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**Minutes of Proceedings at Meeting of Cork County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Cork on 25th May 2020.**

**I LATHAIR**

**Comhairleoir Ian Ó Dubhghaill, Méara Chontae**

Comhairleoiri Ó Sé J.P., Ó Murchú Gerard, Ní Mhuineacháin G, Ó Héigheartaigh, Uí Thuama, Mac Uaid, Ó Cearbhaill, Ó Colmáin, Ó Murchú Caoimhín, Ó Coileáin D, Ó Murchú P.G.,Ó Donnabháin, MacCraith, Uí Daltún, Daltún Ó Suilleabháin, Barra, Sheppard, Rasmussen.

An Príomhfheidhmeannach, Oifigeach Feidhmiúcháin Sinsearach.

**PRESENT**

**Councillor Ian Doyle, County Mayor, presided.**

Councillor O’Shea J.P., Murphy Gerard, Moynihan G, Lynch, Hegarty, Twomey, Quaide, Carroll, Coleman, Murphy Kevin, O’Donovan, McGrath, D’Alton, Dalton-O’Sullivan, Barry, Sheppard, Rasmussen.

Chief Executive, Senior Executive Officer.

**[a] CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

***Proposed by Cllr. John Paul O’Shea* 1/5-2**

***Seconded by Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen***

**RESOLVED:**

“That the minutes of the Meeting held on 11th May 2020 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.”

**[b] VOTES OF SYMPATHY**

**TO:** The Old Head Signal Tower Committee on the death of their patron, Gregg Bemis. **2/5-2**

John Turner on the death of his brother in law Stephen Roche.

Mary Hickey on the death of her brother in law, Pat Hickey.

**[c] STATUTORY BUSINESS**

**Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001: 3/5-2**

**M28 Cork to Ringaskiddy Road Project**

“That the Council agrees to the making of an Agreement between Cork County Council and Cork City Council under Section 85 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 14 of the Roads Act, 1993, in the form as presented to them, for the carrying out by Cork County Council of the relevant statutory procedures, procuring the necessary design work, acquiring the land and carrying out of / procuring the construction works and such other powers, functions and duties necessary for the design, construction and completion of the M28 Cork to Ringaskiddy Road Project.”

***Proposed by Cllr. John Paul O’Shea***

***Seconded by Cllr. Seamus McGrath***

**[l] ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Commercial Rates and restart grant: 4(a)/5-2**

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* Members welcomed the Restart Grant recently introduced.
* It was queried if businesses who are now operating increasingly online will be eligible to apply for funding support.
* Asked if the waiver applied to businesses who have not yet paid Rates for 2018 or 2019.
* Asked if the grants are available for businesses who do not operate from commercial premises.
* Asked if a business needs to be closed for the full 3 months or will it be looked at on a pro-rata basis.
* Asked if there is assistance for new businesses who were preparing to open but could not due to Covid restrictions.
* Asked what evidence businesses are required to provide.
* Some businesses were instructed to close due to guidelines however others had to close due to reduction in sales.
* The grants will only get back a fraction of the lost turnover and these companies will also have an issue with Revenue going forward. Income averaging will have to be applied.
* Asked if a business owner has no staff, how do they show that they are the only employee.
* The Restart Grant will be a lifeline for many small businesses who will be able to claim from €2,000 to €10,000.
* Cork County Council should make a public statement regarding Commercial Rates.
* It is a difficult time for businesses who are the heart of the community and they may be closed for longer than 3 months.
* Asked if businesses that pay Rates as part of their rent would qualify for the scheme.

**The Chief Executive advised the following:**

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government had notified Local Authorities of two supports for business. The first was a three-month Waiver of Rates for certain businesses that were forced to close due to public health requirements for the period 27th March to 27th June 2020. No further information has been given to Local Authorities on the proposed Rates Waiver.

It should be noted that Rates are a legal liability.

The second support was the Restart Fund for which a clear set of criteria was laid out and for which there is an easy online application process.

**The Head of Finance addressed the Members’ queries as follows:**

* The criteria have been set by the Department, not Cork County Council.
* The application is a self-declaration form and must show proof of losses and commitment to reopening if the business has been closed.
* There has been no instruction in relation to businesses that are now operating online more than before the Covid 19 restrictions.
* The Restart Grant relates to small businesses that have incurred a reduction in turnover of at least 25%.
* Chain stores and non-commercial organisations (e.g. sports clubs) are not eligible.
* Regardless of status of 2018 and 2019 rates, businesses can still apply.
* If a business has no employees, ‘0’ should be entered on the form.
* No further details since 2nd May have been received from the Department.

***Proposed by Cllr. Seamus McGrath, seconded by Cllr. Alan Coleman:***

***Members asked Cork County Council to write again to the Minister for Business, Enterprise, and Innovation to follow up on the previous correspondence requesting further supports for small businesses who do not qualify for the Rates Waiver Scheme.***

**Ballinhassig / 5 Mile Bridge Water Mains: 4(b)5-2**

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* There have been 20 to 30 breaks in the water mains in Ballinhassig / 5 Mile Bridge in the last year.
* Irish Water is not prioritising this matter which is greatly impacting on residents, businesses and farms in a large area.
* The pipe is a large diameter pipe and brings a large volume of water into the area.
* This mains system was due to be replaced last year but works did not go ahead. The cost of repairs has now exceeded the cost of replacement.
* An urgent upgrade is now needed.

***Proposed by Cllr. Ben Dalton-O’Sullivan, seconded by Cllr. Seamus McGrath:***

***Members asked Cork County Council’s County Engineer would write to Irish Water requesting a report on the total cost of repairs to date, details of road closures to carry out repairs to date and the projected cost of replacement of the mains system.***

**Funeral Arrangements (Covid-19 Restrictions): 4(c)5-2**

***Proposed by Cllr. Alan Coleman seconded by Cllr. Ian Doyle***

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* Under current HSE guidelines, only 10 people may attend a place of worship or graveside together which results in immediate family members not being permitted to attend their loved ones’ funerals.
* Churches have now reopened and social distancing measures are in place.

***Members asked Cork County Council to write to the Taoiseach requesting a relaxation in regulations, to allow an increase in the number of family members permitted to attend funerals to as long as social distancing requirements may be carried out at these numbers.***

**Pedestrian Road Safety: 4(d)5-2**

**During this discussion the Members made the following points:**

* There are more users walking on rural roads due to travel restrictions.
* There is also now an increase in traffic volumes and this is becoming dangerous for pedestrians.
* Asked if was possible to trim hedgerows during downtime and for signage to be erected at particular black spots.

The Chief Executive advised that local Area Engineers may trim hedgerows in the interest of road safety and that the matter is locally managed.

**MOTOR TAXATION**

Members asked if a response had been received to a letter from Cork County Council to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in relation to arrears of motor tax that accumulated while vehicles including school buses are not in use due to Covid 19 restrictions. The Senior Executive Officer confirmed that a response to the letter was awaited.

**COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Members agreed that the submission of Notices of Motion would recommence for the Council meeting to be held on June 8th, 2020.

**~ This concluded the business of the Meeting ~**