

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE UÍBH FHAILÍ

MINUTES OF STATUTORY BUDGET MEETING OF OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TULLAMORE ON THURSDAY, 15TH DECEMBER 2008 AT 2.00PM

PRESENT:

Cllr. B. Cowen (Presiding), Cllrs. N. Bourke, M. Buckley, J. Butterfield, J. Carroll, P. Clendennen, M. Corcoran-Kennedy, D. Dolan, E. Dooley, T. Feighery, E. Fitzpatrick, J. Foran, M. Fox, C. Hanniffy, G. Killally, F. McDonnell, T. McKeigue, T. McLoughlin, S. Moylan Ryan, P. Ormond, D. Owens.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Pat Gallagher, County Manager, Mr. Michael Roche, D.O.S., Mr. Declan Kirrane, D.O.S., Mr. Sean Murray D.O.S., Mr. Frank Heslin, D.O.S., Mr. Declan Conlon, Head of Finance, T. Mawe, Financial Accountant, Ann Dillon, Acting S.E.O. (Meetings Administrator), & Ms. Natasha Troy, C.O.

APOLOGIES:

STATUTORY BUDGET MEETING – INTRODUCTION AND RECOMMENDATION:

The County Manager, Mr. P. Gallagher in his introduction advised that his formal report dated 5th December 2008 had been circulated to Members and considered by the Members. He stated that it had been very difficult to draft the proposed Budget 2009 in the context of such a dramatic change in the general economic climate over the past year. He informed the members that our Local Government Fund has been reduced by 5.8%. In addition, due to the announcement from Central Government in July, public bodies are also required to reduce payroll costs by 3% and advertising costs by 50%. He also mentioned the ongoing increase in inflation together with pay increase inflation having to be absorbed/paid and the increasing regulatory, statutory regulations and standards that the Council is expected to comply with, monitor and maintain. He outlined some of the measures taken since October to reduce costs.

Mr. D. Conlon, Head of Finance, referred the member's attention to the draft Budget Book 2009, in particular Table A – (white pages) which outlines the projected Income & Expenditure for 2009 and Table F – (green pages) which give a more detailed analysis.

PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENTS:

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. B. Cowen thanked the Management and staff for making presentations and he also thanked the members for the manner in which they have dealt with preparing the Budget 2009. He noted their responsibility to the rate and the tax payer. He also complimented the Vet Services for their good work around the county over the past week with regard to the contaminated pork issue.

He continued by stating that the Manager had previously outlined the context under which the Budget was drafted and he noted some of the issues facing Offaly County Council i.e. 3% reduction in staff, temporary contracts not being renewed; reduction of 50% in advertising plus a major reduction in income (50%) from losses in planning applications. He stated that the public have become accustomed to being provided with a certain level of service and we should endeavour to continue to provide this as/where we can. He emphasised that businesses have been hit hard in recent times, turnover is down, cutbacks and job losses are rife and added that a full and frank discussion had taken place at previous meetings and consequently the following was proposed:

A 0% increase in Rates and that the draft Budget be adopted subject to the following amendments:

- A reduction of €21,000 in member's conferences and maintenance of Cathaoirleach's allowance at 2008 level.
- A reduction of €74,000 in repayments of capital on the loan for the Aras an Chontae.
- A reduction of €10,000 in the grant for Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann.
- A reduction of €6,000 in the provision for the Midlands Regional Authority.
- A reduction of €31,471 in the provision for Central Management Charge (Appendix 1)

That a general annual rate on valuation of 56.7658 be adopted for 2009 (i.e. no increase)

ADOPTION OF THE BUDGET 2008:

On the proposal of Cllr. Barry Cowen, seconded by Cllr. C. Hanniffy, the resolution to adopt the draft budget as amended by the Members as set out above was passed.

ADOPTION OF THE GENERAL ANNUAL RATE OF VALUATION

On the proposal of Cllr. Barry Cowen and seconded by Cllr. Connie Hanniffy the resolution to adopt the general annual rate of valuation to be levied at 56.7658 was passed. This represents an increase of 0% on 2008 rate.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Members, Management, staff and the media for their co-operation throughout 2008.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

MINUTES CONFIRMED: -

CATHAOIRLEACH

MEETINGS ADMINISTATOR

18TH MAY 2009