

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF SLIGO
HELD ON MONDAY 9TH NOVEMBER, 2015 AT 10.00AM
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL, QUAY STREET, SLIGO.**

COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

- Councillor Declan Bree
- Councillor Marie Casserly
- Councillor Thomas Healy (Mayor)
- Councillor Seamus Kilgannon
- Councillor Sean Mac Manus
- Councillor Gino O'Boyle
- Councillor Rosaleen O'Grady

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mr. Ciarán Hayes, Chief Executive
- Ms. Dorothy Clarke, Director of Services
- Mr. Tom Kilfeather, Director of Services
- Mr. Bartley Gavin, A/Director of Services
- Ms. Patricia Guckian, Financial Accountant
- Ms. Sinéad Branley, Staff Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Tom Mac Sharry and Councillor Sinéad Maguire

MAYOR:

The Mayor, Councillor T. Healy presided and welcomed those present to the meeting. The Mayor advised that the purpose of the meeting was to consider the draft budgetary plan which covers discretionary expenditure allocated to the Municipal District. Discussions on the main strategic non-discretionary expenditure of the local authority will form part of the main local authority budget discussions later in the month.

TO CONSIDER DRAFT BUDGETARY PLAN:

The Chief Executive advised the meeting that the same template as last year had been used in the preparation of the draft budget. The Council has also endeavoured, where possible, to keep the discretionary spending figures on a par with last year. However, he stressed that in line with the requirements of the Financial Plan and the Department, the main focus for the 2016 budget was to increase income and reduce expenditure.

Ms. Guckian, Financial Accountant gave an overview of the Draft Budgetary Plan and the discretionary elements of same.

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Division B – Roads Transport and Safety

Mr. Kilfeather, Director of Services outlined details under this heading, the main points of which were:

- Sligo County Council's own contribution to the Roads Programme and reliance on grants for Road Schemes.
- Approximately €860,000 was identified for discretionary spending for 2016 under this programme heading. However this figure had to be reduced by just over €200,000 as a result of disallowed expenses under the roads grants. A revised figure of approximately €642,000 is now available under this category for 2016. This figure represents a reduction of €68,000 from the 2015 figure. The €642,000 figure is further broken down as:
 - €267,440 for the Sligo Municipal District
 - €374,000 for the Ballymote-Tobercurry Municipal District

In addition, a sum of €5,000 per Councillor for Councillors proposals is included in the figures.

The members discussed the funding under this programme heading and expressed their disappointment at the level of discretionary funding available and the options open to them on where this funding is allocated. However members paid tribute to the engineering department and their staff for the works done with limited resources.

Division C – Water Services

Mr. Kilfeather, Director of Services advised the meeting that the discretionary funding allocated to C04 Public Conveniences was €8,500 which was unchanged from last year.

Following a query from the members regarding the costs associated with the storage of a public convenience and the provision of a public convenience in the Stephen Street area, Mr. Kilfeather advised as follows:

- There is no public convenience locked in storage and therefore there is no financial liability on the Council in respect of storage costs.
- The Council is endeavouring to look into the provision of a public convenience in the Stephen Street area but progression of this project has been delayed due to lack of funding.

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Division D – Development Management

Ms. Dorothy Clarke, Director of Services advised the meeting that the discretionary funding allocated to D05 Tourism Development and Promotion was €142,500. This included a small increase of €8,000 on the previous year's figure of €134,500. Included in this figure was a sum of €12,500 for developments along the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) and a sum of approximately €20,000 towards a national project of significance i.e. Coolaney Mountain Bike Project.

It was clarified that the funding related to the County and the information is being provided for the purposes of context.

Following further queries from members relating to the extension of the pontoon at Hughes Bridge and the provision of coach parking, the Chief Executive advised that the provision of coach parking was on the Council's agenda and this was something that they were looking to progress. Regarding the pontoon facilities, Ms. Clarke advised that the Council would actively look for funding sources for this project as they became available in 2016.

Division F – Recreation and Amenity

Ms. Dorothy Clarke, Director of Services gave an overview of the funding available under programme headings F01, F03, F04 and F05.

Following a query from members regarding the total level of funding under F04 Community Sport and Recreational Development – Grants, Ms. Clarke advised that the figure for 2016 was €266,500 as opposed to a figure of €331,500 for the previous year. This was a reduction of €65,000 on the previous year's figure but when taken into context, it was actually an increase on the previous year's figure as a sum of €100,000 had been included in the 2015 figure for the Fleadh and this was excluded for 2016.

Ms. Clarke also advised that a sum of €20,000 had been included in the draft budget for the Sligo 2016 Commemorations. The Council is still awaiting notification from the Department with regards to the amount of the allocation from central government but it is expected to be in the region of €60,000-€100,000. The Council would notify all relevant groups when they receive notification of the actual allocation.

Following further queries from members regarding costs for Christmas lighting and the allocation of funding for community grants, Ms. Clarke and Mr. Hayes advised as follows:

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- The cost of the Christmas lights is anticipated so far in excess of €30,000 that the Council contributes. The Chief Executive added that he had been in contact with the Chamber of Commerce and the Council were endeavouring to assist the Chamber with the storage of the Christmas lights thus resulting in a saving of approximately €5,000 per annum. He also stated that the Chamber is looking to gradually upgrade the lights over a number of years depending on the availability of funds.
- The issue of Christmas lights to be reviewed in the event of a BIDS application being successful.
- The Chief Executive advised that the allocation of funding for community grants was based on the policy adopted by the Council. The allocation of grants will remain unchanged until such time as the policy is changed.

The Chief Executive, Mr. Hayes advised the members that it is a reserved function of the members to adopt the budgetary Plan as presented to them with or without amendments. If the members do not pass the plan the Chief Executive is obliged to incorporate it into the General Council Budget.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING:

The Mayor, Councillor Healy proposed to adjourn the meeting for 5 minutes to allow the members discuss the draft Budgetary Plan in private. This was agreed by the members.

RESUMPTION OF MEETING:

Following the adjournment, the Mayor advised that the members were not going to adopt the draft budgetary plan as presented to them today and were going to let it revert to the full Council.

The business of the meeting ended at 11.30 am.