Fees and Charges 2024/25 held in the Council Chambers, 10 Gorge Road, Queenstown on Monday 27 May 2024 commencing at 9.30am

Present:

Councillor Lisa Guy (Chairperson), Councillor Gavin Bartlett and Councillor Niki Gladding

In attendance:

Councillor Quentin Smith (on line), Mr Stewart Burns (General Manager, Assurance, Finance and Risk) (on line), Mr Caleb Dawson-Swale (Business Planning Manager), Ms Jane Robertson (Senior Governance Advisor); other Council managers and officers in attendance but all took no active part in the hearing of submissions

Commencement of the hearing: Election of Chairperson

The Governance Advisor called the meeting to order and asked the Councillors to elect a Chairperson for the hearing.

It was moved (Councillor Bartlett/Councillor Gladding):

“That Councillor Guy be appointed to chair the hearing.”

The motion was carried unanimously, and Councillor Guy duly took the chair.

Declarations of conflicts of interest

No conflicts were notified.

Confirmation of Agenda

It was moved (Councillor Bartlett /Councillor Gladding):

That the agenda be confirmed without addition or alteration.

Motion carried unanimously.

Late Submissions

It was moved (Councillor Gladding/Councillor Bartlett):

That the panel accept the late submissions for consideration.

Motion carried unanimously.

Hearing of submissions

1. Mark Ayre (on line)

Mr Ayre asked for the jetty and moorings charges to be in line with charges in Dunedin. He had a mooring in Wānaka and as an owner provided the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) with information about its GPS location so he did not understand why the Council did not now have a complete set of data. Mr Ayre had no confidence that QLDC was able to use this information effectively and contrasted this with the Marlborough District Council which had showed him a detailed map of all their moorings and extensive information. Owners were providing even more information through their resource consent applications and this should be recognised in the fees. Wānaka Marina should be paying similar fees for its moorings.

2. Matt Hollyer (on line)

QLDC should use a fair market rate for its moorings fees and did not compare well with charges elsewhere in New Zealand. Owners were addressing QLDC's historic incompetence by having to apply for retrospective resource consent and this was at significant cost.

3. Don Grant (on line) (speaking on behalf of Wānaka Airport Users Group - WAUG)

Mr Grant noted that WAUG had voted unanimously to support the proposed landing fee increases at Wānaka Airport, acknowledging that they had not increased for ten years. However, WAUG was critical of the Council for the financial losses at Wānaka Airport and considered that the management fee of \$440k was too much. There were now five staff at Wānaka Airport, including a full time Health and Safety Officer and in their view this many staff were not needed at an operation as small as Wānaka Airport. Mismanagement was the main reason for increasing the landing fees and the cost of leases. WAUG wanted QLDC to provide Wānaka Airport's financial records for the last five years as they could use this information to develop a sustainable plan for Wānaka Airport. WAUG also encouraged the Council to engage with them on Wānaka Airport planning.

4. Jayne MacDonald

Ms MacDonald spoke on behalf of herself and her husband. They were opposed to the proposed increase in mooring fees. She had also produced a proforma submission that had been used by other submitters. Fee increase needs to be reasonable and justified and she did not believe that either was true. She was disappointed in the officer response to her submission which did not respond at all to her points. She acknowledged that some increase was acceptable because fees had not increased in a number of years, but not the level of increase proposed.

Councillor Gladding asked for Ms MacDonald's view whether the process had been conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Navigation Safety Bylaw as the mooring fees represented a change to the way of administering the fee. Ms MacDonald agreed in light of this question that it would be appropriate to put these fees to one side

and deal with them separately, especially in light of the current resource consent process that all mooring owners were going through.

The hearing of submitters adjourned briefly at 10.25am as the panel was unsure whether a further submitter would attend as no confirmation had been received but he had been included on the schedule of submitters speaking.

Mr Tony Avery (GM Property & Infrastructure), Mr Roger Davidson (Property Advisory Team Leader), Mr Harry Beaumont (Legal Counsel) and Ms Alice Milne (Senior Legal Counsel) joined the table to respond to questions about jetties/moorings.

Councillor Gladding asked how the funding policy would be met if mooring fees were reduced. She also noted that the fees did not take into account whether there would be annual vs biennial inspection costs. Mr Avery disagreed and noted that officers had subsequently changed the consultation materials to reflect the Council's decision that a biennial inspection was preferred. The materials published for consultation clearly stated that a biennial regime for moorings would commence from financial year 2024/25.

No further submitters arrived at the hearing. The public part of the meeting concluded at 10.45am and all staff except the Governance Advisor left the meeting at this point.

The panel worked through the schedule of charges and considered the points raised during the hearing. A series of questions was compiled for officers to assist the panel with its deliberations which were scheduled to take place on 4 June 2024. The Chair summarised the questions and undertook to circulate them to the rest of the panel and once finalised, to the relevant Council staff to respond.

The meeting adjourned at 11.47am and reconvened for deliberations at 1.00pm on Tuesday, 4 June 2024.

Minutes of deliberations on User Fees and Charges 2024/25 held in the Council Chambers, 10 Gorge Road, Queenstown on Tuesday 4 June 2024 commencing at 1.00pm

Present:

Councillor Lisa Guy (Chairperson), Councillor Gavin Bartlett and Councillor Niki Gladding

In attendance:

Mr Stewart Burns (General Manager, Assurance, Finance & Risk) (on line), Mr Tony Avery (General Manager, Property & Infrastructure), Mr Dave Wallace (General Manager, Planning & Development), Mr Simon Battrick (Acting General Manager, Community Services), Mr Paddy Cribb (Finance Manager), Mr Brendan Peet (General Counsel), Mr Harry Beamont (Legal Counsel), Mr Dan Crosby (Organisation Performance Manager)(on line), Mr Quintin Howard (Property Director) (on line), Mr Anthony Hall (Regulatory Manager), Ms Fiona Blight (Manager, Resource Consents), Mr Roger Davidson (Property Advisory Team Leader), Mr Paul Carter (Property Projects Team Leader)(on line), Ms Sue Gwilliam (Library Services Manager), Ms Alex Martin (Sport and Recreation Manager), Mr Caleb Dawson-Swale (Business Planning Manager) and Ms Jane Robertson (Senior Governance Advisor)

Deliberations

The panel worked through the questions that had been developed following the hearing of submissions.

Various staff responded verbally and an updated set of questions and answers was prepared and circulated following the meeting.

The following areas were explored with officers responding as needed:

- Environmental health: increase from 4 to 5 hours; relative costs for small/large businesses; inspection times; allocation of operational expenses; business process improvements
- Sport and Recreation: mandatory use of swimming caps
- Parks, Reserves and community facilities: is there parity with other districts/cities? Should 'out of town' costs be attributed?
- Libraries: is there any way of charging for visitor use?
- Parking: can a differential rate be applied to campervans (e.g. in Boundary Street)?
- Jetties and Moorings: rates funding reduction under proposed fees; constitution of inspection fee; does the proposal imply an increase or change of service?; current inspection regime and the need for an increase; business improvement processes undertaken; what changes were made to Statement of Proposal following Council meeting on 4 April 2024?
- Wānaka Airport Landing Fee: discussion about request for Wānaka Airport planning to be worked on with urgency.
- Planning and development: could there be discounts for faster service? Discussion about Case Manager suggestion.
- General: more information needed to justify beyond increasing levels in line with inflation, including the operational costs that contribute to hourly rates and any

efforts made to minimise these. Comments that QLDC is collecting 'reasonable costs' in line with the Revenue and Financing Policy are insufficient.

Following completion of questions, the panel agreed to consider and resolve on each group of fees and charges by activity area.

Environmental Health

It was moved (Councillor Bartlett/Councillor Guy):

That the Fees and Charges Hearing Panel recommend to Council that the fees and charges for Environmental Health for 2024/25 be adopted without amendment.

Motion carried unanimously.

Sport and Recreation

It was moved (Councillor Bartlett/Councillor Guy):

That the Fees and Charges Hearing Panel recommend to Council that the fees and charges for Sport and Recreation for 2024/25 be adopted without amendment.

Motion carried unanimously.

Community Facilities & Parks and Reserves

It was moved (Councillor Bartlett/Councillor Guy):

That the Fees and Charges Hearing Panel recommend to Council that the fees and charges for Community Facilities & Parks and Reserves for 2024/25 be adopted without amendment.

Motion carried unanimously.

Library Services

It was moved (Councillor Bartlett/Councillor Guy):

That the Fees and Charges Hearing Panel recommend to Council that the fees and charges for Library Services be adopted without amendment.

Motion carried unanimously.

Parking Charges

It was moved (Councillor Bartlett/Councillor Guy):

That the Fees and Charges Hearing Panel recommend to Council that the fees and charges for parking charges be adopted without amendment.

Motion carried (2:1) with Councillor Gladding recording her vote against the motion

Wānaka Airport Landing Fees

It was moved (Councillor Bartlett/Councillor Guy):

That the Fees and Charges Hearing Panel recommend to Council that the fees and charges for Wānaka Airport Landing Fees for 2024/25 be adopted without amendment.

Motion carried unanimously.

Planning and Development

It was moved (Councillor Bartlett/Councillor Guy):

That the Fees and Charges Hearing Panel recommend to Council that the fees and charges for Planning and Development for 2024/25 be adopted without amendment.

Motion carried unanimously.

Moorings and Jetties

There was further discussion about the uncertainty regarding annual or biennial inspections with the panel agreeing that it was important to make the Hearing Panel's view clear.

It was moved (Councillor Bartlett/Councillor Guy):

That the Fees and Charges Hearing Panel recommend to Council that the fees and charges for moorings and jetties be adopted subject to the Council confirming by resolution at the 27 June 2024 Council meeting that a biennial inspection regime for jetties and moorings shall be introduced from the 2024/25 financial year.

Motion carried (2:1) with Councillor Gladding recording her vote against the motion

The meeting concluded at 2.51pm.