

## Minutes of Ballinasloe Municipal District Meeting 2016

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MINUTES OF DRAFT BUDGETARY PLAN 2016 OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBERS, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL ON 28<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER, 2016 AT 2pm.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Donal Burke

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill: Cllr. Donal Burke  
Cllr. Michael Finnerty  
Cllr. Michael Connolly  
Cllr. Dermot Connolly  
Cllr. Tim Broderick  
Cllr. Aidan Donohue

Oifigigh: Mr Ger Mullarkey, Head of Finance  
Mr Liam Gavin, Director of Services  
Mr Michael McGovern, Financial Accountant  
Ms. Anne Gardiner, Administrative Officer  
Mr. Adrian Headd, Senior Executive Engineer  
Ms. Catherine McConnell, Director of Services

- The Chairperson for the meeting Cllr Donal Burke welcomed everyone to the meeting. The single item Agenda was "To consider & adopt (with or without amendment) under Section 58 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 a Draft Budgetary Plan 2017 for the Municipal District of Ballinasloe "
- Head of Finance Ger Mullarkey thanked everyone for attending. He began with a brief overview, and explained that the CCMA and the Department of Finance are having discussions about streamlining the Budgetary process but for now it will be the same as last year. He stated that the same approach was taken as last year in relation to the level of services, there was no increase and they are working hard to ensure there are no reductions. He also stated that the Roads allocation is €125,000 higher than the 2016 figure country wide which is allocated on a kilometre basis per Municipal District. In 2016 Loughrea and Athenry/Oranmore Municipal District got €250,000 in funds, Tuam Municipal District would get this level of funding in 2016 and Ballinasloe will be getting it in due course. He stated that the Community Grants, Recreational Development and Contributions to other Bodies Arts Programme would remain the same. The plan was to incorporate the Draft Budget MD plans the full Council Budget due for presentation on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016.

Cllr. Michael Connolly thanked Ger for the document. He stated that it was good news that it was along the same lines as last year and that this showed a continuation of service levels. He stated that whilst they took the difficult decision last month on Local Property Tax, they as Councillors had to ensure that the Council was adequately funded. He understood the decision to increase LPT. He welcomed the fact that there is an increase in the roads budget, however small

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that increase is. He felt that it was important to say in the presence of the Councils Engineers that there is a deficit going back a number of years in relation to secondary and tertiary roads. He would like to see that addressed. He stated that it is not good enough any more to say to people that they live down a small road with very few houses and therefore are to be neglected. In relation to Housing he stated that the Ballinasloe area is also largely rural and he wanted to see people have the opportunity to build homes and live in the area. He finished by complementing his colleagues for making difficult decisions when they needed to be made and that we have maintained our front line services and this was very important.

Cllr. Dermot Connolly stated that he had a few questions. Firstly he queried what criteria was used to allocate €500,000 to the Municipal Districts. He questioned would Ballinasloe not have had first call considering their roads were deteriorating badly. In relation to the Adopted 2016 Budget he queried why there was no figures for Maintenance of Traveller Accommodation Units and Estate Maintenance. In relation to the main Burial Grounds, he wondered if there was adequate funding. He stated that there was an increase of 10% in property tax & would Ballinasloe see these monies. He stated that while he didn't agree with the increase he understood it. In his opinion there is no equity in the funding of Local Government and that we are victims here in Galway and at a huge disadvantage. He stated that this is why we should take a stand and not adopt these budgets. He stated that people are been taxed to the hilt and then being discriminated against by virtue of where they live.

Cllr Michael Finnerty questioned the one page document which they had received. He wanted to see both expenditure and income, to see exactly what money was coming in. He stated that he wanted it put on record the exceptional work our engineers do, and he would like to show his appreciation. In relation to Town Twinning he would like to see an increase in the amount of work they do. He wondered if there was any provision towards Galway 2020. He stated that there was a more cultural side to the Ballinasloe Fair this year and it was a huge success. He would like to build on this.

Ger Mullarkey (Head of Finance) responded to Cllr. Dermot Connolly & said that there were figures for Maintenance of Traveller Accommodation Units and Estate Maintenance, and that it wasn't that Ballinasloe didn't get an allocation but that the allocations were not available for the 2016 GMA meeting. He also wished to remind the Councillors that the total budget figure included non-discretionary costs such as Payroll, insurance, property tax. In relation to Burial Grounds he stated that there were burial ground grants available to each Municipal District. In relation to purchasing and extensions he noted that this was carried out in the Capital account and therefore not reflected in the Revenue Budget. He also noted that the budget for Sub Service F0504 Heritage/Interpretive Facilities Operations related to the Athenry Heritage Centre. In response to Cllr Michael Finnerty in relation to Town Twinning he stated that he will take on board the request but also that possibilities are limited, however he did acknowledge and appreciate the good work that is been done.

Cllr Tim Broderick started by stating that these draft budgets were an unfairly presented and that we did not have a comparative figures. He stated that he was confused by the document, he wondered do Ballinasloe MD get an increased GMA of €125,000 over 2016. He could only find €82,000 of a difference year on year. He questioned what the implications for regional roads are. He again stated that the document did not make sense and that we should be prioritising works /

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services / subservices. For example he said the bridge in Cappataggle should be treated as Priority one. In relation to Pitches, Parks and Open Spaces he wanted some clarification, he stated that they received commitment from a previous Director that money would be made available. He stated that Ballinasloe has got no extra allocation and there has to be an anomaly there.

Cllr Aidan Donohue thanks officials for producing the document. His query was in relation to "Rapid Costs", he queried what the €5,500 was spent on. He was disappointed to see the Bring Centres Operations was down by €3,500 as he stated recycling should be a growing area of activity.

Ger Mullarkey in response to Cllr Tim Broderick stated that Ballinasloe did not get an increased allocation of €125k but that this €125k that was a county-wide figure, the basis of allocation was per km of Road. He also stated that the local roads maintenance works was reduced in last years adopted GMA (comparative 2016 figure) for the potential impact of paid parking.

Mr Mullarkey confirmed that the reduction in the budget for Bring Centres Operations was as a result of a reduction in the tender cost for these services.

Liam Gavin, (Director of Services for Roads & Transportation), then addressed the Regional Roads Winter Maintenance question and stated that a portion is taken out of the Discretionary Maintenance Grant. He stated that this was the same procedure used as last year. He also stated that the Regional Roads Winter Maintenance Programme was operated as in previous years. In relation to the bridge at Cappataggle he agreed that this was a serious issue, which he said was also addressed last year. In relation to salting in times of frost, he agreed that it did need attention, and stated that it got that attention. He stated that if the winter is harsher they seek additional funding from the relevant Department who have been very accommodating in recent times.

Mr Mullarkey confirmed that the roads budget for the Ballinasloe Municipal District was showing an increase of €82,882 over the adopted general municipal allocation for 2016. Mr Gavin stated that the basis for Ballinasloe Roads allocations as in every other MD is on a per kilometre basis.

Cllr Michael Connolly proposed to adopt the Budget.

On a point of clarification Mr Mullarkey again confirmed that the roads budget for 2017 reflected an increase of €82,882 over the adopted budget for 2016.

Cllr Aidan Donohue then stated that it had been a tough task voting for the increase in Local Property Tax but it had to be made. He stated that this County had to continue to offer services & he was quite happy with the €82,000 increase in Budgets and while he would like a lot more funding, he believed it to be their duty to ask the executive to run the District to the best of their ability and for that reason he was seconding Cllr Michael Connollys proposal.

Cllr. Burke as chairperson of the meeting then stated that he had received a proposal from Cllr. Michael Connolly to adopt the Budget, this was seconded by Cllr. Donohue. Cllr. Burke then brought it to a vote. Ms Anne Gardiner Administrative Officer then in turn noted each Councillors vote. The proposal was to adopt the Budget. The Councillors voted as follows:

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Cllr. Tim Broderick	Against	Cllr. Michael Connolly	For
Cllr. Donal Burke	For	Cllr. Aidan Donoghue	For
Cllr. Dermot Connolly	Against	Cllr. Michael Finnerty	Abstain

The proposal was subsequently passed 3 to 2 with one abstention and the Municipal District area of Ballinasloe adopted the Budget.

*Do/Burke*

*Done 14/12/2016*