

Minutes of Budget Meeting of Youghal Town Council held on 10th January, 2012 at 10.00 a.m. in the Mall House, Youghal.

Present: Mayor Eoin Coyne presided.

Cllrs. Linehan Foley, Revins, O'Connell, Flanagan, Hennessy, Beecher and Murray.

Officials Present: Mrs. Patricia Power, Town Manager.

Mr. Liam Ryan, Town Clerk.

Mrs. Helen Mulcahy, Staff Officer.

Opening Prayers:

The members and officials recited the opening prayers.

MANAGERS REPORT ON THE 2012 DRAFT BUDGET

The Manager presented the following report on the 2012 Draft Budget to the Members of the Council.

Councillors,

I have found it particularly difficult and onerous to prepare this years draft budget for your consideration due to the arctic economic climatic that we currently find ourselves in. Significant income reductions in 2009, 2010 and through 2011 have seriously challenged this Council's ability to maintain efficient and effective services to the public at large.

The general economic climate and successive resource sapping national budgets have impacted heavily on the options and flexibility available to the Council in the preparation of the 2012 Budget. Further significant cuts to expenditure and income are anticipated for the year ahead which will further impact on the Council's ability to generate local economic activity. Indeed great credit is due locally to all involved in acquiring a second Tidy Towns Bronze Medal in 2011 and achieving 6th place nationally in the IBAL Competition when one considers the negative economic backdrop against which these results were achieved.

In the years when the economy was growing rapidly, Youghal Town Council met the challenge of delivering major infrastructure programmes. The significant change in economic conditions challenges Youghal Town Council to manage very scarce resources in a targeted way and to deliver core services at much lower costs. Equally all the major infrastructure which the Council sought so hard to acquire must now be maintained with significant reduced resources.

In preparing the budget I have used the key strategy of maintaining, where practical, all local charges at 2009 levels. For the first time actual income received from the Council's social housing sector will surpass that received from commercial rates. This is having a considerable effect on the Council's ability to engage in new work programmes going forward.

In spite of all the efficiencies achieved in 2009, 2010 and 2011 the reduction in income across those years coupled with what is anticipated in 2012 means that improved efficiency alone will not be sufficient to balance the current budget and significant reductions and prioritisation of work across all areas of activity will be required. Consequently this Budget has been prepared taking into account the anticipated income available for 2012 from all sources and allocating this available income to fund a level of services which such an income can sustain.

Commercial Rates:

It is fully acknowledged that Commercial Rates is a cost to business and in the current climate Youghal Town Council must be mindful that any increase would have a negative impact on both commercial activity and employment within the Commercial Sector.

The lack of available credit for business has put significant pressure on businesses and in turn on the Local Authority Rates. Here is a summary of the 2010 Rate Collection Account:

Arrears of commercial rates on 1st January 2010	€ 189,587.00
Demand for commercial rates for 2010	€1,418,781.00
Total for collection:	€1,608,368.00
Amount collected in 2010:	€1,021,557.00
	€ 586,811.00
Amount written off uncollectable in 2010:	€ 321,338.00
Amount carried forward as arrears in 2011:	€ 265,473.00

As you can see from these figures a very significant sum of €321,338 was struck off as either refundable if collected, or just not collectable. The closing arrears figure for rates carried forward rose by €75,886 year on year. Collected commercial rates in 2010 accounted for just 22.91% of the Town Council's expenditure. Most towns would expect an income/rates ratio of around 40% and that with a much higher rate in the euro. The commercial rate charged to businesses outside the Town Boundary at Millennium Court, Summerfield or Springfield Commercial Park by Cork County Council is €74.75 in the euro while business within the Town Council boundary pay €65.31 in the euro resulting in a subsidy of 12.6% to town business. Consequently I have maintained the rate at €65.31 (2007 levels) for 2012 thus maintaining this subsidy to order to encourage business in the Town.

Local Government Fund:

The Local Government Fund available in 2008 was €1,293,513, this will be reduced to €878,642 in 2012, a reduction of €414,871 or 32% on the 2008 figure. The continued cutting of this fund is having a very restrictive effect on the Council's ability to continue to be proactive with new projects etc.

Roads:

In 2011 Youghal Town Council spent the following sums on resurfacing projects in Youghal:

Raheen Road:	€44,434
Knockaverry:	€32,285
Mall Lane:	€25,000
Quarry Road:	€48,809
Golf Links Road:	€60,116
Allins Quay:	€ 5,000
Repair Works:	€20,900
Total:	€236,544

Cork County Council spent approximately €400,000 resurfacing South Main Street, North Main Street, O' Rahilly Street, New Catherine Street and Water Lane in 2011. Both of these combined

shows funding sought and used on Youghal Roads of close to €635,000 in total, a remarkable amount in the current climate. We hope to continue this programme in 2012, however at a much reduced level.

Other Infrastructural Projects:

Youghal Town Council received €60,000 of funding from the Heritage Council for works in Section M (top of the Jail Steps) in 2011. Hopefully a similar amount of funding may be made available in 2012.

The construction of the Eco Boardwalk is nearing completion at a total cost of €271,000. Hopefully in time Cork County Council will complete the Project to the Quality Hotel and Holiday Village at Redbarn.

In September, 2011 Youghal Town Council secured funding of €400,000 from the Department of Tourism, Culture & Sport for energy upgrade and enhanced disabled access works at the Swimming Pool. The funding allocated to Youghal was one of the highest in the Country. Plans were immediately put in place for the erection of a wind turbine and ancillary facilities. In addition, disabled toilets were constructed on the first floor. The Wind Turbine, when fully operational and combined with the existing energy saving facilities, will provide 90% of the swimming pools electrical requirements.

In September, 2011 Youghal Town Council also secured funding of €12,709 from the Department of Tourism, Culture & Sport in conjunction with the National Lottery, for the installation of Outdoor Exercise Equipment along the existing Slí na Slainte walkway.

Supporting Local Groups: Youghal Town Council will continue to support local voluntary organisations through these difficult times, however it may not be able to maintain the same level of grant aid as it did in 2011. The work of the voluntary and sporting sections of the community is vital in monitoring moral in these difficult times.

Proposed Capital Programme (3 Year)

2012:

a) Stage 4 of Works on Town Walls. €40,000
Funded by: Heritage Council Grant (90%)
Youghal Town Council (10%)
(Subject to available funding)

b) R634 Project: €25,000
Co-ordinate and part fund works to main access routes.
Funded by:
Youghal Town Council
Cork County Council.
Waterford County Council.

Other funding applications for specific projects may be Made by Youghal Tidy Towns and YSEDG.

c) Footpath Repairs: €30,000
Continue to roll out the Public Realm Plan in A scaled down manner.

2013:

a) Stage 4 of Works on Town Walls. €40,000

Funded by:
Heritage Council Grant (90%)
Youghal Town Council (10%)
(Subject to available funding)

b) R634 Project: €25,000
Co-ordinate and part fund works to main access routes.

Funded by:
Youghal Town Council
Cork County Council.
Waterford County Council.

Other funding applications for specific projects may be Made by Youghal Tidy Towns and YSEDG.

c) Footpath Repairs: €30,000
Continue to roll out the Public Realm Plan in A scaled down manner.

2014:

a) Stage 4 of Works on Town Walls. €40,000

Funded by:
Heritage Council Grant (90%)
Youghal Town Council (10%)
(Subject to available funding)

b) R634 Project: €25,000
Co-ordinate and part fund works to main access routes.

Funded by:
Youghal Town Council
Cork County Council.
Waterford County Council.

Other funding applications for specific projects may be made by Youghal Tidy Towns and YSEDG.

c) Footpath Repairs: €30,000
Continue to roll out the Public Realm Plan in A scaled down manner.

Please note that years 2013 and 2014 will be reviewed in December 2012 to determine funding and both project advancement viability. It is possible that other projects may be initiated over the 3 year timeframe where funding for these projects is currently unavailable. The Programme will be updated annually.

I would like to sincerely thank the Members for their co-operation, understanding and support in these difficult times. Certainly Youghal Town Council works as a unified force, working for the betterment of Youghal and all its citizens and this is reflected in our continued levels of service delivery.

The Manager also thanked The Town Clerk and all the staff of Youghal Town Council for their hard work and also thanked all the various community groups and residents associations for their hard work and dedication.

The Manager asked the Members to consider the extension of the following provision contained in the 2011 Development Contribution Scheme for a further 2 years to the 31st December, 2012:

Cllr. O'Connell

The General Annual Rate on Valuation of €65.31 was adopted by 6 votes to 2.

This concluded the business of the meeting.