

WESTERN ROCK LOBSTER COUNCIL Inc.

GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

69-75 Connell Road, Geraldton

10:30am Thursday 12th November 2009

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

ATTENDANCE: DEXTER DAVIES, STEVE MCLEARY, JOHN COLE, JOHN NEWBY, PETER HAMMOND, ANTHONY PIRROTINA, TERRY PARISH, JASON BARRETT, TERRY MOUCHEMORE, DARREN MCTAGGART, FEDELE CAMARDA, NIC SOFOULIS, VICKY KERR.

GUESTS:

APOLOGIES: JAMES PARATORE

1. Welcome

Dexter declared the meeting open at 10:35am. Dexter also welcomed and congratulated all new Board Members onto the Council, John Cole, John Newby, Jason Barrett, Nic Sofoulis and Fedele Camarda.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting on 22 September 2009 was confirmed as true and correct.

Moved: Terry Mouchemore Seconded: Peter Hammond Confirmed

3. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

All matters arising from the previous minutes are to be addressed as Agenda Items

4. Financial Report

Finances were looked at and taking in account all our obligations and outstanding money owed to us, the WRLC will be ok until end of 09-10 financial year. The Minister is making a 25% cut of funding to WAFIC and the WRLC which is a consequence of the recent pot fee reduction and the Minister has reduced the contribution required by fishers going into the DBIF fund by 50%. The question was raised on how we will survive with the reduced DBIF funding? The short answer is that in the long term we can't unless we raise a levy or get satisfactory results in terms of funding from the Minister and WAFIC. A draft cash position projected to 30.06.2010 was provided.

The liability we have on research projects isn't financial in that we have allocated funds; we have an obligation to manage it by allocating the project to a Project Manager. The NACC project is going through an audit at the moment and is in the final stages of getting the toilets installed and we have a contracted plumber to do the job, there is money in the project to cover this.

There has been a request to increase Vicky's pay by \$10,000pa. (Vicky was receiving \$10k from FRAB; however this has been withdrawn by WAFIC). The "DRAFT" budget shows that this could be accommodated.

Peter Hammond moved the motion to approve a pay increase of \$10,000. Seconded by Steve McLeary. The motion was carried.

Action: Develop a working budget for Board Members; distribute 10 days before next meeting.

The Financial Report was accepted

Moved: Darren McTaggart; Second: Peter Hammond; Carried: All in favour

5. Election of Chairman

According to the WRLC Rules of Constitution the Chairman's position is declared vacant each year after the new Board has been elected. There have been no expressions for interest, but board feels it should be sorted out as there are too many emails floating around. John Cole said that Dexter has done a great job a chairman and showed a lot of guts at previous meetings with PFA's. The feeling of the Board is that having an independent chairman will make it easier on Dexter to do the job he is employed to do. On an operational point of view it will be better to have two separate people doing the jobs. The feeling is also that maybe they should only decide on an interim chairman for the moment. It was decided that the interim period will be for 4 months only, the position will be declared vacant again on 15 March 2010. It was also stressed that the chairman should stay totally impartial at all times.

Darren McTaggart nominated John Cole and the nomination was seconded by Steve McLeary Fedele Camarda nominated John Newby and the nomination was seconded by Jason Barrett

John Cole was elected.

Anthony Pirrotina suggested that the Chairman write to the EO in order to put issues on the agenda as well as compile a Chairman report for each meeting.

Steve McLeary suggested that the Chairman send a letter out to the Association regarding the election of the Chairman and the terms of election.

It was resolved unanimously that the Chairman write to PFA's requesting all correspondence including emails be directed through the Executive Officer. The email traffic was becoming intolerable.

6. Research Updates

Attached (research update 09.doc)

Andrew Winzer is finishing the final reports on most projects. It is a bit tricky finalising the Post Puerulus project as Andrew is only doing the analysis on WRLC behalf, and that data will be available for scrutinising soon. The Pot design is an ongoing project which might be outsourced

now that Andrew is moving on. In regards to the Bird Cameron Economic study, it has been very hard getting people to participate.

7. General Business

- **Election update**

There isn't much more to update on the election, the database gets retrieved from the Department of Fisheries of all MFL holders, plus all skippers who register. Brett McCallum is used as the scrutineer and Vicky tabulates all the votes.

- **AGM update**

The motion that did get passed at the AGM in regards to changing the constitution is silent as to whether you have a bi-annually congress or not. The Constitution needs to be reviewed on technical side. No changes should be made in the short term as changes with the Minister and WAFIC could change the whole stance of WRLC.

Nic Sofoulis registered his disappointment at the registration and voting procedure at the AGM, however it was pointed out that all actions at the AGM were agreed to on the day by all those in attendance.

Peter Hammond will be moving a motion well in time for next years AGM that only MFL holders will have a vote and the voting system will be on a one vote per pot basis.

Steve McLeary mentioned that the B and C Zone catch ratio's should be even. DoF explanation was that historically a bad year in the puerulus count in C Zone reflects a dramatically worse catch in C Zone 4 years later than in B Zone. Allocation has nothing to do with management package.

Dexter wanted to also thank Steve McLeary and the Ladies at Jurien Bay Country Golf Club for the great spread they prepared, it worked well at Jurien.

- **MSC update**

The **Full Audit** has just taken place on principal 1(stock assessment). It happened on the 4th – 6th November without much notice and Rhys Brown did a great job at getting all the information together. The Conservation Council and Nic Dunlop were invited and replied indicating they would attend, but didn't turn up. They were contacted as to why they didn't turn up but had no response back. A 3rd party accredited auditing company from America does the review and there was even an auditor auditing the auditors. We are likely to be recertified with a minimal score reduction. The WRLF will get ticked off as still being a sustainable fishery and that will pay dividends in regard to the Conservation Councils' recent press release and Marine Parks.

- **Marine Parks**

WAFIC is running the Marine Parks issue. Anna and Guy have been leading the charge on that, but there will come a time when the Rocklobster Industry will need to provide fine scale information on catch figures. We are hoping to get compensated in a proper way if areas get taken for Marine Parks. There will probably be a small number of no take zones as displacement figures will be a big cost. We need to keep our fingers on the pulse when they start putting lines on maps but we will need to have bit of give and take and make sure our stance doesn't impact on other fisheries.

Oakajee Project – Anthony Pirrotina went to a meeting for the Oakajee Port and Rail Project and there was no mention of crayfishing why? The guy from OPandR went to a few PFA meetings and the AGM last year and in the process between then and now the management went from one group to another and we somehow were kept out the loop for one meeting. It is a Rocklobster and WAFIC issue as the effect goes across the board. Dexter has met with OPR since (Kim Pervan) and communication and involvement reestablished.

- **Input vs. Output Discussion**

The voting return slips on Input vs. Output had a return of 50% and out of the 50% return 50% were in favour, 33% were against and 6% were undecided. Dexter's feeling towards what the Minister thinks about quota is that he will be in favour of change if someone can show him how he would do it. The Department of Fisheries have drawn up a paper on their position. The previous paper that came out didn't really focus on the issues that needed to be dealt with. WRLC need to put a lot of thought into what the proper system is and work out a proper management system in place.

The question was raised as to what the Board wants to do? Peter Hammond said the Board should come up with the very best paper for quota. They need to look at all the other papers available online, (should stay with pots) and get their heads around it all, All the papers need to be read and then they will all meet in January to work through all the pros and cons. Work on an ideal input and output and present that.

- **WAFIC restructure/ WRLC Funding**

Dexter has written back to WAFIC confidentially regarding the funding issue. There is a 25% cut on the total funding. There might be a WAFIC restructure but most things are only speculation at the moment. We will have to work out what needs to be done and how that is achieved with the funds available. WAFIC Board has 2 more meetings set for this year, so Dexter can update at the next WRLC Board meeting. The Board will have to work with WAFIC to achieve effectiveness and efficiency within our financial capabilities. With RLIAC going, WRLC responsibility increases considerably. The hopeful outcome will be that WAFIC handles generic subjects, and anything directly related with Rocklobster gets dealt with by the WRLC and the % funds get distributed to reflect that.

- **WRLC Levy – Letter attached**

There are no levies at the moment. If we send out the letter requesting a levy to the Industry and receive support we will fund ourselves to a much greater extent and be more in charge of our own destiny.

The Council have decided to hold off on the letter until we know what is happening with our funding and WAFIC restructure.

- **Future of WRLC**

The future of WRLC have been discussed in Finances and WAFIC restructure/WRLC Funding

- **30th Parallel Line**

The Deepwater project at the 30th parallel line which is proposed to be 3 nautical mile by 3 nautical mile will be a closed off area. The aim is to make it as small as possible. The benefit is, it will demonstrate(hopefully) that there are no negative ecological effects on the environment caused by Rocklobster fishing. The sooner they do the exercise the better because it appears that on preliminary evidence rocklobster fishing makes little difference and we need this to be done so you have the evidence up your sleeve when MPA come knocking on your door. That area was specifically picked because a scientific reference group had requirements that needed to be met, and it went through a comprehensive procedure to get to that specific area. The area originally started off as 10x10mile. On the 30 degree line there is an equal area in A and B Zone affected. Then it needs to be as small as possible but still achieving what it's set out to do.

The feeling is to keep it 3 miles by 3 and push for temporary compensation.

Action: Dexter to email out information on this.

8. Other Business not on Agenda

- **Letter from Bruce Cockman**

Bruce Cockman wrote a letter regarding the transfer fee exemption which was only in for last year. He was hoping that it could be exempt again this year.

Discussion around the table was to see if we can get rid of temporary transfer fee or maybe rebate half back. Use argument that they changed the system there has been a lot of transfers. Fedele Camarda to follow up on this.

The Council did previously write a request to have pots returned at the end of the season, it was an issue left with RLIAC.

The second part of Bruce's letter was regarding FRMA amendments - Section 65. The Council supports the abolishment of MAC and penalties. But you can not make more amendments to it because once you amend an amendment it will stop it in its track. We need to let it go through as it is.

- **Amateur Catch**

Did we write to the Minister regarding amateur catch? Dexter contacted the Ministers Office and the Minister's response was that amateur catch gets managed by Rec Fisheries. What we need to try and concentrate on is that they don't catch more than their 5%. We should point out the catchability of Rocklobsters for amateurs are now greater and it is likely they will catch more than their 5%.

A suggestion was made that for future amateurs must apply for a pot/dive licence as every diver gets their quota every time they go fish and some days they go twice a day.

- **ETS Trading Scheme**

The suggestion was made that we write to the Minister, State and Federal that we have done our part for carbon reduction. Scott bailey could tell us all the stats on the lower fuel consumption.

- **Big Bank**

Where do we go from here with to the shifting on the line at Big Bank? We have written to RLAC twice and it was knocked back both times. Three options have been put up and we will get an answer in January.

8. Andrew Winzer leaving

The Board Members wished Andrew Winzer all the best for the future. There will be a dinner for Andrew on 13th November, a gift will be purchased on behalf of the WRLFishery.

9. Discuss meeting dates and location for next 12 months

The Board decided on the dates for the next two meetings which will be **Friday 18 December 9:30am at Jurien Bay and then Saturday 16 January which will start at 8:30am in Perth.**

10. Close

John declared the meeting closed at 4:30pm.