

WAGAIT SHIRE COUNCIL

**MINUTES
AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS
LOT 62, WAGAIT TOWER ROAD
9.30AM**

Wednesday 22 January 2020



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1.0 Present:

Committee members:

Chair Clare Milikins
Barry Bamford
Maureen Newman
Cr Neil White

Council staff:

A/CEO, Rebecca Taylor
Office Manager, Pamela Wanrooy

2.0 Opening of Meeting:

The Chair declared the meeting open at 9.35am and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chair confirmed with Committee members that they agreed to have the meeting taped for Minute taking purposes.

The Chair requested that for all future Audit Committee Meetings, the Agenda be reordered as follows:

- Conflicts of Interest to be addressed at the start of each Agenda before proceedings commence.
- In-Camera sessions to be brought to the start of each meeting.

The Chair also requested that, members and the Secretary identify any omissions or oversights that she may miss being new to Council premises.

2.1 Conflict of Interest

Nil

3.0 Apologies:

<p>Resolution No. 2020/021 That the apology of Cr Graham Drake be accepted. Moved: Barry Bamford Seconded: Maureen Newman</p>

4.0 Confirmation of Previous Minutes for the Audit Committee held Wednesday 13 November 2019.

The Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held Wednesday 13 November 2019 were included as an attachment to the Agenda.

Resolution No. 2020/022

That the Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting of Wednesday 13 November 2019 be confirmed by Committee Members as a true and correct record and that Council reviews the Audit Committee Meeting Dates.

Moved: Maureen Newman

Seconded: Cr Neil

5.0 Matters Arising from The Minutes

- The Committee queried Management on the change in meeting dates noting it was standard practice for the Audit Committee to meet prior to Council Meetings. The dates for Audit Committee Meetings as per the January 2020 Agenda are Tuesday 26 May 2020, Tuesday 22 September 2020 and Monday 30 November 2020, all of which are dated after Council Meetings. The Committee requested that these dates be reviewed by Council so that wherever feasible, Audit Committee Meetings will be held prior to Council Meetings.
- Committee requested that an Action List with status update on all Action Items from this and preceding meeting be provided for each Audit Committee Meeting.
- The Committee had not received a copy of the Audit Report and Management letter. As a standard practice the Committee requested that the Audit Committee review the Audit Report and Management letter at the meetings and that Audit Recommendations from these reports be tracked and presented to each meeting. Audit Reports are to be brought to each meeting on a spreadsheet. The Management letter from the Auditors is to be forwarded to the Chair.

6.0 Declaration of Interests of Committee Members and Staff.

Addressed at 2.1

7.0 Action Sheet

The Action Sheet was reviewed at the meeting in reflection of an earlier request for an action items and status list and will in future follow directly from the Minutes and include the matters identified in Item 4.

8.0 Agenda Items

The Committee requested that all Policies which come to Audit Committee for review include both the old policy and the new annotated policy showing tracked changes which can be easily viewed. If the level of changes are such that this is not possible then this needs to be identified.

8.1 Policy Review - P005 – Council Staff Code of Conduct

Resolution No. 2020/023

That the Audit Committee recommends to Council that:

- a) the report entitled Policy Review P005 – Council Staff Code of Conduct be received and noted;
- b) endorses the revised Council Employees Code of Conduct at Attachment B; and
- c) recommends Council adopts the revised P005 – Council Employees Code of Conduct at Attachment B.

Moved: Barry Bamford

Seconded: Cr Neil White

8.2 Policy Review - P006 – Vehicular Crossovers/Drainage

The Vehicular Crossovers/Drainage Policy was discussed in light of actual experiences and the Committee requested it be amendment on the basis of causation; a landholder could not be held responsible for the costs of remediation relating to and issue where they had not contributed to its causation. The A/CEO was also requested to consider the cross over between this and the Verge Policy.

Resolution No. 2020/024

The Vehicular Crossovers/Drainage Policy to come back to the next Audit Committee Meeting addressing the issue of causation and linkages to Verge policy.

Moved: Chair Clare Milikins

Seconded: Maureen Newman

8.3 Policy Review – P008 – Human Resource Management

The Audit Committee requested that Minutes and Actions items from the Workplace Health and Safety meetings come to the Audit Committee for noting as an Agenda item.

The Committee identified that Policy Item 4.1 – “Terms of Engagement” made no reference to ensuring there was sufficient funding for two year contracts in this Policy and requested that the relevant sentence be amended to read, that “Council favours two year contracts on the provision that funding is available”.

Resolution No. 2020/025

That the Audit Committee recommend the revised P08 Human Resource Management Policy to Council for approval subject to Item 4.1 Terms of Engagement being amended to read: Council favours two-year contracts on the provision that funding is available.

Moved: Chair Clare Milikins

Seconded: Cr Neil White

8.4 Policy Review – P011 – Complaints Against Council Employee Work Practices

Resolution No. 2020/026

That the Audit Committee recommends to Council that:

- a) the report entitled Policy Review P011 Complaints Against Council Employee Work Practices be received and noted; and**
- b) recommends to Council that P011 Complaints Against Council Employee Work Practices be rescinded based on coverage of PO15. Procedures for Council and Council committee Meetings**

Moved: Barry Bamford

Seconded: Maureen Newman

8.5 Policy Review – P013 – Use of Council Firearms

The Committee discussed the Policy and questioned management regarding the currency of supporting procedures. There was some concern that the Policy was not reflective of the risk involved and that procedures and internal checks may not align. Committee requested the Use of Council Firearms Policy be revisited and the supporting procedures revised and that it be provided with an update on the review status of implementation. The Audit Committee asked that management look at the Firearms Policy, and Procedures as a whole ensuring risk assessment be in line with the Firearms Act. The Policy is to be returned to the next meeting with this supporting information.

8.6 Policy Review – P21 Wagait Shire Council’s Dispute Resolution Policy and P31 – Counselling, Disciplining & Dismissing Employees.

That P021 “Wagait Shire Council’s Dispute Resolution Policy” be rescinded, and that this Policy be combined with P031 Counselling, Disciplining and dismissing Employees to form one Policy.

Resolution No. 2020/027

The Audit Committee recommends to Council that

- a) the report entitled Policy Review P21 Dispute Resolution Policy be received and noted; and**
- b) recommends to Council that, subject to finalisation and approval of a revised P31 – Counselling, Disciplining & Dismissing Employees incorporating dispute resolution, P021 Dispute Resolution Policy rescinded.**

Moved: Maureen Newman

Seconded: Cr Neil White

8.7 Policy Review - P31 - Counselling, Disciplining & Dismissing Employees

The Audit Committee discussed the recommended Policy PO31 – Counselling, Disciplining and Dismissing Employees and raised a number of concerns, specifically:

- Does not address complaints against the CEO;
- Does not take into account real and perceived conflicts of interest;
- Is insufficiently clear on requirements around reporting of fraud and serious misconduct; and
- Does not cover Whistle Blower and Whistle Blower’s protection

The Chair noted that there were significant responsibilities on anyone in a position where public money is being used such as Council, specifically to establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). The Chair recommended the Audit Committee encourage Council to invite the Anti-Corruption Commissioner to attend a Council Meeting and give a talk on this topic as this can be very informative and will help build an understanding around the legislation and how this will impact an organisation like this.

The Committee requested the draft Policy P31 be revised against recommendations from LGANT to ensure that it is fair and just and addresses all required issues. Council Management was asked to review the Policy addressing the issues raised by the Committee and resubmit it to the next meeting.

8.8 Half Yearly Budget Report

The Audit committee noted and discussed the financial report and the difficulty in interpreting the ‘real ‘position of Council independent of Grant and Specific Purpose Funding which had to be acquitted. The Committee requested:

- future Operating Statement financial report be segregated into Operational and Grant funding streams to enable members to assess the real position of Council operations separate from tied the commitments relating to grants; and
- A report on current grants and their status at its next meeting.

8.8 Work Plan – Wagait Shire Council Audit Committee

The Audit Committee endorsed the Work Plan as recommended and that Council notes the report entitled Work Plan.

9.0 General Business **Nil**

10.0 Confidential Items:

Nil

11.0 In-Camera

The Committee held a short In Camera session with no issues arising

12.0 Closure of Meeting:

Subject to determination of the issue relating to timing of Audit Committee and Council meetings identified earlier, the next meeting of the Wagait Shire Council Audit Committee will be held in the Wagait Shire Council Chambers at 9.00am, Wednesday 27th May 2020.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 11.05am