

8th December, 2015

TO: Each Member of Donegal County Council

I hereby give notice under Paragraph 7 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 2001, having received a requisition from the Cathaoirleach pursuant to Paragraph 6 (1) (a) of said schedule, that a Special Meeting of Donegal County Council shall be held at 3pm on Friday 11th December, 2015 in the County House, Lifford, County Donegal to transact the following business:-

AGENDA

“To discuss the recent severe weather event”

Joe Peoples

Mr Joe Peoples

Meetings Administrator

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD ON 11TH DECEMBER 2015 AT 3PM IN THE COUNTY HOUSE
LIFFORD.

C/555/15 MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Ciaran Brogan, Cathaoirleach, L Blaney, E Bonner, J Campbell, P Canning, T Conaghan, G Crawford, N Crossan, A Doherty, G Doherty, L Doherty, R Donaghey, M Farren, M.T. Gallagher, M Harley, N Jordan, J Kavanagh, N Kennedy, M C Mac Giolla Easbuig, F McBrearty, M McBride, M McDermott, S McEniff, I McGarvey, P McGowan, B McGuinness, G McMonagle, S O'Domhnaill, J S O'Ferraigh, B O'Neill, M Quinn, J Ryan, D Shiels.

C/556/15 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mc Daid, Murray, and Slowey who were unable to attend the meeting.

C/557/15 OFFICIALS PRESENT

Mr Seamus Neely, Chief Executive, Mr Joe Peoples, A/ Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services, Meetings Administrator, Mr John McLaughlin, Director of Roads & Transportation, Mr Michael McGarvey, A/Director of Water & Environment, Mr Liam Ward, Director of Community and Enterprise & Planning, Mr Paul Mc Gill, Area Manager , Council Secretariat, Mr Eunan Quinn, A/Senior Planner, Ms Cliodhna Campbell, Senior Executive Engineer, Mr Donal Murphy, Executive Engineer, Ms Anne Marie Conlon, Communications Officer, Mr Sean O' Daimhin, Oifigeach na Gaeilge, Ms Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer, Corporate Services.

C/558/15 DISCUSSION ON THE RECENT SEVERE WEATHER EVENT

Mr Donal Murphy, Executive Engineer, updated Members in relation to the North Western Neagh Bann Programme (Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Programme).

The OPW was, he advised, the lead authority on flood management and through the CFRAM Project intended to focus on areas throughout the Country where the future flood risk had been assessed as potentially significant.

The aim of the study, he added, was to assess flood risk, through the identification of flood hazard areas and the associated impacts of flooding and identify viable structural and non-structural

measures and options for managing the flood risks for localised high-risk areas and within the catchment as a whole.

This, it was acknowledged, would result in the preparation of a Flood Risk Management Plan and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) setting out the measures and policies that needed to be pursued to achieve the most cost-effective and sustainable management of flood risk through public consultation and engagement.

He confirmed that the OPW was the lead authority on flood risk management, but that Local Authorities as first responders to flooding events also played a key role in the process.

The statutory public consultation in relation to the flood maps was ongoing, he said, and copies were available at all Council Offices. It was noted that the closing date for the lodgement of objections in relation to the Draft Flood Hazard Maps was the 21st December, 2015.

Mr John Mc Laughlin, Director of Roads & Transportation informed Members that all relevant comments/observations in relation to the maps should be forwarded to Mr Murphy prior to the December 21st deadline.

Members considered the preliminary report presented by the Director of Roads & Transportation, Mr John Mc Laughlin on flooding in the County over the period the 6th and 7th December, 2015. (Vide Appendix 1)

A lengthy debate ensued with Members raising a variety of issues.(Vide Appendix 2)

A number of suggestions were made including:-

- That Engineering Staff in Donegal County Council meet to assess and consider the difficulties facing many homes and businesses throughout the County and advise where possible in relation to any possible solutions. This, it was acknowledged, could be done in consultation with local community groups.

- The need to re-establish a Council Land Drainage Committee.
- A co-ordinated approach involving the OPW, the Inland Fisheries Board and Donegal County Council to be undertaken in order to alleviate flooding problems in the County.
- Emergency Funding needs to be sought at national level.
- Call for an extension of time to be sought in relation to the CFRAM submissions until the end of January 2016 at least, to allow those affected by the recent flooding events make valid and worthwhile comments.
- Identified the need for a single agency to deal with flooding and suggested that the Loughs Agency, and the National Parks and Wildlife Agency needed to be part of the overall solution.
- MEPs for the region be contacted in relation to EU Directives which were presently hampering the OPW from carrying out necessary drainage works.

Cllr G Doherty proposed, seconded by, Cllr Mc Brearty, that a meeting be arranged between Donegal County Council, Derry City & Strabane District Council, Fermanagh District Council, the OPW, the Loughs Agency and all other relevant stakeholders for the formulation of a proactive and joined approach to the flooding problem. The assistance of international experts was also deemed essential.

Cllr O' Neill proposed, seconded by, Cllr Mc Eniff, that Pettigo to be reinstated on the list for road and drainage works and that this be actively pursued at MD level.

C/559/15

ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING

On the proposal of Cllr Mc Gowan, seconded by Cllr Mc Garvey it was resolved to adjourn the meeting for a brief recess to facilitate the commencement of the Special Council Meeting in relation to the Primetime Programme Broadcast.

DISCUSSION ON THE RECENT SEVERE WEATHER EVENT

On resumption of the meeting a number of further suggestions were made including:-

- That Mr Simon Harris T.D, Minister of State at the Departments of Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform and the Department of the Taoiseach with Special Responsibility for the OPW, Public procurement, and International Banking (incl IFSC) be invited to visit the County and see the devastation for himself.
- Call for Local Oireachtas Members to be proactive in ensuring that applications from Donegal under the Humane Assistance Programme are fast tracked.
- Noted necessity of enhancing flood defences in Lifford and more robust structures put in place.
- Suggested that one or two local farmers in each area with access to specialized suction equipment are kept on standby for callout by the local roads engineers.
- Noted that a separate section should be set up within Donegal County Council to deal with flooding and coastal erosion. Call for an engineer be designated in each area to meet in an informal way with the OPW and that consideration be given to the formulation of a specific plan outlining alternative routes that could be used in the event of flooding emergencies.

Cllr Crawford proposed, seconded by, Cllr Mc Gowan, that a committee be set up with or in conjunction with the Roads and Transportation SPC to deal with flooding/drainage issues and that representatives from all of the communities affected be invited to participate in same.

In conclusion it was agreed that every effort would be made to progress the issue of an Inter-Agency approach and that the matter come before Members again in January 2016.

This concluded the business of the meeting.