

Council Meeting

Minutes

Date: Wednesday 7 August 2024

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

In accordance with Rule 6.4 of the *Governance Rules 2020* the Council Meeting was livestreamed via the Council's website and an audio recording was made of the proceedings.

Members of the public were encouraged to watch the live broadcast of the meeting at www.benalla.vic.gov.au



PO Box 227
1 Bridge Street East
Benalla Victoria 3671
Tel: 03 5760 2600
council@benalla.vic.gov.au
www.benalla.vic.gov.au



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Minutes

Chair Councillor Danny Claridge (Mayor)

Councillors Councillor Peter Davis
 Councillor Don Firth
 Councillor Bernie Hearn
 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
 Cathy Fitzpatrick Manager Finance
 Grant Banks Interim Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
 Cameron Gray Audit and Risk Committee Chair
 Jess Pendergast Governance Coordinator

Opening and Acknowledgment of Country

The Chair will open the meeting and recite 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.

Apologies

Councillor Peter Davis requested a leave of absence from 1 August 2024 to 13 August 2024.

It is noted that Council Punarji Hewa Gunaratne is on an approved leave of absence.

Cr Hearn / Cr O’Brien:

That a leave of absence be granted to Cr Peter Davis form 1 August 2024 to 13 August 2024.

Carried

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.

Governance Matters

The Council Meeting was conducted in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Benalla Rural City Council Governance Rules 2020*.

Recording of Council Meetings

In accordance with Rule 6.4 of the *Governance Rules 2020* the Council Meeting was livestreamed via the Council's website and an audio recording was made of the proceedings and made available for public access, with the exception of matters identified as confidential items in the agenda.

Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

See item 4.3, 4.5 and 8.1.

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 this meeting.

Cr King / Cr Hearn:

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26 June 2024 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Carried

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1. Public Question Time

No questions were submitted to the Council Meeting.

2. Petitions

No petitions were submitted to the Council Meeting.

Record of Committees

3.1 Recommendations from Finance and Planning Committee

The recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 31 July 2024 were presented.

Cr Hearn / Cr King:

That the recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 31 July 2024 be adopted.

Carried

3.2 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, Advisory and External Committees were presented.

July 2024

| | |
|--------------|---|
| 24 July 2024 | Assembly of Councillors – Business Review |
|--------------|---|

Cr Hearn / Cr King:

That the report be noted.

Carried

Officer Reports

4.1 Audit and Risk Committee Chair Report

Audit and Risk Committee chairperson Cameron Gray presented a report on the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee in 2023/24.

Cr Hearn / Cr O'Brien:

That the *Audit and Risk Committee 2023/24 Activity Report* be accepted.

Carried

4.2 Audit and Risk Committee Independent Member – Vacant Position

The report discussed the vacant independent member position on the Audit and Risk Committee.

Cr Firth / Cr King:

That expressions of interest for vacant Audit and Risk Committee Independent Member positions be invited.

Carried

It is noted that Councillor Bernie Hearn declared a conflict of interest in the following item and left the meeting at 5.45pm.

4.3 2024/2025 Major Events Grant Funding Program

The report presented funding applications for the 2024/25 Major Event Funding Program.

Cr King / Cr Firth:

That a \$2,000 grant from the 2024/25 Major Event Funding program be allocated to the Benalla Racing Club.

Carried

Councillor Bernie Hearn returned to the meeting at 5.47pm.

DC

4.4 Benalla Rural City Council *Financial Hardship Policy* Review

The report presented for consideration the *Financial Hardship Policy*.

Cr Hearn / Cr King:

1. That the *Financial Hardship Policy* be adopted.
2. That the *Financial Hardship Policy* be reviewed in August 2028.

Carried

It is noted that Councillor Gail O'Brien declared a conflict of interest in the following item and left the meeting at 5.45pm.

4.5 Establishment of Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee

The report discusses the establishment of the *Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee* and the appointment of members to the committee.

Cr King / Cr Hearn:

1. That the Community Asset Committee known as the *Benalla Art Gallery Committee* be dissolved.
2. That the *Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee* be established.
3. That the *Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee Terms of Reference* be adopted.
4. That Councillor Danny Claridge and Councillor Punarji Hewa Gunaratne be appointed as the 2024 Councillor Representatives on the *Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee*.
5. That the President of the Friends of the Benalla Art Gallery Inc. and a representative of the Benalla Art Gallery Foundation be appointed to the *Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee* until 7 August 2027.
6. That the following nominees be appointed as general committee members of the *Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee* until 7 August 2027:
 - Barbara Alexander AO
 - Tim Abdallah
 - Anna Parle
 - Fiona Stephens
 - Alice Tallis.

Carried

Councillor Gail O'Brien returned to the meeting at 5.58pm.

DC

4.6 2024 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey

The report presented results from the *2024 Local Government Community Satisfaction survey*.

Cr O'Brien / Cr Firth:

That the *2024 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey* be received.

Carried

4.7 Councillors' Expenses For The Quarter Ended 30 June 2024

The report detailed expenditure associated with Councillors' mobile phone usage, attendance at professional development courses, conferences and seminars, and reimbursement of expenses incurred.

Cr Firth / Cr Hearn:

That the report be noted.

Carried

4.8 Mayor and Councillors' Attendance at Committees and Civic Functions

The Mayor and Councillors, listed in alphabetical order, attended meetings and events as detailed below during the period from 10 June 2024 to 28 July 2024.

Cr Hearn / Cr King:

That the report be noted.

Carried

4.9 CEO Credit Card For The Quarter Ended 30 June 2024

The report detailed expenditure associated with the corporate credit card issued to the Chief Executive Officer for the quarter ended 30 June 2024.

Cr Hearn / Cr King:

That the report be noted.

Carried

4.10 Council Actions Pending

Council Actions Pending are detailed in **Appendix 1**.

Cr King / Cr Hearn:
That the report be noted.

Carried

5. Reports by Councillors

Councillor Justin King reported on his attendance at:

- Benalla Festival Advisory Committee meeting on Thursday 13 June 2024.
- Benalla College P-12 Humanities class visit to the Benalla Civic Centre with the Mayor Cr Danny Claridge and Cr Bernie Hearn and Cr Gail O'Brien on Thursday 25 July 2024.

Councillor Gail O'Brien reported on her attendance at:

- NAIDOC Week Flag Raising Ceremony at Benalla Civic Centre on Tuesday 9 July 2024.
- NAIDOC week activities held at Lakeside Community Centre on Tuesday 9 July 2024.
- National Tree Planting Day event held in Benalla on Sunday 28 July 2024.
- Benalla Health Winter Ball held at Benalla Town Hall on Saturday 3 August 2024.

Councillor Don Firth reported on his attendance at:

- First Benalla Indoor Recreation Committee Steering Committee meeting with Cr Bernie Hearn on Thursday 1 August 2024.

Councillor Bernie Hearn reported on her attendance at:

- Benalla Foott Waste CDC Depot site visit with Mayor Cr Danny Claridge and Cr Don Firth on Friday 28 June 2024.

Councillor Danny Claridge reported on his attendance:

- Benalla Migrant Camp pop-up exhibition held at the Benalla Visitor Information Centre on 21 July 2024.

Cr Hearn / Cr King:
That the reports be noted.

Carried

6. Notices of Motion

No notices of motion were submitted to the meeting.

7. Notices of Rescission Motion

No notices of rescission motion were submitted to the meeting.

8. Urgent Business

The Mayor has proposed that the following matter be admitted under urgent business.

It is noted that Councillor Gail O'Brien declared a conflict of interest in the following item and left the meeting at 6.19pm.

8.1 Correspondence Received: Changes to Benalla Health and Other Health Services

Cr Claridge / Cr Hearn:

That correspondence received from local doctors regarding changes to Benalla Health and Victorian Health Services be admitted as urgent business.

Carried

The correspondence discussed alleged Victorian Government operational and governance changes to Benalla Health and other health services including a 20 percent reduction in annual budget funding.

Cr Claridge / Cr King:

- 1. That the Council seek an urgent meeting with the Benalla Health Board to discuss the issues raised in the letter.**
- 2. That the Council write to the Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas seeking information about the proposed amalgamation and budget cuts at Benalla Health.**

Carried

Councillor Gail O'Brien returned to the meeting at 6.31pm.



Confidential Business

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

- 9.1 Tender For Contract CM24.108 Supply and Delivery of Two Medium Rigid Trucks and One Heavy Rigid Truck
- 9.2 Tender For Contract CM24.096 Spray Sealing Works on Various Council Roads 2024/2025 Program
- 9.3 Confidential Reports by Councillors
- 9.4 Confidential Council Actions Pending

Cr Hearn / Cr King:

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

10. Reopening of the meeting to the public

Cr O'Brien / Cr Hearn:

That the meeting be reopened to the public.


Carried

Closure of the meeting

The Council Meeting closed at 6.50pm.

The minutes were confirmed on the eleventh day of September 2024.

Signed:



Mayor Cr Danny Claridge