

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE.

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT THE AULA
MAXIMA, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY
ON MONDAY 22ND SEPTEMBER, 2014
ADDRESS BY MARTIN J. WALSH, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF BOSTON.**

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Cllr. M. Hoade, Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

ILATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill:

Cllrs. D. Burke, J. Byrne, N. Byrne, S. Canney, J. Charity, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, G. Cronnelly, Comh. S. Ó Cualáin, Cllrs. J. Cuddy, S. Cuniffe, Comh. T. Ó Curraoin, Cllrs. S. Donnellan, A. Donohue, M. Fahy, M. Finnerty, M. Fitzmaurice, T. Healy, P. Hynes, F. Kearney, P. Keaveney, M. Kinane, M. Maher, E. Mannion, J. McClearn, K. McHugh, T. McHugh, M. Noone, A. Rabbitte, P. Roche, N. Thomas, Comh S. Ó Tuairisg, Cllrs. S. Walsh, T. Welby

Oifigigh:

Mr. K. Kelly, Chief Executive, Interim; Messrs. J. Cullen, L. Gavin, P. Gavican, Directors of Service; Ms. C. McConnell, Acting Director of Service; Messrs. G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance; M. Owens, County Secretary & Meetings Administrator; P. Ó Neachtain Oifigeach Gaeilge; Ms. G. Healy, Staff Officer.

On the opening of the Meeting, it was agreed, following the proposal of Cllr. Hynes, seconded by Cllr. Fahy, to defer the Ordinary Meeting of the Council, scheduled for 11 a.m. in the Aula Maxima, NUIG, to 12.30 p.m. in the Bailey Allen Hall, NUIG.

ADDRESS BY THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

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Chuir an Cathaoirleach, Comh. Máire Ní Hódach, fáilte roimh an Méara Walsh, chuig an gCruinniú Speisialta de Chomhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe a bhí dhá ghairm ina onóir. Duirt sí gur ócáid stairiúil a bhí ann, ócáid fáilte, ócáid Gaillimheach agus ócáid Muintearais.

Cllr. Mary Hoade, Cathaoirleach of Galway County Council, said that it was her great privilege and honour to extend to the Mayor of Boston, Martin J. Walsh, a most sincere and warm Céad Míle Fáilte to this Special Meeting of Galway County Council which was held in his honour. She said that this was a historic occasion, a welcoming occasion, a strong Galway occasion and an occasion of sincere friendship.

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She also welcomed Mayor Walsh's mother Mary home to her roots and extended a warm Galway welcome to his partner Lorrie, to Mary O'Keeffe, State Representative, Eugene O'Flaherty, Corporation Counsel, his wife Trisha and to the Mayor's full entourage.

She said that the Mayor's acceptance of the Council's invitation to address a Special Meeting of Galway County Council bestowed a great honour on the Members and was an appropriate and fitting acknowledgement of the close ties of friendship that both the Mayor and the Members enjoy and value so highly.

Galway people have a long and proud history in the United States and while Boston serves as a new home for emigrants from all over the world, the story of the Boston Irish community is a particularly remarkable one. There is no doubt that the Irish have made a special contribution to the development of modern Boston, there is of course the extraordinary contribution made to the public services including the police services, fire services, medical services and also many other aspects of public life.

The ties that come from the common experience shared between Galway and Boston are strong and have left a mark in many positive ways, gifting our country and especially our county with a generous and supportive extended family in Boston, she said.

The Cathaoirleach said that Mayor Walsh and his family are part of the story of Irish emigration to the U.S. She said that his late father John Walsh, in leaving Caladh Mháinse, Carna in 1956 and his mother Mary O'Malley leaving Ros Cide, Rosmuc in 1959, became part of Ireland's migrant story. They seized the opportunities presented to them, meeting in the dance hall on Dudley Street, marrying and settling in Taft Street Dorchester, raising a family, contributing to their community, providing support to the Irish community of Boston, while maintaining close ties to home. According to all accounts the Walsh home, in which the Mayor was reared in Boston, had a reputation of being most welcoming and generous. No one was ever left on the doorstep, all were welcomed in.

She recited an old Irish proverb 'Is treise dúchas ná oiliúint' 'Heritage or family values are stronger than any training' and she said that we here in Galway feel that this is true about Mayor Walsh.

"Is iad na tréithe Conamarach agus Gaillimheach sin a chreideann muid atá a sní trí do chuid fola chomh maith agus dúchas Chonamara agus na Gaillimhe go do threorú agus tú in oifig an Mhéara", a deir sí.

She said "it is Conamara and Galway traits that we believe are coursing through your veins while the heritage and values of Conamara and County Galway inform and guide your gut instincts in your role as Mayor".

These Conamara traits have a proven track record, with Denis McDonagh, White House Chief of Staff, Joseph Brennan, former Governor of Maine, Senator Margaret Creaven of Maine State and former Senator John E. McDonagh, Professor of Health Policy at Harvard University all enjoying direct family links with Connemara.

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It is a cause of massive pride for the Carna area, for the Ros Muc area, for Conamara and for County Galway that one of our own is now on the tiller in a major city in America.

She said she knows that Mayor Walsh is aware of the immense interest that the communities of Carna and Ros Muc, of Conamara and indeed County Galway have shown in his political career, during his years in the Massachusetts House of Representatives and his campaign for and election as Mayor of Boston. The warmth of the welcome he received in Ros Muc and Carna is a reflection of the esteem in which he is held and of the shared pride in his achievements.

She said Galway is fortunate that Mayor Walsh has retained deep connections to his Galway roots and heritage, through the many summers spent in Ros Muc during his childhood, to his keen interest the development of the county and in particular Conamara. His support for various projects and initiatives in Conamara, is noteworthy, including his support for developing critical road infrastructure, maintaining services including the bus service and indeed his support for Coiste Ionad Cuimhneachán – the Emigrants Commemorative Centre in Carna. The fact that he has chosen a trip to Ireland and Galway as his first official foreign trip as Mayor of Boston is a clear testament to the importance he attaches to his Galway roots. She said he has also encouraged others to visit the county and during his time in the House of Representatives and during his term as Mayor, he has welcomed many visitors from Galway, including in recent months receiving visitors from the boxing club in Carna who were afforded the opportunity to take part in an open air boxing exhibition on the City Hall Square. She said she is aware that the Mayor is deeply committed to further strengthening the strong economic, cultural and political ties that have been forged through many generations and the Members look forward to partnering him in these efforts.

She said she is aware that one of Mayor Walsh's goals is to nurture and grow the 'spirit of Boston' which he has described as a spirit of determination and resiliency, a spirit of ambition and teamwork, a spirit of unity, a spirit that he intends to nurture and grow by building relationships.

She said she is confident that his visit as Mayor of Boston will further strengthen the strong bonds he enjoys with our county and that the links between Boston and the County of Galway will, through our shared efforts, continue to deepen, endure and prosper.

The Cathaoirleach then invited the Mayor of the City of Boston to address this Special Meeting of Galway County Council convened in his honour.

The Mayor of Boston thanked Cllr. Mary Hoade, Cathaoirleach and all of the Members of Galway County Council for their very warm welcome and hospitality. He introduced some members of his entourage, Mary O'Keeffe, State Representative, and Eugene O'Flaherty, Corporation Counsel to the Members.

He said his journey back to Galway was a very emotional one, returning as Mayor of the great city of Boston to the place from which his parents had emigrated. He said he was delighted to be home in Galway reconnecting with the people, especially the people in Carna and Rosmuc. He said he was deeply touched by the warmth of his reception and hoped the forging of new bonds and friendships would foster links, including economic and business links, between Galway and Boston.

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He recounted how his father left Carna at the age of 15 to work in Athenry picking potatoes for a local farmer and then travelled to England in 1956 to find work as a labourer on the building sites with so many other Irish at that time. From there he went on to the United States to seek out new opportunities. His mother left Rosmuc for America in 1959 at the age of 17 and found employment there as a nanny and housekeeper.

His parents were glad they made the journey to Boston because they met and married there. They built a house in Dorchester and went on to have two sons, Martin J. and John. The U.S. is built on emigrants like his parents, people who left their native soil at a young age to seek out employment and make a new life for themselves.

He said Galway is a beautiful county and he thanked the officials for their work in providing public services for the people of Galway and for investing in infrastructure and the natural and cultural heritage of the county.

He is confident that there is potential to develop cultural links through tourism development. “It is a mode that has saved countless local cultures from extinction by marrying their preservation to regional economic goals” he said. He said that through investment and by working together, the tourism industry in Conamara can be expanded.

He said that the Irish have wisely invested heavily in heritage-based tourism in places like his parents native place, Conamara, and he hopes to increase tourism in Boston by replicating Ireland’s commitment to its natural heritage.

He is also impressed by the education system in Ireland and he intends to study Ireland’s system as he feels that perhaps the U.S. can learn from it.

He said his achievements to date are as a result of the strong Irish values invested in him by his parents and he will cherish the memory of his visit back to Galway throughout his political career and especially his term as Mayor of Boston, a city which has such close links with Ireland and Galway.

Once again he thanked the Cathaoirleach and the Members for holding this Special Meeting in his honour and he said he will keep the memory of his visit to Galway close to his heart during his Term as Mayor of the City of Boston.

Cathaoirleach Mary Hoade then called on the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District of Conamara, Cllr. Seamus Walsh, to address the Mayor of the City of Boston.

Cllr. Walsh extended a warm welcome to Mayor Walsh and said that the people of Conamara are delighted to have him back to Galway, from whence he came. The people of Conamara have a very special claim to Mayor Walsh and are especially proud of him. Although separated by time and a generation and thousands of miles, the people of Conamara know he is never far away from them.

He said reaching back to when the Mayor’s father and mother left Conamara in the 1950’s and when they went to Boston, he wonders if they could have dreamed that their son would return home one day as Mayor of Boston.

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“I also wonder Mr. Mayor, that if your parents had not taken the Bád Bán, would you be sitting here as Councillor for Conamara or by now gracing the seats of Leinster House as a Senator or even, Teachta Dála for Galway West” he said.

Cllr. Walsh continued by saying that as President of the Laborers Local 223 Union and secretary-treasurer and general agent of the Boston Metropolitan District Building Trades Council, Martin J. Walsh was the standard bearer for a proud Walsh tradition. His Uncle Pat preceded him as champion of the Trade Union movement and was the man and is still the legend who helped so many Irish, who went to Boston, to make good.

On behalf of Mayor Walsh’s native people, Cllr. Walsh once again welcomed him home, he saluted him and thanked him for his powerful service. He wished him continued success and hoped that in some small way the people of Conamara and Galway could help to make these few days the brightest part of his sentimental journey.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Mary Hoade, then invited the Chief Executive, Mr. Kevin Kelly, to address the Mayor.

The Chief Executive joined with the Cathaoirleach of Galway County Council, the Cathaoirleach of the Conamara Municipal District and all of the Members in extending a warm welcome to the Mayor of Boston to this Special Meeting which was convened in his honour.

He said Ireland has a population of 6m while there are in excess of 44m of Irish diaspora in the U.S. Our emigrants have worked hard and contributed to making Boston a thriving city. The Irish diaspora have been to the fore in consolidating industry for Ireland and in particular Galway by bringing multi-nationals here which give employment to local people. Galway has a young demographic, a strong infrastructural base and excellent 3rd level colleges which produce a well educated and dynamic workforce. On the other hand, Boston serves as an ideal base for Galway businesses to set up.

He said it is evident that the Mayor has an interest in fostering links with Galway and this is very welcome. He said he hopes that by sharing experiences and learning from each other, economic development can be fostered which will extend business both in Galway and in Boston.

He noted that the evidence of the strong ties between the U.S. and Ireland is visible in the number of U.S. multinational companies that have decided to make Ireland, and especially Galway, their home. This is vital for Galway, as these firms specialise in the main in science, technology and innovation which greatly benefits the local economy and provides jobs for a large number of people.

The Chief Executive concluded by saying that he hoped the warmth of Mayor Walsh’s reception in Galway would remain with him until he has an opportunity to return.

Signing of the Distinguished Visitor’s Book

The Cathaoirleach invited the Mayor to sign the Council’s Distinguished Visitor’s Book to mark this historic occasion.

Presentation of Gifts

The Cathaoirleach, on behalf of the people of Galway at home and abroad, presented a specially commissioned handmade scale model of a Galway Hooker, crafted by Jim Horgan, Na Forbacha, Galway School of Boat Building.

She said the Galway Hooker is intrinsically linked with Conamara. These beautiful boats which have three distinctive dark red-brown sails on a single mast were designed for their great strength and pace which enables them to sail in both shallow waters and stormy seas. It is a sturdy craft. She said she hopes it serves to guide the Mayor of Boston and in his future career and serve as a reminder of his second home here in Galway and encourage him to cross the Atlantic on many future occasions.

The Cathaoirleach also presented the Mayor with specially commissioned Conamara wool felt art by Conamara artist, Sandra O'Connor, as gifts for his partner Lorrie and his mother Mary. The wool art reflects the colour and texture of Conamara, a place of ethereal scenery, fascinating history, and endearing people. She said she hopes that the scenes depicted in Conamara wool will evoke fond memories that will never fade and support a desire to return.

The Mayor of Boston then presented a Silver Paul Revere Bowl to the Cathaoirleach

The Cathaoirleach wished Mayor Walsh great success in his term as the Mayor of the beautiful and resilient City of Boston and also on his political career into the future, in which the people of Galway will continue to show a keen interest. She said she hopes that his County Galway roots and heritage will guide him in achieving all of his goals and in meeting the challenges that lie ahead.

Dúirt sí “A Mhéara, bí cinnte den deá mhéin agus deá ghuí atáimid a sheoladh in éindí leat agus tá súil againn go mbeidh ar do chumas a theacht ar ais ar cuairt chugainn arís sar i bhfad. Guím gach rath ort i do thréimhse mar Mhéara ar Chathair ársa Bhoston agus ar do shaol polaitíochta sa todhchaí. Tá súil againn go dtreoróidh do dhúchas Gaillimheach thú ar bhealach do leasa sna blianta atá romhat.”

She said “Mr. Mayor, be assured that you carry with you our goodwill and best wishes and indeed we hope that the demands of your office will allow you the opportunity to return in the not too distant future and until then be assured that you carry with you our deep and warm affection”.

CHRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNÍÚ ANSIN.