



MINUTES

OF THE

SPECIAL MEETING

OF THE

BALONNE SHIRE COUNCIL

HELD IN THE

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 118 VICTORIA STREET, ST. GEORGE

ON FRIDAY, 28 AUGUST, 2009

COMMENCING AT 9.10 AM

ATTENDANCE

Crs Donna S Stewart (Mayor), Randall I Winks, Robyn G Fuhrmeister, Andrew F Sevil, Richard W Marsh, and Mr Scott L Norman (Chief Executive Officer), Mrs Donna Burke (Director of Corporate and Community Services) and Mr. Paul Turri, (Director of Technical Services).

The Mayor declared the meeting opened at 9.19 a.m.

PURPOSE OF MEETING

It was resolved that a Special Meeting be held for the purpose of discussing the Queensland Transport and Main Roads proposal for the Thallon - Noondoo-Dirranbandi Transport Corridor.

NOONDOO – THALLON RAIL CORRIDOR / ROAD PROPOSAL

The Mayor opened the meeting pointing out that it had been an epic journey in relation to this proposal.

Discussions were held on the negotiations in Brisbane with the Department of Transport and Main Roads and Council clarified a number of matters.

Following discussion it was:

MOVED CR. MARSH

SECONDED CR. FUHRMEISTER

That Council write to the Director-General, Mr. David Stewart from the Department of Transport and Infrastructure thanking him for his correspondence and advising that after extensive consultation with residents of the Shire and his Department Council would like to make the a proposal in regard to the Thallon – Noondoo – Dirranbandi Transport corridor; the proposed terms being:

1. The Noondoo-Thallon Road be declared a state road and form part of the Castlereagh Highway;
2. The existing Castlereagh Highway between Noondoo and the intersection with the Carnarvon Highway south of St George become a local road;
3. The Thallon-Dirranbandi rail branch line be closed and resultant savings of \$1.4million per year (indexed) for 10 years be diverted, subject to term 11, to the upgrade of the road network in the Balonne Shire. In particular
 - (a) The cost of reseals to the current Castlereagh Highway between Noondoo and Carnarvon Highway which Council would take over as a shire road.
 - (b) The balance of funding to be applied to the Noondoo-Thallon Road.
4. The funding be indexed at Brisbane CPI in accordance with annual escalation provisions in the transport service contract (Rail Infrastructure).
5. The reallocation from QR Limited to MR will commence following the closure of the branch line. The amount of funds reallocated from QT to MR towards upgrade of the subject road infrastructure will be in addition to any funds allocated by MR for the region in the Roads Implementation Program 2009/10-2013/14 (RIP). MR also agrees that the additional funding will not influence future RIP allocations to the Main Roads network beyond appropriate adjustments as a result of changed road conditions.

6. The actual date of closure will be subject to agreement between the Council and QT. Rail services and maintenance of the Thallon – Dirranbandi line section will cease immediately following official closure of the line so as to release the savings which will fund road/bridge upgrades.
7. When the total funding amount is reached, subsequent annual savings from the closure of the Thallon – Dirranbandi line section will be retained by the State's Consolidated Fund.
8. The Council and MR will be responsible for the road construction works undertaken as agreed between each party. The construction shall proceed at the rate the funds become available and the priority of works shall be negotiated between MR and Council.
9. The formation, ballast and bridges be retained on the rail corridor;
10. The rail corridor, once the line is closed, will be maintained for safety and vegetation management on a fit for purpose basis by Queensland Transport. Funding for this will be provided through the Non-Rail Non-Operational Corridor Land Transport Service Contract. This arrangement excludes those sections of corridor that are sub-leased by the Council.
11. It is understood QR will continue to provide a general freight service to Dirranbandi for 10 years. However if the ownership of QR changes and in recognition of the importance of the continuation of freight services to Dirranbandi and surrounding communities that up to \$50,000 per annum over the balance of the 10 years of the provision of funding, will be redirected from expenditure on Noondoo Thallon Road to support general freight services to Dirranbandi. This support would be managed by Council. Should the funding not be required to support the general freight services it could be directed to expenditure on Council roads as decided by the Council.
12. The Council is welcome to sub-lease all or portions of the corridor from QT for community use (such as walking, hiking or bike riding tracks) and/or liaise with QR Limited regarding lease of any buildings and other relevant property considered to have local historic value.
13. At the conclusion of the 10 year term, and only if requested by the Balonne Shire Council that the Castlereagh Highway is restored to its current route and Balonne Shire Council resumes control of the Noondoo-Thallon Road;
14. At Council's request a viability study to reconsider the possibility of establishing a rail line be undertaken at the end of the agreement (i.e. 10 years) and at regular intervals thereafter and that Council be advised of the outcome of those studies;
15. To expedite the efficient construction of the Noondoo-Thallon Road that the timing of the road funding be considered with regard to advancing funds to complete the current construction work to a main road standard.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MEETING CLOSURE

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting closed at 10.10 a.m.

Confirmed at a General Meeting of the Council held on 16 September, 2009.

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MAYOR