



MINUTES

**Special Meeting of Council
Held on Thursday 2 November 2023**

Civic Centre, Council Chambers
24 Stuart Highway, Katherine NT 0850



1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the first nations people of the Katherine township and surrounding council communities. We recognise the first nations culture as one of the longest surviving cultures in the world and we pay our respects to Elders both past, present and future.

2 OPENING PRAYER

Grant O God to this Council wisdom, understanding and sincerity of purpose in the Governance of this Municipality. Amen

3 OPENING OF THE MEETING

Mayor Clark declared the Special Meeting of Council 2 November 2023 open at 12:01 pm.

4 ATTENDANCE

4.1 PRESENT

ELECTED MEMBERS

- Mayor Elisabeth Clark (Chair)
- Deputy Mayor Denis Coburn
- Councillor Amanda Kingdon
- Councillor Peter McDougall
- Councillor Kerrie Mott

OFFICERS

- Ms Ingrid Stonhill – Chief Executive Officer
- Mr Avtar Singh - Director Corporate Services
- Ms Rosemary Jennings – Director Community Services
- Mr Brendan Pearce – Director Infrastructure and Environment
- Amanda Haigh – Governance and Executive Officer (minute taker)
- Staff x 2

PUBLIC - Matthew Ward, KPMG

4.2 APOLOGIES

COUNCIL RESOLUTION SMC-2023-10

Moved: Deputy Mayor Coburn; **Seconded:** Councillor Kingdon

That Council accepts the apology of Councillor Bower and Councillor Trembath.

CARRIED 5|0

FOR: Mayor Clark, Deputy Mayor Coburn, Councillor Kingdon, Councillor McDougall and Councillor Mott
AGAINST: Nil

4.3 LEAVE OF ABSENCE

5 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded members of their responsibility to declare any conflicts of interest.

Nil conflicts declared.

6 REPORTS OF OFFICERS

6.1 KATHERINE TOWN COUNCIL 2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT

COUNCIL RESOLUTION SMC-2023-11

Moved: Deputy Mayor Coburn; **Seconded:** Councillor McDougall

1. That Council approve the Katherine Town Council 2022/2023 Annual Report incorporating the Audited Financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2023.
2. That Council note that in accordance with Section 290 (1) of the *Local Government Act 2019*, the approved Katherine Town Council 2022/2023 Annual Report incorporating the Audited Financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2023 will be provided to the Minister for Local Government on or before 15 November 2023.
3. That Council note that in accordance with Section 290 (2), the endorsed Katherine Town Council Annual Report 2022/2023 incorporating the Audited Financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2023 will be published on Council's website and provide a copy to the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet, after the report has been delivered to the Minister, and publish a notice in a newspaper as soon as practicable.

CARRIED 4 | 1

FOR: Mayor Clark, Deputy Mayor Coburn, Councillor Kingdon and Councillor McDougall

AGAINST: Councillor Mott

Discussion

CEO spoke to the annual report process outside of financials and acknowledged the staff, Casey Anderson, Amanda Haigh and Sharna Ross hard work to develop the report especially with no communication officer to put the document together. There has been so many firsts for Council in 2022/23 especially Councils focus on Priority: Strong Governance and Leadership with accomplishing: a risk management framework, integrity training about ICAC, financial overhaul, workforce development and wellness including a Diploma of Leadership and Management completed by staff; the development of a Wellness Strategy, metal fitness training, branding upgrade and new uniforms, kindness award, fleet trackers; internal upgrade of IT systems and training; improved processes for service requests; regulatory service applied the amended by-laws; more outward communications and improvement in how we communicate to stakeholders. All this has developed organisation to a well oiled machine but there is still room for improvements, evident in the quality of service provided to the town. The Financial Audit is a result of an outstanding Corporate Services team and thanked KPMG for the process as easy as possible, really want to acknowledge outstanding result.

The CEO also sincerely acknowledged and thanked Sharna Ross who is at her last council meeting as she is leaving due to moving interstate, "thankyou for the journey you have taken with me and the extraordinary contribution to Council".

Further discussion of council included recognising that the Youth Advisory Committee is included as the report relates to 2022/23 year.

Councillor Kingdon acknowledged the extraordinary work done for the report that is very transparent. Really impressed and am looking forward to wonderful year ahead. The financial statements have put the council in a good position.

Matt Ward, KPMG explained the audit is now finished with a very smooth process. KPMG worked well with Avtar Singh and team, even with staff shortages, to complete in the timeframe. Noting that not all councils are in same position to sign off. Key focus areas of the report and findings, with no significant issues to report. The Audit financials were presented to the Audit and Risk Management Committee on 25 October 2023. There is no issues to highlight with the council. The result is a signed clean audit report, that went really well, noting a stable team makes a big difference, and the collaborative relationship that KMPG and Katherine Town Council have.

Further explained the financial statements from a result perspective with main movement in higher rates income, mostly from general rates and Waste charges and higher income from user charges. The grant income decreased but due to timing not recognised up front. Investment income and interest rates has increased. Employee costs increased by \$300k, up 5-6%. The profit recognition driving operating surplus movement is because of accrual accounting basis. No area of concern with the result in decrease in surplus.

Employment expenses have increased due to the standard EBA 3% wage increase impact that also includes on costs increase. Noted that expenditure against budget is down. Also this is inline with the current market of retaining staff and competition for talent.

Mayor congratulated all staff and CEO, acknowledging that an extremely lot of hours have gone into the development of the report and the audited financials. Commending all for the hard work and is a lot of work in the report and keeping us compliant, deserving a round of applause.

Cr Mott advised that she had not seen the report therefore must vote against, not sufficient time to read. Deputy Mayor suggested the meeting could wait while Cr Mott read the auditors report and asked questions of the auditor. Cr Mott declined.

7 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The Special Meeting of Council 2 November 2023 was declared closed at 12:24 pm.