



TOWN OF
VICTORIA PARK

Special Council Meeting Minutes – 7 April 2020



WE'RE OPEN
VIC PARK

Please be advised that a **Special Council Meeting** was held at **5pm on Tuesday 7 April 2020** as an electronic meeting accessible at victoriapark.wa.gov.au

Her Worship the Mayor Karen Vernon
10 April 2020

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1 Declaration of opening

Mayor Karen Vernon opened the meeting at 5pm.

Acknowledgement of Country

Ngany yoowart Noongar yorga, ngany wadjella yorga. Ngany djerapiny Wadjak – Noongar boodja-k yaakiny, nidja bilya bardook.

I am not a Nyungar woman, I am a non-Indigenous woman. I am honoured to be standing on Whadjuk - Nyungar country on the banks of the Swan River.

Ngany kaaditj Noongar moort keny kaadak nidja Wadjak Noongar boodja. Ngany kaaditj nidja Noongar birdiya – koora, ye-ye, boorda, baalapiny moorditj Noongar kaaditjin, moort, wer boodja ye-ye.

I acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and respect past, present and emerging leaders, their continuing cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land, which continues to be important today.

Ngany youngka baalapiny Noongar birdiya wer moort nidja boodja.

I thank them for the contribution made to life in the Town of Victoria Park and to this region.

2 Announcements from the Presiding Member

2.1 Recording and live streaming of proceedings

In accordance with clause 39 of the *Town of Victoria Park Meeting Procedures Local Law 2019*, as the Presiding Member, I hereby give my permission for the administration to record proceedings of this meeting.

This meeting is also being live streamed on the Town's website. The recording will be made available on the Town's website following the meeting.

2.2 Public question time and public statement time

Public question and statement time will still occur during this electronic meeting.

In accordance with clause 7(4)a of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996, public questions and statements at this Special Council Meeting must relate to the purpose of the meeting.

Public questions and statements received by 12pm today will be addressed. These questions and statements will be read by myself and if required, I will call on relevant people to answer.

There will be at least 15 minutes set aside for both public question time and public statement time at the beginning and end of this Special Council Meeting.

If there are outstanding questions or statements following the time set aside for public participation time,

these questions and answers will be answered in the agenda for the next Ordinary Council Meeting.

2.3 No adverse reflection

In accordance with clause 56 of the *Town of Victoria Park Meeting Procedures Local Law 2019*, Elected Members when speaking are not to reflect adversely on the character or actions of Elected Members or employees.

2.4 Town of Victoria Park Meeting Procedures Local Law 2019

All meetings of the Council, committees and the electors are to be conducted in accordance with the Act, the Regulations and the *Town of Victoria Park Meeting Procedures Local Law 2019*.

2.5 Additional announcements

The last four weeks have been difficult for everyone in our community in ways we could never have imagined just a few months ago.

The impact of COVID-19 is changing how we live our lives. It is a terrible equaliser – we are all affected by it.

There is no business as usual. The future has never seemed more uncertain. There's a terrible fear that the worst is still ahead of us.

But when times are tough, that's a time to show resilience, courage and generosity.

When times are changing and seem out of control, the only thing we can control is how we respond to the situation. How we choose to behave and react to this crisis will determine how we survive it.

We know that Australians are great at uniting behind a common cause. Now is that time. We are seeing this already in our own community – neighbours looking out for one another, residents rallying to support local businesses struggling to survive, local businesses adapting to continue to serve the community, strangers helping strangers, and random acts of kindness. I feel incredibly proud to be part of such a caring and supportive community, and I thank everyone for all they have been doing to help out and lift spirits.

I would also like to thank the Town of Victoria Park staff. They have been adapting to new working environments, new challenges and new demands on their time and resources in order to ensure continued delivery of services to our community. More than that, they have been helping charities within the Town provide assistance to those in need, and they have been helping organise activities to support us. It has no doubt been stressful for them and their families. On behalf of myself, my fellow Elected Members, and our community, we thank you.

And finally to my fellow Elected Members. This is a testing time to be a leader. But it's a great opportunity to test ourselves!

There has never been a more important time for us to step up for our community. Thank you for your enthusiasm and collaborative efforts over the last few weeks. Together we will get through this.

3 Attendance

Mayor

Ms Karen Vernon

Banksia Ward

Cr Claire Anderson
Cr Ronhhda Potter
Cr Wilfred Hendriks
Cr Luana Lisandro

Jarraah Ward

Deputy Mayor Bronwyn Ife
Cr Vicki Potter
Cr Brian Oliver
Cr Jesvin Karimi

Chief Executive Officer

Mr Anthony Vuleta

Chief Operations Officer

Mr Ben Killigrew

Chief Financial Officer

Mr Michael Cole

Chief Community Planner

Ms Natalie Martin Goode

Manager Development Services

Mr Robert Cruickshank

Manager Governance and Strategy

Ms Danielle Uniza

Secretary

Ms Amy Noon

3.1 Apologies

Nil.

3.2 Approved leave of absence

Nil.

4 Declarations of interest

Declaration of financial interest

Nil.

Declaration of proximity interest

Nil.

Declaration of interest affecting impartiality

Nil.

5 Public question time

Nil.

6 Public statement time

Nil.

7 Presentations

7.1 Petitions

Nil.

7.2 Presentations

Nil.

7.3 Deputations

Nil.

8 Method of dealing with agenda business

Nil.

9 Motion of which previous notice has been given

In accordance with clause 4.3 of the *Town of Victoria Park Meeting Procedures Local Law 2018*, Mayor Karen Vernon has submitted the following notice of motion:

Recommendation

That Council:

- 1 Approves the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a budget for 2020-2021 in accordance with section 6.2 of the *Local Government Act 1995* based on:
 - a. 0% rate revenue increases
 - b. no increase in fees and charges
 - c. the charge to be levied for underground power on ratepayers in Victoria Park West, Victoria Park East and Carlisle North as approved by Council on 19 November 2019 being deferred for collection to the 2021-2022 financial year so as to not financially impact on ratepayers in the 2020-2021 financial year.
- 2 Requests the Chief Executive Officer to prepare and report to Council by May 2020, an alternative budget scenario for 2020-2021 to that in point 1 above, based on:
 - a. 10% reduction in rate revenue, alternatively a 5% reduction in rate revenue
 - b. no increase in fees and charges;
 - c. the charge to be levied for underground power on ratepayers in Victoria Park West, Victoria Park East and Carlisle North as approved by Council on 19 November 2019 being deferred for collection to 2021-2022 financial year so as to not financially impact on ratepayers in the 2020-2021 financial year.
- 3 Endorses the immediate waiver of all cancellation fees, late fees and suspension of membership fees contained in the Schedule of Fees and Charges 2019/20 until further notice.
- 4 Approves the immediate waiver of rent payable by not-for-profit organisations and sporting clubs occupying Town-owned premises pursuant to a lease or a license until 30 September 2020 or a declaration that the State of Emergency for WA is over whichever occurs sooner, at which time it will be reviewed.
- 5 Requests the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a report to Council in April 2020 outlining the options for providing relief to ratepayers in the 2020-21 financial year, including but not limited to:
 - a. extending the time for payment of rates;
 - b. waiver, removal or reduction of the interest rate charged on rates instalments;
 - c. waiver, removal or reduction of the administration fee charged on rates instalments.
- 6 Requests the Chief Executive Officer to report to the Ordinary Council Meeting in April 2020 about the actions and measures the Town has implemented to date (including funding sources) in response to COVID-19 to support:
 - a. the community and community service organisations;
 - b. local small businesses; and
 - c. the relaxation of planning conditions restricting delivery times to local supermarkets, grocery or food businesses.
- 7 Requests the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a report to the Ordinary Council Meeting in May 2020 outlining the options for establishing a donation program to support not-for-profit or charitable organisations located in the Town in providing assistance and support to the local community.
- 8 Requests the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a hardship relief policy for ratepayers for

consideration by the Policy Committee in May 2020;

- 9 Requests the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a report to the Ordinary Council Meeting in May 2020 investigating the creation of a reserve fund for funding future programs and projects to support the community and local businesses during the COVID-19 recovery period including a recommendation as to the amount of initial funding.
- 10 Endorses the Town advocating to the WA Government to immediately suspend the Loan Guarantee Fee imposed by the WA Treasury Corporation on loans to local governments until 30 June 2021.

Reason

The last 4 weeks have seen the development of an unprecedented health and economic crisis worldwide and within Australia that has resulted in ever-increasing Commonwealth government restrictions on the social and economic activities of all Australians in an attempt to stop the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) within our community.

On 11 March 2020 the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 outbreak a global "pandemic."

On 15 March 2020 the WA government declared a State of Emergency for the entire State of Western Australia in relation to COVID-19. That declaration activated the provisions of the *Emergency Management Act 2005*. Under this Act, the function of local government in a state of emergency is in recovery.

On 25 March 2020 the Premier of Western Australia wrote to all local governments to urge them to follow the State's lead in freezing household fees and charges for the next year by adopting a 0% rate increases to ratepayers, and freezing all other Council fees and charges.

There is no doubt that COVID-19 is having, and will continue to have, a severe and negative impact on the financial and social well-being of residents and businesses. Commonwealth government restrictions on non-essential services has seen the closure of many businesses within the Town, rising unemployment and restrictions on social gatherings with directions to practice social isolation has changed the way of life for our community.

Now more than ever our community expects strong leadership from its Council. It is important for Council to take timely, considered and comprehensive action to support our community to cope with and recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

The measures proposed in this Notice of Motion are intended to be a part of a suite of actions that Council should take, and we will likely be required to take further action in due course. Given the Council is in the midst of preparing its next annual budget, it is appropriate to adopt these recommendations now, to inform the budget process, and to create certainty for our community.

Strategic alignment

Civic Leadership	
Strategic outcome	Intended public value outcome or impact
CL08 - Visionary civic leadership with sound and accountable governance that reflects objective decision-making.	The community has confidence that during this crisis, the Council can make the leadership decisions necessary to support our community through this crisis.

Economic	
Strategic outcome	Intended public value outcome or impact
EC01 - A desirable place for commerce and tourism that supports equity, diverse local employment and	Local businesses will be supported to survive and thrive.

entrepreneurship.	
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Social	
Strategic outcome	Intended public value outcome or impact
S03 - An empowered community with a sense of pride, safety and belonging.	The community will be supported during a time of unprecedented restrictions on social and economic activities.

Officer response to notice of motion

Location	Town-wide
Reporting officer	Danielle Uniza
Responsible officer	Anthony Vuleta
Voting requirement	Simple majority
Attachments	Nil

Officer comment

Each of the points within the notice of motion has been responded to by the Town as follows.

Preparation of budget based on 0% rate revenue increase, no increase in fees and charges and deferral of underground power charges (point 1a, 1b and 1c of motion)

1. The Town will prepare a draft budget for 2020/21 based on a 0% rate rise and no increases in fees and charges.
2. The Town supports the deferral of the service charge to be levied for underground power on ratepayers in Victoria Park West, Victoria Park East and Carlisle North, as approved by Council on 19 November 2019, being deferred for collection to 2021-2022 financial year so as to not financially impact on ratepayers in the 2020-2021 financial year.

Preparation of budget based on 10% rate revenue reduction, no increase in fees and charges and deferral of underground power charges (point 2a, 2b and 2c of motion)

3. A 10% rate reduction equates to \$4.6 million. A 5% rate reduction equates to \$2.3 million.
4. It is proposed to fund capital works renewal projects that would ordinarily be funded from general revenue generated from rates, to the value of either \$4.6 million or \$2.3 million, by drawing down this amount from existing reserves instead.
5. This will have an impact on those reserves in the medium term and this will need to be factored into the revised Long-Term Financial Plan.
6. Similar to the first point of the motion above, the Town supports the deferral of the service for underground power to 2021-2022.

Immediate waiving of all cancellation fees, late fees and suspension of membership fees (point 3 of motion)

7. This proposal is supported and can be accommodated within existing delegation of authority.

Immediate waiving of rent by not-for-profit and sport clubs in Town-owned premises until 30 September 2020 or until the end of State of Emergency in Western Australia (point 4 of motion)

8. This proposal is supported, and the financial impact has been calculated at \$22,509.36. This has been provided to Finance to inform the budget.
9. Commercial and residential private tenants will be assessed on a case-by-case basis which are managed by external agents.
10. A large number of leases are also peppercorn and as such no rent is collected by the Town, or are telecommunication leases which are not affected by COVID-19 trading requirements.

Chief Executive Officer's report on options for providing relief to ratepayers in the 2020-21 financial year to be presented to Council at April Ordinary Council Meeting (point 5 of motion)

11. The Town can prepare a report on options for providing relief to ratepayers for the April 2020 ordinary meeting of Council. The options that will be presented in that report will include, but not be limited to, an extension of the time to pay, reduction/removal of interest payable for instalment options and overdue rates.

Chief Executive Officer's report on actions and measures implemented by the Town in response to COVID-19 to support community, small business and to relax planning conditions to be presented to Council at April Ordinary Council Meeting (point 6 of motion)

12. This proposal is supported and a report will be provided at the April 2020 Ordinary Council Meeting. The report will outline the Town's response to COVID-19 to support the community and small businesses and relaxation of planning approval conditions restricting delivery times to local supermarkets, grocery or food businesses. Many actions have already been undertaken in this regard and will be detailed in the report.

Chief Executive Officer's report on options to establish a donation program for not-for-profits and charitable organisations that support the community to be presented to Council at April Ordinary Council Meeting (point 7 of motion)

13. This proposal is supported and a report will be provided to the April 2020 Ordinary Council meeting.

Preparation of a Financial Hardship Relief Policy to be presented to the May Policy Committee meeting (point 8 of motion)

14. To ensure that strategic direction is received from Council on how the Town may offer financial hardship relief to the community, the preparation of a policy to be presented to the Policy Committee by May 2020 is supported. The policy will seek to provide guidance to the Town in assessing the unique circumstances and challenges that ratepayers will face as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. A template for this policy has been developed by the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) and will be used as the basis for the Town's own policy.

Chief Executive Officer's report on investigating the creation of a reserve fund to support the community and local business during recovery period

15. A report for the May 2020 Ordinary Council Meeting will be prepared on the creation of a reserve fund to support the community and local businesses during the recovery period.

Town advocacy to the WA Government to immediately suspend the Loan Guarantee Fee imposed by the WA Treasury Corporation

16. Advocacy to suspend the Loan Guarantee Fee imposed by WATC is supported.

Engagement

Internal engagement

Stakeholder	Comments
Finance	Responded to points 1, 2, 3 and 5 of motion
Community development	Responded to points 6 and 7 of motion
Place Planning	Responded to point 6 of motion
Statutory Planning	Responded to point 6 of motion
Operations	Responded to points 4, 9 and 10 of motion
Property and Leasing	Responded to point 4 of motion
Governance	Responded to point 7 of motion

Legal compliance

[Section 6.12 of the Local Government Act 1995](#)

[Section 6.16 of the Local Government Act 1995](#)

Risk management consideration

Risk and consequence	Consequence rating	Likelihood rating	Overall risk analysis	Mitigation and actions
Reputational Not setting the Council's response to the COVID-19 crisis will result in negative community perception and a lack of clarity.	Moderate	Likely	High	Endorsing a Council position on its intent/current consideration in responding to the crisis will give greater clarity and understanding for the community.
Financial Making decisions relating to financial matters without all relevant information can result in a bad outcome	High	Likely	High	By requesting that further, detailed reports be presented back to Council relating to financial matters and/or expenditure, this risk will be mitigated.

Financial implications

Current budget impact	<p>The majority of the recommendations in the notice of motion relate to future years' budgets.</p> <p>The full impact of COVID-19 on the 2019/2020 budget is still being determined. Where possible, initiatives are being funded from existing resources. Should a budget variation be required, this will be included in the next monthly finance report to Council.</p>
Future budget impact	<p>These recommendations will be incorporated into the draft 2020/2021 annual budget.</p> <p>The proposed 10% rate reduction (or 5% rate reduction) is a once-off reduction or discount for 2020/2021. Provided this is restored in 2021/2022, there will be little impact on future years' budgets.</p> <p>It is proposed to draw down the \$4.6 million (\$2.3 million in the case of a 5% rate reduction) from existing reserves. To limit this impact on asset renewal in future years it would be preferable for this amount to be recovered from future years budgets, even if this was over a longer term, for example 1% for 10 years.</p>

Cr Vicki Potter joined the meeting at 5.13pm.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION (360/2020):

Moved: Mayor Karen Vernon

Seconded: Cr Bronwyn Iffe

That Council:

1. Approves the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a budget for 2020-2021 in accordance with section 6.2 of the *Local Government Act 1995* based on:

- a. 0% rate revenue increases;
- b. no increase in fees and charges; and
- c. the charge to be levied for underground power on ratepayers in Victoria Park West, Victoria Park East and Carlisle North as approved by Council on 19 November 2019 being deferred for collection to the 2021-2022 financial year so as to not financially impact on ratepayers in the 2020-2021 financial year.

2. Requests the Chief Executive Officer to prepare and report to Council by May 2020, an alternative budget scenario for 2020-2021 to that in point 1 above, based on:

- a. a 10% reduction in rates, alternatively a 5% reduction in rates;
- b. no increase in fees and charges;
- c. the charge to be levied for underground power on ratepayers in Victoria Park West, Victoria Park

East and Carlisle North as approved by Council on 19 November 2019 being deferred for collection to 2021-2022 financial year so as to not financially impact on ratepayers in the 2020-2021 financial year.

3. Endorses the immediate waiver of all cancellation fees, late fees and suspension of membership fees contained in the Schedule of Fees and Charges 2019/20 until further notice.

3A. Approves the waiver of interest on all outstanding instalment rates levied for 2019/20 from 22 March 2020 until 30 June 2020.

4. Approves the immediate waiver of rent payable by not-for-profit organisations and sporting clubs occupying Town-owned premises pursuant to a lease or a license until 30 September 2020 or a declaration that the State of Emergency for WA is over whichever occurs sooner, at which time it will be reviewed.

5. Requests the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a report to Council in April 2020 outlining the options for providing relief to ratepayers in the 2020-21 financial year, including but not limited to:

- a. extending the time for payment of rates;
- b. waiver, removal or reduction of the interest rate charged on rates instalments;
- c. waiver, removal or reduction of the administration fee charged on rates instalments.

6. Requests the Chief Executive Officer to report to the Ordinary Council Meeting in April 2020 about the actions and measures the Town has implemented to date (including funding sources) in response to COVID-19 to support:

- a. the community and community service organisations;
- b. local small businesses; and
- c. the relaxation of planning conditions restricting delivery times to local supermarkets, grocery or food businesses.

7. Requests the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a report to the Ordinary Council Meeting in May 2020 outlining the options for establishing a donation program to support not-for-profit or charitable organisations located in the Town in providing assistance and support to the local community.

8. Requests the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a hardship relief policy for ratepayers for consideration by the Policy Committee in May 2020;

9. Requests the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a report to the Ordinary Council Meeting in May 2020 investigating the creation of a reserve fund for funding future programs and projects to support the community and local businesses during the COVID-19 recovery period including a recommendation as to the amount of initial funding.

10. Endorses the Town advocating to the WA Government to immediately suspend the Loan Guarantee Fee imposed by the WA Treasury Corporation on loans to local governments until 30 June 2021.

CARRIED (9 - 0)

For: Mayor Karen Vernon, Cr Claire Anderson, Cr Vicki Potter, Cr Ronhhda Potter, Cr Brian Oliver, Cr Luana Lisandro, Cr Wilfred Hendriks, Cr Bronwyn Ife, Cr Jesvin Karimi

Against: nil

Amendments to original notice of motion

The first proposed amendment is sought to ensure that, for the avoidance of doubt, when the alternative budget scenarios are prepared, equal consideration can be given to a reduction in overall rate revenue between 5% and 10%, or a discount of an amount between 5% and 10% in the amount of rates payable.

The second proposed amendment is sought to ensure that there is appropriate relief for ratepayers from interest that has begun accruing since the last instalment was due on 21 March 2020 on any outstanding rates instalments for the current financial year.

The measures proposed in this Notice of Motion are intended to be a part of a suite of actions that Council should take, and we will likely be required to take further action in due course. Given the Council is in the midst of preparing its next annual budget, it is appropriate to adopt these recommendations now, to inform the budget process, and to create certainty for our community.

The first proposed amendment is sought to ensure that, for the avoidance of doubt, when the alternative budget scenarios are prepared, equal consideration can be given to a reduction in overall rate revenue between 5% and 10%, or a discount of an amount between 5% and 10% in the amount of rates payable.

The second proposed amendment is sought to ensure that there is appropriate relief for ratepayers from interest that has begun accruing since the last instalment was due on 21 March 2020 on any outstanding rates instalments for the current financial year.

10 Public question time

Nil.

11 Public statement time

Nil.

12 Closure

There being no further business, Mayor Karen Vernon closed the meeting at 5.29pm.

I confirm these minutes to be true and accurate record of the proceedings of the Council.

Signed:

Mayor
Karen
Vernon

Dated this:

Day of:

2020