

**COMMUNITY MEETING
WENTWORTH TOWN HALL
1 MAY 2007
7.00PM**

**PRESENT: General Manager - Peter Kozlowski
Director Corporate Services – Terri Maguire
Director Infrastructure & Assets – Bill Turner
Crs. - Mark King, Jim Macri, Brian Wakefield, Sue Nichols
& Bill Wheeldon.
23 – Local Residents**

Note: Since the consultation meetings the situation with the issue of land and water separation has changed. The State Government has prepared legislation that will allow Council to use last year's values. This will mean the large increases discussed will not eventuate. Council was advised of this last week. The Management Plan has been adjusted accordingly.

Question:	1.	Will residential rates go up 20%? Legislation doesn't allow?
Answer:		Total rate is pegged, not individual rates. No farmland can have more than 20% increase.
Question:	2.	If \$30 put on all, how much of \$274,000 will this be?
Answer:		About \$80,000 – about 2700 properties x \$30
Question:	3.	Anomalies in valuations \$96,000 - \$214,000 plus rate increase but no revalue since 2004 for loss of water? Why?
Answer:		VG has been asked to remove water. When revaluation not due for sometime supplementary valuations were done.
Question:	4.	Why weren't we advised?
Answer:		Should have been by Valuer General.
Question:	5.	Still doesn't answer question why (my) rates have increased by 50%
Answer:		Valuation of individual properties compared to average increase
Question:	6.	Can I get VG information?
Answer:		Yes
Question:	7.	Next general revaluation?
Answer:		2008. Deferment has been requested but ignored.
Question:	8.	Horticulture industry is a disaster at present. No income for past 2 years. We have cut cloth why can't Shire do the same.
Answer:		Understood. Nothing is set in concrete. We are looking to efficiencies.
Question:	9.	Is there a difference between Irrigation Association and private?
Answer:		Don't have that information. Apparent trend elsewhere – bigger properties get bigger reductions.
Question:	10.	Understand why rates are being increased. Is Council trying to reduce expenditure?
Answer:		Going through process at present. The organisation will be going through a continuous improvement process. Intention is to go to 10 year scenario.

Question:	11.	When \$274,000 is recovered will 3.5% go on top?
Answer:		Council still to decide. 3% around 75k (?) Council has to consider all issues and will be informed by the Minister for Local Government as to how much rate can be increased.
Question:	12.	Could we work with 44 other Council's and ask the VG how this inequitable situation arose.
Answer:		VG can explain all and fairness/equity is relevant. Council's can't create all the extra categories. National water initiative has led to this situation.
Question:	13.	Large reductions will benefit because maximum is 20%
Answer:		Can be increased 20% p.a. to get balance. If we drop \$274,000 this year, but future increases can only be in line with pegging.
Question:	14.	Is increase based on revenue received or amount invoiced out.
Answer:		Not rating 274k would put Wentworth Shire Council back 5 years. G.M commented on organisational review. Increase/ reduce levels of service where possible, deliver at lower cost if possible. State Government do not intend to change rate capping policy. Cannot have it both ways. DM -Rates have built from 1.4m to 2.36m (?) Federal Assistance Grants provides 3.54m. That could also change. These are not keeping pace with inflation. R.W – Next revaluation will put many residential properties up by more than 3.5% - others will go down. Correct but total can't be above peg set by Minister.
Question:	15.	If \$30 goes on will it be for 1 year or ongoing?
Answer:		On being considered for this year. Starting objective is to recover what we got last year.
Question:	16.	Depends on what goes into budget?
Answer:		Get \$X of income and aim for balance. Surplus could come from extra revenue or work not being completed. Overs would be met by unders.
Question:	17.	Shire has to bite the bullet and go backwards. If we go backwards then so be it. Can take levee bank work out to start with.
Answer:		Local Government is a creature of statute – sometimes they are told what to do. Could be "closed down".
Question:	18.	Grass roots democracy no longer exists - we are told what to do.
Answer:		There is significant influence from State Government.
Capital Projects	19.	GM & DIA covered issues on capitals works program. LEP requires liaison with State Government because of requirement. Take note and remember its your land not theirs! DM referred to 1993 - were required to jump through hoops

		and rules kept changing. Won't be any quicker this time.
Question:	20.	Any surveys on usage of tracks?
Answer:		Yes
Question:	21.	LEP available for comment. Is that correct?
Answer:		Answers needed and will definitely be out for public comment
Mgt Plan	22.	Future changes need to be considered as part of a continuous process. Organisational review recommendations require strategies in place. Aimed at improved service at same cost or same service at reduced cost.
Water Restrictions	23.	Will be reviewed on the 16 th May 2007. BW – Dareton suggested letter to Minister of Local Government and the same should be done by Wentworth.
Question:	24.	This situation (water) was signalled 7-8 years ago. It was suggested nothing needed to be done because its not going to happen.
Answer:		NSW put in place 4 (?) years ago and said “no problems” Now understand dilemma but haven't found answer. J.M. – Most essential to get up to date valuations. Demand VG comes down and values entire Shire. SN – No panic in papers because Vic less affected. 44 affected Councils are minnows, others not interested. A Bureaucrat did in fact say that
Question:	25.	If reprieve given how would it be done?
Answer:		Same as last year.
Question:	26.	Has water been taken off?
Answer:		Yes for 2007/2008
Question:	27.	How would you reduce costs – cars to Mildura?
Answer:		Look across the board. All services will be reviewed for efficiencies.
Question:	28.	Community perception of excessive staff cars. Heaps of wastage.
Answer:		Review of fleet is one of recommendations of the review.
Question:	29.	Water wastage at Triangular Park in front. Mains flushed out regular. Requests made that it be run onto naturestrips. Mayor advised of the flushing.
Answer:		Where recovery possible it would certainly be looked at. Range of idea's to be addressed. Liaise with residents.
Question:	30.	Cost of By – Election \$30,000?
Answer:		Yes. Quote from Electoral Commission. Could be less.
Question:	31.	Plans for Shire sponsored trips to Japanese Sister City?
Answer:		No
Question:	32.	Is Solar Tower going ahead?
Answer:		Don't think so. We understand that investors are looking at the US.