

Council Meeting

Minutes

Date: Wednesday 23 March 2022

**Venue: Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room)
13 Mair Street, Benalla**

The *COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) Act 2020* enables councils to hold meetings electronically. This measure is intended to ensure the safety of members of the public, Councillors and Council staff.

The Council Meeting Room had limited capacity for public attendance. Accordingly, members of the public were encouraged to watch the live broadcast of the meeting at www.benalla.vic.gov.au

In accordance with the Governance Rule 6.4 an audio recording was made of the proceedings of the meeting.

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Minutes

Chair Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)

Councillors Councillor Danny Claridge
Councillor Peter Davis
Councillor Don Firth
Councillor Punarji Hewa Gunaratne
Councillor Justin King
Councillor Gail O'Brien

In attendance Dom Testoni Chief Executive Officer
Robert Barber General Manager Corporate
Adrian Gasperoni Manager Assets and Infrastructure
Jessica Beaton Governance Coordinator
Cathy Fitzpatrick Manager Finance

1. Opening and Acknowledgment of Country

The chair opened the meeting at 6.03pm and recited the following Acknowledgement of Country.

We, the Benalla Rural City Council, acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and to Elders from other communities who may be here today.

2. Statement of Commitment

The Councillors recited the following Statement of Commitment:

*I declare,
that as a Councillor of Benalla Rural City
I will undertake on every occasion
to carry out my duties in the best interests of the community
and that my conduct shall maintain the standards of our Councillor Code of Conduct
so that I may faithfully represent
and uphold the trust placed in the Council
by the people of Benalla and District.*



3. Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest disclosed to the meeting.

4. Apologies

There were no apologies submitted to the meeting.

5. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes were circulated to Councillors and posted on the Council website www.benalla.vic.gov.au pending confirmation at the meeting.

Cr Davis / Cr King:

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 23 February be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Carried

6. Public Question Time

It is noted that Ms Jane Rushworth tabled two questions regarding the proposed Visitor Information Centre Redevelopment.

- 1. How many tenders were submitted for the VIC redevelopment? Has a tender been chosen? If not, why not?*
- 2. I understand the VIC Redevelopment tenders submitted exceeded BRCC's \$2M budget by about 33%. Can you confirm this, and if not, then why not?*

The Chief Executive Officer answered that the tender is listed in confidential business for tonight's meeting, depending on the outcome of confidential business, a announcement will be made tomorrow.

Cr King / Cr Firth:

That the questions and answers be noted.

Carried



7. Petitions

No petitions were submitted to the meeting

8. Record of Committees

8.1 Finance and Operations Committee

The reports and recommendations of the Finance and Operations Committee held on Wednesday 9 March 2022 were provided to Councillors.

Cr Gunaratne / Cr Davis:

That the report and recommendations of the Finance and Operations Committee meeting held on Wednesday 9 March 2022 be adopted.

Carried

8.2 Planning and Development Committee

The reports and recommendations of the Planning and Development Committee held on Wednesday 16 March 2022 were provided to Councillors.

Cr Gunaratne / Cr Firth:

That the report and recommendations of the Planning and Development Committee meeting held on Wednesday 16 March 2022 be adopted.

Carried



8.3 Assemblies of Councillors, Advisory and External Committees

The Chief Executive Officer provided a written record of the Assemblies of Councillors.

The record of Assemblies of Councillors since the report presented at the meeting on 23 February 2022 was provided to Councillors.

Copies of the Minutes from the following meetings have been provided to councillors under separate cover.

February 2022

2 February	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
7 February	Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee
8 February	Accessibility Reference Group
22 February	Benalla Art Gallery Committee
23 February	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review

Cr Claridge / Cr Davis:
That the report be noted.

Carried



9. Reports by Officers

9.1 Authorisation of Signing and Sealing of Documents

No documents were submitted to the meeting for signing and sealing.

9.2 Mayor and Councillors' Attendance at Committees and Civic Functions

The Mayor and Councillors attendance at meetings and events for the period from 12 February 2022 to 11 March 2022 was provided to Councillors for consideration.

Cr King / Cr Davis:

That the report be noted.

Carried

9.3 Council Actions Pending

Council actions pending were provided to Councillors.

Cr Firth / Cr King:

That the report be noted.

Carried



10. Reports by Councillors

- Cr Claridge reported that he attended the North East Multicultural Association (NEMA) Harmony Day 2022 on Saturday 19 March 2022. A great day was enjoyed by all who attended. NEMA was formed 17 years ago to assist migrants in Benalla, Wangaratta, Indigo and Alpine shires. NEMA currently run English classes, basic computer classes and a translation service. Benalla has had a long rich history of multiculturalism with Chinese immigrants during the gold rush, Indian immigrants in the 1920 and following WWII the migrant camp hosted European refugees. This has help shape the history of Benalla.
- Cr Claridge reported that he attended the GRETALS Australia Open Day on Saturday 19 March 2022. GRETALS Australia recently published a paper outlining discoveries the company has made with a compound sourced from eucalypts trees for treating lung disease in livestock. Guest speakers provided demonstrations and spoke about future projects including reducing food waste and using bi-products from grape harvesting as a stock feed additive to help reduce methane gasses in livestock.
- Cr Davis reported that he attended the Swanpool Motor Festival on Sunday 13 March 2022 at the Swanpool Football oval. A full oval of cars, trucks, utes and anything with an engine were on display for the community to view. Cr Davis congratulated the event organisers and volunteers on a fantastic event.
- Cr Gunaratne reported that he attended the Community Plan Implementation Steering Committee meeting on Tuesday 1 March 2022. The committee is discussing where its focus should be following the adoption of the *Council Plan 2021-2025* and the *Community Vision 2036*.
- Cr Gunaratne reported that he attended the Victorian Local Government Association (VLGA) Fast Track 2022 Councillor Leadership Development Program on Friday 18 March 2022. The theme for the 2022 program was 'Trust – The Foundation of Your Leadership Journey'. The Hon Shaun Leane MP, Minister for Local Government was a presenter for the program.
- Cr Gunaratne reported that he attended the Multicultural Gala Dinner hosted by Victorian Multicultural Commission at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre on Saturday 19 March 2022. Cr Gunaratne attended the Gala with Sabine Smyth who is a member of the Victorian Multicultural Commission Hume Regional Advisory Council. The Gala was a delightful night enjoyed by all.
- Cr Gunarante reported that March is Endometriosis Awareness month. Cr Gunarante would like to acknowledge members of our community who have been diagnosed with this chronic disease. It takes on average, seven years before receiving a diagnosis. The *National Action Plan for Endometriosis* list its first priority as awareness and education.
- Cr King reported that Cr Firth has been appointment as the Chair of the 2022 Benalla Festival Committee.

Cr Claridge / Cr Davis:

That the reports be noted.



Carried

11. Notices of Motion

No notices of motion were submitted to the meeting.

12. Notices of Rescission Motion

No notices of rescission motion were submitted to the meeting.

13. Urgent Business

No urgent business was submitted to the meeting.

14. Confidential Business

It was proposed that the following item be considered in confidential business pursuant to the *Local Government Act 2020* as it contained private commercial information that would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage if released:

14.1 Tender for Contract CM22.004 Benalla Visitor Information Centre Redevelopment

It was proposed that the following items be considered in confidential business pursuant to the *Local Government Act 2020* as they contain personal information that would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about a person or their personal affairs if released:

14.2 Confidential Reports by Councillors

14.3 Confidential Report by Councillors

Cr King / Cr Davis:

That the meeting be closed to the public for the consideration of the confidential business item noted above pursuant to Sections 3(1) and Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Carried



15. Reopening of the meeting to the public

Cr Claridge / Cr King:

That the meeting be reopened to the public.

Carried

16. Closure of the meeting

The meeting closed at 7.26pm.

Confirmed this twenty seventh day of April 2022.

Signed:



Chair – Cr Bernie Hearn (Mayor)