



SHIRE OF RAVENSTHORPE

MINUTES

**Special Meeting of Council held in the
Council Chambers, Ravensthorpe,
Monday, 3 December, 2015
Commencing at 5.00pm**

SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

TO BE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, RAVENSTHORPE,
THURSDAY 3 DECEMBER, 2015 AT 5.00PM

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EXTRACT FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1995

5.5. CONVENING COUNCIL MEETINGS

- (1) The CEO is to convene an ordinary meeting by giving each council member at least 72 hours' notice of the date, time and place of the meeting and an agenda for the meeting.

- (2) **The CEO is to convene a special meeting by giving each council member notice, before the meeting, of the date, time, place and purpose of the meeting.**

1. DECLARATION OF OPENING / ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

5.00pm – the presiding person, Cr Dunlop, declared the meeting open.

2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS: Cr Keith Dunlop (Shire President)
Cr Kerry Dickinson
Cr Sharyn Gairen
Cr Ian Goldfinch
Cr Ken Norman
Cr Peter Smith

STAFF: Ian Fitzgerald (Chief Executive Officer)
Keith White (Deputy Chief Executive Officer)

APOLOGIES: Cr A Kelton (Deputy Shire President)

ON LEAVE OF ABSENCE:

ABSENT:

VISITORS:

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Cr A Kelton – financial interest

5. REPORTS OF OFFICERS

5.1 Chief Executive Officer

Cr A. Kelton has declared a financial interest in this item.

5.1.1 APPOINTMENT OF NEW GENERAL PRACTITIONER
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File Ref:

Applicant:

Location: Not applicable

Disclosure of Officer Interest: None

Date: 2 December, 2015

Author: Ian Fitzgerald – Chief Executive Officer

Authorising Officer: Not applicable

Attachments: Doctor's Resumes'

Summary:

The purpose of this item is to recommend to Council the appointment of a new General Practitioner to replace the retiring Dr Manus Lochner and resolve the matters associated with this appointment.

Background:

Dr Lochner has advised of his resignation from his agreement to provide medical services to the Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun communities effective from 31st January 2016. Dr Lochner is transitioning to retirement.

At the Special Council Meeting held on the 9th November 2015 Council resolved the following:

<i>OFFICER RECOMMENDATION AND COUNCIL DECISION</i>	<i>ITEM 5.1.1</i>
<i>Moved: Cr Kelton</i>	<i>Seconded: Cr Goldfinch</i>
<i>That Council:</i>	
<i>a) acknowledges the resignation of Dr Lochner</i>	
<i>b) authorises the Chief Executive Officer to engage Rural Health West to assist with the recruitment of a suitably qualified and experienced General Practitioner and any other appropriate agency that may be able to assist</i>	
<i>c) authorises the Chief Executive Officer to accept the offer of locum doctor services from Rural Health West for the first 2 weeks of February 2016</i>	
<i>d) authorises the Chief Executive Officer to engage locum doctor services as required post the initial locum service to help ensure continuity of medical services until a new General Practitioner is appointed</i>	
<i>e) approves Council becoming the practice managers in the short term and longer term if requested by the incoming General Practitioner</i>	
<i>f) request that regular updates be provided to Council and the community on the progress in recruiting a new General Practitioner.</i>	
<i>Carried by absolute majority: 7/0</i>	<i>Res: 121/15</i>

Comment:

As advised at the November Special Meeting discussions had already commenced with Rural Health West on the recruitment of a new General Practitioner (GP).

On Friday 13th November Rural Health West provided details on a GP who had shown an interest in our practices – Dr Michael Livingston. I had an initial telephone discussion with Dr Livingston the following week and was impressed with his manner and enthusiasm towards our situation.

On Saturday morning 21st November, I received a call from the Recruitment Manager from Rural Health West advising another doctor who was in W.A. looking at another practice had decided he wanted to visit our practices. I met with this doctor – Mark Byrne and showed him through the hospital (arranged on short notice by Ruth York) and both surgeries and provided as much information as I could. That evening I, together with the Shire President and his wife, entertained Dr Byrne for dinner. It was agreed that Dr Byrne was also a very suitable candidate for our practices.

A follow up discussion was arranged with Dr Livingston via Skype for Wednesday 25th November with Dr Livingston and his wife, Shire President, Deputy President and the CEO. At this stage Dr Livingston has indicated from his research and discussions with Rural Health West and ourselves he is happy to accept an offer of appointment without visiting the area.

We are now in the very fortunate situation of having two suitably qualified doctors keen to come and work in our practices. A copy of their resumes has been provided with this item.

Both doctors have shown a very strong interest in working with the hospital and have a very good background in emergency medicine however it should be noted that Dr Byrne has a bit more qualification in this area.

Dr Byrne has an interest in cosmetic surgery/medicine whilst Dr Livingston has an interest in skin care/cancer medicine – this in addition to their strong background in rural medicine which is of paramount importance to our two practices. Dr Livingston has practiced in W.A. previously whereas Dr Byrne has not.

I should also point out that Dr Livingston is of Scottish descent currently working on a 457 visa and therefore requires sponsorship whereas Dr Byrne is an Australian GP. Dr Livingston has delayed applying for permanent residency whilst he completes his fellowship to avoid complications in having to re-register with Medicare twice but is more than willing to apply for his permanent residency immediately to be successful with our vacancy. Council can apply to be a sponsor but this may be complicated in this case as there is an Australian GP willing to take on the position. If Dr Livingston is the preferred applicant we may be able to work with the Department on a temporary sponsorship arrangement whilst his application for permanent residency is processed. Rural Health West would be able to assist with this process.

Initially Dr Byrne was talking a 2–3 contract but has since indicated a 3–5 year contract would be acceptable. Dr Livingston has indicated a 5 year contract with potential for extension as his preference.

Both doctors have indicated a preference for doing full day surgeries in each town rather than the split days as is the current practice – they believe this would be beneficial to both the patients and themselves with less travel time between towns.

Dr Livingston's wife would become the practice manager and has had experience in this role. In the case of Dr Byrne he would be looking to employ a practice manager to help run the practice.

Dr Byrne has indicated a preference to live in Hopetoun for lifestyle reasons for his family and would be looking for a fully furnished residence. Dr Livingston has indicated a preference to live in Ravensthorpe so as to be closer to the hospital for on-call purposes and would bring his furniture across from NSW with potentially some relocation assistance provided by Council.

Council does not have suitable housing in either location. The Chief Executive Officer has had informal discussions with the General Manager of First Quantum regarding a suitable house being made in Hopetoun with Council to meet rates, insurance and maintenance expenses but with no rent payable. Whilst this would need to be the subject of a formal request the General Manger thought this was something that could be further investigated.

The interested doctors have been provided with a copy of the current service agreement with Dr Lochner and have raised no great concerns with any matter included. I would suggest Council works with Rural Health West, and if required our lawyers, to develop a suitable agreement with the incoming GP. At this stage the only suggestion I have is that Council meet the costs of cleaning the Hopetoun surgery – Council currently only pays for the cleaning of the Ravensthorpe surgery.

In relation to housing in Ravensthorpe there is not a great deal of housing currently listed for sale that is considered suitable long term as a doctor's residence. Here is a 4 bedroom – 2 bathroom home in Daw Street that is listed with Landmark Realty (but not actively marketed) that may be suitable. This property is owned by Julian and Angela Kelton – hence Councillor Kelton's declaration of interest in this item. The Chief Executive Officer has viewed the property and believes it meets the requested requirements of Dr Livingston and his family. (Both doctors are married and have a young child). If Council decides to purchase a property funding could come from the Building Reserve or via loan, or a combination of both. In the current economic climate a loan may be a good option for Council to consider. Details on possible loan repayments will be provided at the meeting. The purchase of a home would provide a long term housing solution for any resident GP.

Referee checks have been carried out on both doctors on Council's behalf by Rural Health West with both getting good references and one for Dr Livingston in particular very positive.

Both doctors have indicated they will need to give notice from their current positions and it is looking like an end of February/early March start for either doctor requiring further short term locum coverage which has already been listed with Rural Health West.

I have attempted to address most issues but will add further at the meeting and respond where possible to questions Council may have.

In relation to Dr Lochner it is recommended Council look to host a community function to acknowledge the wonderful contribution he has made to our community.

Council may wish to discuss the format and timing of such an event during the meeting. Council will also be requested to purchase some equipment and consumables that Dr Lochner has purchased and will say at the practice after his retirement. A value on this has yet to be determined.

Consultation:

Rural Health West

Doctor Byrne and Doctor Livingston

Shire President

General Manager FQM

Statutory Obligations:

N/A

Policy Implications:

N/A

Budget / Financial Implications:

There are a number of budget implications for Council as we work through the recruitment and appointment process including:

- a) cost of providing interim locum doctors
- b) purchase of equipment and consumables from Dr Lochner
- c) possible purchase of a house of cost of furnishing a home
- d) relocation expenses

At this point in time a lot of these expenses are unknown but there is a community expectation that Council will find a new GP and some costs will have to be met. Council will be informed of these expenses as they become known but it will not be fully known the extent of these expenses until a new GP is in place.

Strategic Implications:

As per Councils Strategic Community Plan:

Provide a vibrant, supportive and socially connected community with strategy:

Connected
families

1.1.1

Supporting families to remain connected relating to health, aged care, education and work.

Sustainability Implications:

- **Environmental:**
There are no known significant environmental considerations.
- **Economic:**
There are no known significant economic considerations.
- **Social:**
There are no known significant social considerations.

Voting Requirements:

Absolute majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

ITEM 5.1.1

Moved: Cr Dickinson

Seconded: Cr Goldfinch

That Council:

- a) enter into formal negotiations with Dr Michael Livingston to provide GP services to the Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun communities
- b) negotiate an initial 5 year agreement
- c) offer relocation assistance of up to \$7,500 to Dr Livingston and his family
- d) authorise for the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate the purchase of the property at 5 Daw Street for up to \$310,000
- e) arrange a community event to recognise the contribution made by Dr Lochner
- f) Chief Executive Officer arrange structural report and an independent valuation on 5 Daw Street property prior to purchase.
- g) Purchase of 5 Daw Street property to be financed by a loan from WA Treasury Corporation over a 15 year term.

Carried by absolute majority: 6/0

Res: 137/15

6. CLOSURE OF MEETING – 6.20PM

These minutes were confirmed at the meeting of the _____

Signed: _____
(Presiding Person at the meeting of which the minutes were confirmed.)

Date: _____