



Ouse & Humber Drainage Board

MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD 9.00AM WEDNESDAY 20th MAY 2020 VIA LIVE VIDEO
CONFERENCE, ZOOM.

PRESENT:

Ratepayer Members:	Mr Featherby (VC) Mr Scutt	Mr Hick	Mr Henley
Appointed Members:	Cllr Meredith Cllr Roberts Mr Baxter Cllr P West	Mr Atkinson Mr Wilkins Mr Traill	Cllr K West (C) Cllr Aitken Cllr Marwood
Co-opted Members:	Mr Axup		
Members Present:	15		

APOLOGIES:

Ratepayer Members:	Mr Screeton Mr Maclean	Mr Mowforth Mr Sweeting	Mr Nicholls
Appointed Members:			
Co-opted Members:			
Officers:			

ABSENT:

Ratepayer Members:	Mr Wright	
Appointed Members:	Cllr Bayram	Cllr Wilkinson
Co-Opted Members:		

IN ATTENDANCE:

Officers:	Mr McLachlan - Chief Executive Mr Towse – Operational & Technical Manager	Miss Cowen – Policy & Finance Manager Miss Smith – Board Secretary (Minutes)
Others:	Mrs Jackson – The Board’s Accountant	

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295. Welcome, introductions and apologies

295.1 Apologies were noted from Mr Screeton, Mr Sweeting, Mr Mowforth, Mr Maclean, and Mr Nicholls.

295.2 The Chair welcomed the Board Members to the meeting.

296. Declarations of Interest

296.1 No interests raised.

297. Additional Agenda Items

297.1 No additional agenda items were raised.

298. Health and Safety

Measures Taken in Response to the Pandemic

298.1 The CEO explained the measures that had been taken due to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the safety of staff. Managerial and technical staff were now working at home on a regular basis using the Board's existing computer systems. Two members of staff in the Policy and Finance team were staffing the office on a rotational basis and the reception was shut to all casual callers.

298.2 The CEO continued to explain that workflow changes had been accelerated to move towards a paperless office.

298.3 The OTM informed Board Members that operational staff were working appropriately under the current circumstances and that social distancing measures were being adhered to. The Board had purchased a mobile welfare unit with WC and handwashing facilities in addition to the provision of PPE.

298.4 No further Health and Safety matters were raised.

299. Minutes of the previous Full Board Meeting, 5th February 2020

299.1 It was PROPOSED by CLLR ROBERTS and SECONDED by MR WILKINS and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes be adopted as a true record.

300. Matters Arising

300.1 The CEO informed the Board that item 76.2 had been resolved. The CEO advised the Board that an agreement had been reached with Yorkshire Water.

300.2 Cllr Roberts thanked the Board for their work in providing a resolution to the Thorpe Road pollution issues.

- 300.3 The CEO advised that in relation to item 239.17 that the third party had now withdrawn their offer to purchase the Board's land, so this matter was now closed.
- 300.4 With regards to item 280.5, the CEO presented the Executive Committee's decision to reject the petition by the landowner at Gilberdyke.
- 300.5 In relation to item 282.5, the CEO confirmed the Board's Standing Orders had now been amended to specify a new quorate of eight members.

301. Executive Committee Meeting

- 301.1 The CEO referred members to the minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held on 29th April 2020 via Zoom video conference.
- 301.2 The CEO informed of the Executive Committee's recommendation to replace the Faxfleet Pumping Station, with the £60k cost for this being sourced from the operational budget.
- 301.3 Mr Wilkins asked if there was an alternative pump currently supporting the operational duty of Faxfleet pump.
- 301.4 The CEO explained that if the current pump failed the Board would be required to use a reserve pump. At present there was no significant risk but if flooding issues should arise it would cause problems for landowners.
- 301.5 Mr Featherby highlighted the recent letter received by the Board sent by a landowner who had unfortunately experienced flooding to his land. Mr Featherby questioned whether a replacement pump would have reduced this risk.
- 301.6 The OTM was of the view that this would have made a difference to the flooding issues and that the cost for a replacement pump could be met by allocating funds from the maintenance budget.
- 301.7 After some detailed discussion as to whether consideration had been made to purchase a portable pump and investigate the viability and cost options of such a purchase rather than purchasing a new pump, it was agreed that both cases should be investigated. **Action CEO/OTM**
- 301.8 It was PROPOSED by MR WILKINS and SECONDED by CLLR ROBERTS and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Executive Committee be given delegated authority determine if portable pump or a replacement pump at Faxfleet should be purchased.

302. Appointment of Professional Services Providers

302.1 The CEO recommended the Board should make appointments to professional services providers who support officers on a regular basis in the day to day operation of the Board's activities.

302.2 It was PROPOSED by MR ATKINSON and SECONDED by CLLR ROBERTS and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board employs Wilkin Chapman LLP, Yorkshire Audit Services, Hunter Gee Holdroyd Ltd, Mason Clark Associates Ltd, Mr Ralph Ward (FRICS), Stephen Edwards (FRICS) and Cutler IT Ltd as professional service providers to the board.

303. Internal Audit Report

303.1 The PFM referred members to the Internal Auditor's report in the meeting papers, informing that minor issues raised were now resolved. One of the ongoing actions was to develop a Rates Procedure to clarify and streamline the administrative aspects of the process, particularly in relation to reducing paper records.

304. Risk Register Review

304.1 The CEO presented an updated risk register to the Board and highlighted that as part of good governance, the Board should undertake a regular review of the potential risks and threats that may impact on its operations.

304.2 The CEO advised that enhanced cyber security policies and insurance had been introduced.

304.3 It was PROPOSED by CLLR K WEST and SECONDED by MR TRAILL and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the revised risk register for 2020/21.

305. Accounting Statements and Annual Return

305.1 The CEO introduced Ms Jackson, the Board's accountant and explained that the annual statements had been prepared and approved by Hunter Gee Holdroyd Ltd. He drew attention to the fact that the reserves were not as strong as last year but are intended to increase going forward.

305.2 The CEO went on to advise that the information was required for the Annual Return which would now be published in September due to a Government extension as a result of COVID-19.

305.3 The CEO read out the Annual Governance Statements for Board Members to consider.

305.4 It was PROPOSED by MR HENLEY and SECONDED by CLLR MARWOOD and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the Annual Governance Statements for 2019/20.

305.5 The CEO next referred members to the 2019/20 accounts and the figures presented in the Annual Return Documents (Accounting Statements), inviting questions.

305.6 It was PROPOSED by CLLR K WEST and SECONDED by MR WILKINS and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the Accounting Statements for 2019/20.

305.7 Ms Jackson notified the Board that she would be happy to answer any follow-up questions the members may have.

305.8 Ms Jackson left the meeting.

306. Financial Balances to Quarter 4

306.1 The CEO clarified that the financial balances for Quarter 4 were incorporated within the annual accounts, discussed in the previous item.

307. Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled

307.1 The CEO referred members to the schedule of invoices paid and accounts settled for Q4 2019/20, for consideration by the Board.

307.2 It was PROPOSED by CLLR MARWOOD and SECONDED by CLLR ROBERTS and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board notes and approves the record of Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled, totalling £419,210.75 (net) for the last financial quarter.

308. Budget Refresh

308.1 Referring to the previously approved budget for 2020/21, the CEO wished to recommend some adjustments in light of the 2019/20 outturn and projected consortium income. The Board's reserves had been reduced to less than £1m due to a planned reduction of the reserves along with a significant overspend attributable to the prolonged wet weather and associated electricity and breakdown costs.

308.2 He presented a revised budget to members, taking them through the consortium model, noting that the consortium and other management income is represented on the balance sheet estimated at around 35%.

308.3 The CEO explained how the revised budget accounts for the revenue savings arising from the new consortium agreement allowing for additional planned serviceability works as well as a full maintenance programme and planned pumping station servicing works.

308.4 Mr Wilkins asked the CEO what the significance is of having £1m or above in the reserve funds.

308.5 The CEO explained that any public authority should hold an appropriate level of reserves to cover unforeseen circumstances e.g. an event that the Board was faced with a bill due to a failed asset, the costs could be covered.

308.6 It was PROPOSED by CLLR MARWOOD and SECONDED by CLLR AITKEN and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the revised budget.

309. Capital Schemes Update

Near Drain Tidal Outfall

309.1 The CEO advised the Board that 100% grant aid of £335k had been secured and awarded and that he was currently working on this with the Senior Engineer and a company called Aquatic Control Engineering Ltd in view to resolution before the winter this year.

309.2 Cllr Aitken asked whether the positive work undertaken by the Board had been publicised and volunteered to promote this on social media.

309.3 The CEO informed members that there had been some crop loss at Blacktoft due to the Howdenshire pumping station scheme and that the landowner (and Board member) Mr Maclean had graciously waived a compensation claim in this regard.

309.4 It was agreed by the Board that a letter of gratitude be sent to the landowner. **Action CEO.**

Other Schemes

309.5 At this point, Mr Traill gave his apologies and left the meeting.

309.6 The OTM advised that he was currently waiting for a price and availability for the replacement or repair to the pumping station at Howdendyke. Final costs would be considered to decide on the best plan moving forwards.

309.7 The OTM informed that the Harron Homes site at Howden had been shut due to COVID-19, however the contractor (Sweeting Bros Ltd) was now able to commence works on the SUDS lagoon.

309.8 Mr Scutt asked the OTM whether the issues with the sluice-gates at Broomfleet had been resolved.

309.9 The OTM confirmed that the Environment Agency had undertaken repair works and had resolved the damage within a couple of weeks.

309.10 Cllr Aitken asked whether issues in Blacktoft had been resolved.

- 309.11 The OTM advised that the three cloughs were now running through one opening and had been recently examined. Any further work would be funded by the Environment Agency.
- 309.12 Cllr Aitken asked when tree-cutting operations would start in Newport.
- 309.13 The OTM confirmed that operations were due to commence in September.

310. Public Sector Agreements

Consortium

- 310.1 The CEO confirmed that Danvm Drainage Commissioners had now formally entered a consortium arrangement on 1st April 2020 and that there had been an introduction of policies and procedures to the Board.
- 310.2 The CEO went on to explain that a joint Consortium Committee was required to meet at least once a year to oversee management functions on behalf of member Boards.
- 310.3 The CEO asked for four members to volunteer to join the Consortium Committee.
- 310.4 It was PROPOSED by MR HENLEY and SECONDED by MR WILKINS and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Cllr Aitken, Cllr K West, Cllr Roberts, and Mr Featherby represent OHDB on the Consortium Committee.
- 310.5 The CEO advised the Board that the Vale of Pickering IDB had now made a formal request to join the Consortium.
- 310.6 The OTM confirmed that from an operational perspective, planning application consultations would not require additional resources and operational activities were proving manageable.
- 310.7 The PFM advised that administration work would be transferred however she was confident that there was sufficient capacity within the current staffing structure to facilitate this.
- 310.8 The CEO asked the Board to consider the admission of the Vale of Pickering into the Consortium and that delegated authority be given to the Consortium Committee to agree any associated resource requirements.
- 310.9 It was PROPOSED by CLLR MARWOOD and SECONDED by CLLR ROBERTS and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Chairman be authorised to admit the Vale of Pickering IDB into the Consortium and that delegated authority be given to the Consortium Committee to agree any associated resource requirements.

- 310.10 Mr Hick asked how the structure of the Boards would change moving forward with additions to the Consortium and with the new rebrand to Yorkshire Humber Drainage Boards (YHDB).
- 310.11 The CEO confirmed that all Boards would remain as separate legal entities. He explained that YHDB 'brand' was to address practical issues such as websites, emails, and common activities.
- 310.12 He added further that YHDB was not a drainage board and was purely a management group led by the Ouse and Humber Drainage Board.
- 310.13 Cllr Aitken added that it was important that the Board retains autonomy and to remain within specific catchment areas.
- 310.14 Mr Henley asked how finances and time would be distributed fairly across the range of Boards.
- 310.15 The CEO explained the audited cost model where contributions are based on the relative size of statutory income which are in turn are approximately proportionate to management time.

ADOC Boards

- 310.16 The CEO advised that Black Drain Drainage Board had formally joined the, with all the smaller Boards signing into a new five-year agreement on 1st April 2020 and that in respect of Black Drain there were no specific additional resource requirements.

311. Drainage rates

- 311.1 The PFM informed the Board that drainage rates had been issued as normal and that queries were being dealt with over the telephone.
- 311.2 The PFM added that whilst payments were not being taken in the office due to the pandemic, it had not appeared to hinder the receipt of payments.

312. Maintenance Programme

- 312.1 The CEO electronically displayed the maintenance programme to the Board.
- 312.2 The OTM explained in detail how the programme delivered information to users regarding watercourse maintenance. Each watercourse would contain information involving upkeep operations undertaken.
- 312.3 He went on further to explain how it was anticipated that there may be annual alternation between de-silting and spraying on some minor watercourses and that more areas were being identified where machinery access to watercourses was being improved.

312.4 It was PROPOSED by CLLR AITKEN and SECONDED by MR WILKINS and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the 2020/21 watercourse maintenance programme be approved.

312.5 Cllr Aitken commended the work of the OTM and his team on the watercourses and made the Board aware that positive reports from the community had been received.

313. Plant and Vehicles

313.1 The OTM advised members that a Reform Metrack H9X with front mounted and rear mounted flail arm had been purchased. He continued that this new machine was more powerful than the previous machine and with the rear mounted arm was suitable for work on the smaller watercourses.

313.2 A weed boat had been ordered however this had not yet arrived due to manufacturing delays as a result of COVID-19.

313.3 Mr Scutt raised a concern regarding low water levels due to the weather and whether anything could be done to hold the water back to control irrigation. There was some discussion over approach to water level management.

313.4 He continued that it was possible to shut a penstock gate to support with irrigation however this would be decided by the Environment Agency who were currently monitoring the situation and were aware of the importance.

314. Staff and Organisational Matters

314.1 The CEO thanked the Board for their involvement to allow implementation of staff operational contract amendments.

314.2 He went on to advise that staff had now moved to the seasonal working system and one staff member had resigned amicably from his role because of the restructure.

314.3 The OTM informed that a replacement operator had been employed and was proving to be a good acquisition, possessing operational and mechanical skills.

314.4 The CEO introduced the new Executive Assistant to the Board, explaining that this role was to provide the function of Secretary to the Boards, Office Manager, and executive support to the CEO and the two managers.

314.5 The CEO notified the Board of the new Senior Engineer, a qualified geologist and civil engineer experienced in flood and coastal risk management. Their focus was on technical support, development control and project management.

314.6 Mr Wilkins asked how the apprentice was progressing in their role.

314.7 The PFM confirmed that the apprentice was still in position and was very pleased with his progress.

315. Policy Update

315.1 The CEO notified the Board of the submission of the standing orders to the Minister for amendment.

315.2 He drew attention to the additions of Order 28 and Order 29 which allow meetings to be held within a virtual environment and to the fact that the Board's quorate number had been reduced.

315.3 The PFM advised that as part of the ongoing policy review process, some of the Board's policies had been updated. She had also prepared some new policies for members to consider, all presented at Appendix G of the meeting papers. The policies presented for consideration were:

- Financial Regulations (updated)
- Bullying & Harassment Policy
- Document Retention Policy
- Employee's Code of Conduct (updated)
- Equality Policy
- General Privacy Policy (updated)
- Gifts & Hospitality Policy (updated)
- Maternity Policy
- Paternity Policy
- Privacy Notice – Board Members
- Privacy Notice – Employees, Workers and Contractors
- The Duties, Responsibilities and Liabilities of Board Members (updated)

315.4 At this point Mr Hick and Cllr Roberts gave their apologies and left the meeting.

315.5 The CEO took some time to summarise the Financial Regulations in detail and set out why these were so important for a public authority.

315.6 It was PROPOSED by CLLR AITKEN and SECONDED by CLLR P WEST and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approves the new and updated policies en bloc.

316. Date of Future Meetings

316.1 The CEO referred members to the schedule of proposed meetings advising the next Full Board meeting would be held on Wednesday 4th November 2020.

316.2 Cllr K West advised that it would be preferable for the next Executive Committee meeting on Thursday 15th October to be held in the morning due to multiple members meeting at the Council Offices in the afternoon. **Action CEO/Bd Sec.**

316.3 The Chair thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting.