

BARRY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 18 JANUARY 2010 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor T C Stenstrom (Chairperson) together with Councillors B Brooks, J E Charles, G D Davey, P Drake, S C Egan, J Evans, H C Hamilton (Town Mayor, Ex-Officio), A D Hampton, N P Hodges, S A Hodges and L M Payne.

ALSO PRESENT: Derek Wolfe – Executive Officer
Cliff Lewis – Deputy Executive Officer
Mark Sims – Responsible Finance Officer
Amy Bardsley – Administration

F206 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S Wiliam.

F207 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors P Drake declared a personal interest in relation to all agenda items regarding the Memorial Hall & Theatre Trust by virtue of being a Trustee. In addition, Councillor Drake declared a personal interest in relation to all agenda items relating to the GMB Union.

F208 MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE'S MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2009

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee's last meeting held on 12 October 2009 be approved and signed as a correct record.

F209 TO CONSIDER COMMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None.

F210 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2009

The Committee received a budget monitoring report for the period 1 April 2009 to 31 December 2009, which advised that there would be a projected net underspend of £37,073 in 2009/10, in addition to the budgeted underspend of £43,377.

The Responsible Finance Officer informed the Committee that a cheque had been received for a children's party, which unfortunately had not been honoured last year. The hirer had been asked to pay £10 a month to cover the price of hiring the hall and £30 for proceeding to

the Small Claims Court. The Responsible Finance Officer informed Members that a number of options were available. Certain options would result in further costs with little chance of recovering the debt. Councillor Stenstrom proposed that under Financial Regulation 9.4 the Committee use its powers to write the debt off.

RESOLVED

1. that invoice number H8203 for £39 be written off;
2. that an earmarked reserve for the Cemetery Extension be created by transferring the surplus (currently projected to be £80,450) at the end of the 2009/10 financial year;
3. that the contents of the budget monitoring report for the period 1 April 2009 to 31 December 2009 be received and noted;
4. that various virements, as detailed in the officer's report and totalling £2,770, be approved.

F211 SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS FOR JANUARY 2010

The Committee was requested to approve a schedule of payments for January 2010, comprising various direct debits and cheque numbers 105811 to 105845 inclusive, in the total sum of £64,031. However, the Chairperson advised that cheque number 105835 shown in the schedule as being for £17.17, should read £486.75, resulting in a corrected total of £64,500.58.

RESOLVED that the schedule of payments for January 2010, comprising direct debits and cheque numbers 105811 to 105845 inclusive, in the corrected amount of £64,500.58 be approved, subject to amending the description relating to cheque number 105833, the to read "Mayors allowance for January 2010", and subject to no errors being discovered in relation to any individual invoices.

F212 STANDING ORDER 112 URGENT ACTION

Members were provided with a report from the Executive Officer on decisions taken in accordance with Standing Order 112 since the Committee's last meeting.

Concerns were raised regarding the funding agreement between the Town Council and the Memorial Hall & Theatre Trust, and specifically that the Council had had to pay stamp duty land tax relating to the rent of the Town Council offices. The Chairperson advised that he had requested a report detailing the reasons for paying the stamp duty. The Executive Officer advised that information would be forthcoming from the Council's Solicitors. Councillor Egan informed the Committee that a meeting was being arranged to discuss the 2010-2013 funding

agreement between the Town Council and Memorial Hall & Theatre. Councillor A D Hampton also expressed concerns relating to the funding of the Memorial Hall & Theatre, and it was **RESOLVED** that:-

1. a copy of the latest accounts for the Memorial Hall & Theatre be copied to all members of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee;
2. the Executive Officer prepare a report explaining the reasons why the Town Council was liable to stamp duty land tax;
3. the Executive Officer's report on the decisions taken in accordance with Standing Order 112 in relation to the payment of cheque number 105738 to 105624 inclusive on grounds of urgency be received and noted;
4. the Executive Officer's report on the decisions taken in accordance with Standing Order 112 in relation to the payment in December of various accounts by cheques numbered 105739 to 105808 inclusive on grounds of urgency be received and noted;
5. the Executive Officer's report on the decisions taken in accordance with Standing Order 112 in relation to the payment of £90,854.09 to Loosemores Solicitors for completion of the lease be received and noted.
6. the Executive Officer's report on the decisions taken in accordance with Standing Order 112 in relation to the payment of cheque number 105810 in the amount of £2,639.00 to Loosemores Solicitors in relation to stamp duty land tax due following the completion of the lease of the Town Council offices be received and noted.

F213 **DRAFT BUDGET 2010/11**

The Chairperson made available to other members of the Committee a chart indicating how various possible increases in expenditure in 2010/11 would affect the precept and the amount paid annually by a Band D tax payer. A member of the opposition expressed their dissatisfaction on being provided with information at the meeting rather than in advance. The Leader of Council explained to the Committee that the information in question had only been requested from officers that day for the Committee's consideration and he apologised for the lateness of it. After a lengthy discussion it was **RECOMMENDED**:-

1. that the draft budget for 2010/11 be approved in principle, subject to the Council giving detailed consideration to a possible increase of 2.99% in its precept for 2010/11;

2. that a 2010/11 precept of £864,000 be approved in principle (subject to fuller consideration of a possible alternative increase of 2.99%) to be levied on the Vale of Glamorgan and equating to £46.71 per Band 'D' Council tax payer, an increase of 1.79% (82 pence) when compared with the £45.89 paid in 2009/10;
3. that a fuller report on phase 2 of the Cemetery extension be prepared showing in a structured way how funding needed to be earmarked annually;
4. that the last sentence of the summary page be amended to say "This is after an amount of £80,811 to be funded from reserves".

F214 **EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2008/09**

RESOLVED

1. that the annual audit letter from Mazars LLP, concerning the completion of the 2008/09 audit and the contents of the external auditor's certificate and opinion on section 3 of the annual return, be received and noted;
2. that the Council ensure that a full risk assessment be reviewed and approved annually;
3. that the Council review discrepancies between the recording of assets in the asset register and the insurance schedule;
4. that the audited annual return for the year ending 31 March 2009 be approved.

F215 **REFERENCES FROM THE OTHER COMMITTEES**

None.

F216 **CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY CAPITAL FINANCE FRAMEWORK**

RESOLVED that the Welsh Assembly Government's consultation on proposed changes to the Local Authority Capital Finance Framework be supported and that a formal response be returned to the Welsh Assembly Government.

F217 **CONSULTATION: LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) MEASURE 2009 – STATUTORY GUIDANCE**

RESOLVED that the Welsh Assembly Government's consultation on statutory guidance be received and noted.

F218 **PROPOSED GUIDANCE FOR THE WALES PROGRAMME FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR THE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITIES IN WALES**

RESOLVED that proposed guidance for the Wales Programme for Improvement for the Fire & Rescue Authorities in Wales be received and noted.

F219 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED: to note that the next meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee would take place on Monday 29 March 2010 commencing at 7.00pm.

F220 **TRANSPORTATION POLICY & ASSOCIATED ISSUES**

Following consideration of a report submitted by the Executive Officer, it was **RESOLVED:-**

1. that the Town Council's existing Ford Transit van be replaced with a single vehicle to provide for all the Council's transportation requirements;
2. that the environmental components of the Council's transportation requirements be recognised, so that a cost-effective and less environmentally damaging transportation policy could be established for the future;
3. that the Leader of the Council and Chairperson of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee together with senior officers collaborate on a final report concerning the purchase or lease of a new vehicle, for submission to the Town Councils Annual Meeting;
4. that the Council's existing essential user car allowance scheme be terminated with effect from 31 May 2010.

The meeting closed at 8.23pm.

Signed
(Chairperson)

Dated