

Minutes of Budget Meeting of Youghal Town Council held on 11th January, 2011 at 10.00 a.m. in the Mall House, Youghal.

Present: Mayor Mary Linehan Foley presided.

Cllrs. McLellan, Revins, Coyne, Burke, Hennessy, Beecher and Murray.

Officials Present:

Mrs. Patricia Power, Town Manager.

Mr. Liam Ryan, Town Clerk.

Mrs. Geraldine O'Connell, Clerical Officer.

Opening Prayers: The members and officials recited the opening prayers.

MANAGERS REPORT ON THE 2011 DRAFT BUDGET

The Manager presented the following report on the 2011 Draft Budget to the Members of the Council. Preparing a Budget for 2011 for consideration and adoption by Council has proved to be a very difficult and onerous task. Income reductions in both 2009 and 2010 have seriously challenged the Council's ability to maintain efficient and effective services to the public at large. The general economic climate and state of the National Finances have impacted heavily on the options and flexibility available to the Council in the preparation of the 2011 Budget. Further substantial cuts to expenditure and income are anticipated for the year ahead. The Council's ability to generate considerable economic activity locally has been seriously restricted. I propose to reduce Council revenue expenditure in 2011 from €4.19m to €3.91m. The amount of "discretionary expenditure" is estimated at €400,000 or 10.5% of the revenue budget. This is a reduction in discretionary expenditure from 16% in 2010 and 19% in 2009.

In the years when the economy was growing rapidly, Youghal Town Council met the challenge of delivering increased demand for services and oversaw rapid growth in delivering 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 lower costs.

In preparing this budget a key strategy is to maintain where practical, all charges at 2009 levels and in the case of commercial rates to reduce these by 1% to 2007 levels. This represents a significant contribution to the cost of business in 2011 when one considers the scale of income determination being experienced by the Council. Much has been achieved in both 2009 and 2010 in making Youghal Town Council a lean and more cost effective organisation and this work will continue throughout 2011. However, the reductions in income in both 2009 and 2010 and what is anticipated in 2011 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 2011 from all sources and allocating this available income to fund a level of services which such an income can sustain.

Payroll Costs/Staff Numbers:

Council Staff Members have been reduced from a high of 30 in the summer of 2008 to a current level of 22. A number of staff are also working shorter working weeks with no replacements for maternity or other related leave. Maintaining the same level of service delivery following these reductions will be extremely difficult, if not impossible in 2011. It should also be noted that the Council activities through Claycastle Leisure Co. Ltd., Enterprise Youghal and Youghal Socio

Economic Development Group supports employment for a further 53 people in these facilities, something that goes unnoticed but something that contributes greatly to the economy of Youghal.

Commercial Rates:

It is fully acknowledged that Commercial Rates is a cost to all business, and in the current climate Youghal Town Council must be mindful that any increase could have a negative impact on commercial activity and in employment in the commercial section. Given the current state of both the local and national economy together with the lack of credit for the banking sector which has put businesses under considerable pressure have put considerable pressure on rate income. Consequently I have included a provision of €430,000 for irrecoverable rates and have reduced the commercial rate by 1% bringing it back to 2007 levels.

Non Principal Private Residence (NPPR) Charge: LGF:

This new funding from NPPR is a very welcome source of income for Local Authorities. Youghal Town Council have received approximately €90,000 to date in 2010. This goes some way to offsetting the drop in the Local Government Fund in 2011 of €130,000. The Local Government Fund for 2011 will be €965,000 which is €235,000 less than the amount available in 2008.

Other Income Sources:

During 2010 income from many of the Council's own local sources of income was equally subject to a significant reduction. In areas where income is related to activity such as planning fees, income has reduced to pre 2001 Budget levels. Non National Road Grants will be cut in 2011 and maintaining the integrity of the existing road network will become even more difficult.

Supporting Local Groups:

Youghal Town Council will continue to support local voluntary organisations, however it may not be able to maintain the same level of grant aid in some cases for 2011. The work of the voluntary and sporting sections of the community is vital in maintaining morale in these difficult times.

The Members considered the Draft Budget prepared by the Manager showing the amounts, which in her opinion, will be necessary to meet the expenses and provide for the liabilities and requirements of the Council during the local financial year ending 31st December 2011. The Budget was unanimously adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Burke, seconded by Cllr. Murray.

The Manager presented the following Proposed 3 Year Capital Programme to the Members of the Council.

Proposed Capital Programme (3 Year) 2011:

A) Continue Estate Enhancement Schemes: €20,000 Funded by:
Rapid (50%)
Youghal Town Council (50%) (If funding is made available).

B) R634 Project: Rhincrew Roundabout to Greencloyne €50,000 (Subject to funding availability, €25,000 provided in the Revenue Budget)

C) Stage 3 of Works on Town Walls. €150,000
Funded by: Heritage Council Grant (90%)
Youghal Town Council (10%) (Subject to funding availability).

D) Initiate Fairfield Car Park/North Gate as per Public Realm Plan.
€100,000 Funded by: National Roads Authority.

Heritage Regeneration Fund.
Development Contributions Fund. (Subject to funding availability).

2012:

A) Continue Estate Enhancement Schemes: €20,000
Funded by: Rapid (50%)
Youghal Town Council (50%) (If funding is made available).

B) Stage 4 of Works on Town Walls. €100,000 Funded by: Heritage Council Grant (90%) Youghal Town Council (10%) (Subject to funding availability).

C) Stage 1 of DeValera Street Project as per Public Realm Plan. €200,000
Funded by: National Roads Authority. Heritage Regeneration Fund.
Development Contributions. (Subject to funding availability).

D) R634 Project: Rhincrew Roundabout to Greencloyne €50,000 (Subject to funding availability)

2013:

A) Complete Fairfield Car Park Project as per Public Realm Plan: €150,000
(Subject to funding availability).

B) Stage 2 of DeValera Street Car Project as per Public Realm Plan: €200,000 (Subject to funding availability).

C) R634 Project: Rhincrew Roundabout to Greencloyne €50,000 (Subject to funding availability).

The Manger asked that the members note that years 2012 and 2013 would be reviewed in December 2011 to determine funding and project viability. Other projects may be initiated over the 3 year timeframe where at the moment funding is unavailable. The programme can be updated annually.

On the proposal of Cllr. Burke which was seconded by Cllr. McLellan the members unanimously adopted the proposed 3 Year Capital Programme.

The Manager thanked the Members for their co-operation and understanding in these difficult times and stated that Youghal Town Council works as a unified force working for the betterment of Youghal and its citizens and this is reflected in the Council's levels of service delivery. This concluded the business of the meeting.