

**MAESTEG TOWN COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING**

Minutes of a meeting of the **FINANCE COMMITTEE** held remotely via Microsoft Teams, on **Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021**.

**PRESENT:**

**COUNCILLORS:**       **C Reeves (CHAIR)**  
R Collins, AR Davies, P Davies, A James, R Lewis,  
R Martin, W May, R Penhale-Thomas, S Smith,  
G Thomas, L Thomas and I Williams.

**APOLOGIES** from Cllrs L Beedle, P Jenkins and P White.

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST:**

Cllrs R Lewis, C Reeves and I Williams declared an interest in items that may relate to Llangynwyd Middle Community Council.

Cllr L Thomas declared an interest in items that may relate to AWEN Cultural Trust

Cllrs R Collins, P Davies and R Penhale-Thomas declared an interest in items that may relate to Bridgend County Borough Council

94. **TO DISCUSS RIGHTS OF WAY CONTRACTOR RESIGNATION LETTER**

The Clerk received and forwarded a resignation letter from the Rights of Way Contractor to all members. This was then requested to be placed as an urgent item onto the Finance Committee meeting due to the knock-on effect on the Council's finances.

It was agreed to discuss this agenda item first (previously 5) as Mr White was present for the meeting as a member of the public so would not need to wait for the other agenda items to be discussed.

The Clerk shared the letter on the screen during the meeting for those members that had not read the email and read out the resignation letter.

A member queried the discussing of sensitive information outside of the Council in regards to the content of the resignation letter and that losing a key contractor would impact the Council financially. The Member raised other concerns whereby members of the public were openly aware of what was to be discussed at meetings despite the sensitivity of items discussed. Within the resignation letter the ROW Contractor alluded to the way in which his invoices were being

analysed and felt that there was no trust between the Council and himself, the member raising the concerns about sensitive information being leaked advised that this was unprofessional of Members to discuss outside of the Council. Another member interjected that all invoices are discussed openly in the Full Council Meetings which are open to the public and therefore the sharing of said information would not breach any confidentiality terms.

Several members thanked Mr White for his service and added that they were disappointed to see him go. A member did state that when Mr Whites contract was discussed previously there were no accusations presented which were mentioned within the resignation letter and added that discussions regarding his contract were only for scrutiny in regards to budgeting concerns from the Council.

It was agreed to write a thankyou letter to Mr White thanking him for his service of 11 years.

Mr White was asked if he would like to add any comments from tonight's discussion, to which Mr White declined.

#### 95. **TO DISCUSS THE BUDGET**

Members were requested to keep the budget pages from the last Full Council meeting to discuss in this meeting. The Chair of Finance asked members if they had any questions regarding the budget as it stood at the end of June 2021.

- 1) GT queried how the council would reclaim funds from the MTC-CAT grant scheme from BCBC?

The Clerk advised that once payments had been made by MTC, an invoice requesting the 40% BCBC funding is sent by email to the BCBC CAT Grant Officer for reimbursement.

- 2) GT queried the Staffing costs compared to the budget as in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter a third of the budget for Staffing had been paid.

The Clerk advised that when the Budget was prepared, there wasn't a Deputy Clerk or CMO employed at the time although the Deputy Clerk salary had been budgeted for. The CMO position was only agreed to after the ROW Contractor has stipulated that he would be retiring at the end of December 2021 and Council felt that it would be imperative to employ a CMO to be trained by the ROW contractor before he retired. Members agreed to recommend moving money from reserves to cover the Salary payments.

- 3) GT queried the Premises Costs as in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 40% of the budget had been used and if this was to continue then we would be over spent.

The Clerk advised that in June 2021 the invoice for the Grade II\* Building Condition Survey & Maintenance Report was received. The Clerk queried whether this should have been placed under Premises or a separate budget column for all Building repairs that were necessary to make the building safe. Members agreed that this cost would move into a separate column and money moved from Capital Projects.

- 4) The Clerk advised that she had spoken to the Chair of Finance and requested that for easy of reporting in the monthly tracking of the budget that an additional column be added to the database as 'spend to date' for simpler tracking of the budget which was agreed by the council.
- 5) A member queried where would the Van & Equipment for CMO be costed?

The Chair of Finance advised to add a budget line.

- 6) LT asked, due to the stationed capital within the Town Councils accounts, that the Council seek advice on investing a percentage of the funds to increase the Council's income. It was noted that the main business account had an extremely low interest rate returning close to nil benefit. Members deliberated this request and were in favour of enquiring about how short-term investments could make the Council's money work, however were mindful that there could be many risks involved.

It was agreed to recommend that advice be sought from OVW and from other larger Councils.

WM noted that there were rules and regulations pertaining to T&CC's regarding investing money.

96. **TO DISCUSS AND COMPLETE A RISK ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE**  
Members were provided with an example Risk Assessment (RA) from another T&CC and a blank RA for completing. The Clerk advised that within the blank RA details from the Insurance policy had been added for clarity on what was covered within the insurance policy.

The Chair of Finance advised that there had been a few complaints received as to the length of the RA document and that it would be too difficult to complete as a full committee. It was suggested that a smaller sub-committee be created to complete the RA and report back to Council.

Members agreed that the Chair of Finance, Deputy Mayor and Clerk meet to complete the RA.

In addition to the discussion members raised the importance of fire safety and first aid which needed to be a priority for the Council. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor advised that they had completed extensive training in both as part of their professional careers outside of the Council which they still operate within.

97. **TO DISCUSS CONTRACT REVIEWS: SCRUTINY OF CURRENT REGULAR CONTRACTS TO BE POTENTIALLY LOOKED AT BY SUBCOMMITTEES TO SEE IF ANY SAVINGS CAN BE MADE BY THE COUNCIL**

The Chair of Finance advised that some contracts were reviewed last year and savings were made. Members then deliberated which contracts could be reviewed this year and it was agreed that the following be reviewed:

**1) Summer and Winter Street Planter displays & watering**

A member asked if this was for separate contracts or as an all-in contract where both be fulfilled by the same company to which it was agreed that both options could be tendered for companies can provide quotes for summer or winter display or both if they have the resources to do so.

**2) ITCS**

The Chair of Finance advised this would be for the Communications Committee to review

**3) Public Toilet in Car Park**

Members were advised that the contract for this had been emailed to the Property, H&S Committee Members. A member from the committee advised that he had a few comments with the contract and stated that MTC were tied into a 15-year lease and not a 25-year lease as previously advised.

Additionally, this 15-year lease is coming to an end and auto renews unless an 18-month notice period is given which gives MTC 6 months from now to provide (January 2022 at the latest).

The Chair of Finance advised that this would be for the Property, H&S Committee to discuss in greater detail and that Legal Advice could be sought if deemed necessary. GT advised that the contract clearly states its terms and no legal advice would be necessary.

98. **ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEM**

Given the nature of the business and the discussion on purchasing processes it was decided to exclude the public from the meeting as per

**RESOLVED: THAT THE COUNCIL GO INTO COMMITTEE**

**Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and Local Government Act 1972, ss100 & 102 ‘Members of the public/press can be excluded by resolution if publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of confidential nature of the business and arising out of the business to be transacted’**

99. **RESOLVED: THAT THE COUNCIL COME OUT OF COMMITTEE**

100. **RECCOMENDATIONS:**

- a) Write a thank you letter to Mr G White for his service
- b) Move money from reserves to cover Salary payments
- c) Add Grade II\* building Maintenance column to budget and move the Building Condition Survey and Maintenance Report invoice into this budget column
- d) Move money from Capital Projects to Grade II\* maintenance column
- e) Add ‘Money Spend to Date’ Column in the budget spreadsheet
- f) Contact OVW for advice on investments
- g) Sub-Committee to meet to complete the Risk Assessment and report back to Council
- h) Summer & Winter Street Planter displays & watering go out to tender
- i) Communications Committee to meet to discuss ITCS Contract
- j) Property, H&S Committee to meet to discuss Public Toilet Contract

**Minutes emailed to all Councillors to Read on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021**

**Minutes accepted at a remote meeting of the Council  
held on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021**

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Mayor