

## Extraordinary Whangarei District Council Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Monday, 17 March, 2025  
**Time:** 2:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Civic Centre, Te Iwitahi, 9 Rust Avenue

### In Attendance

His Worship the Mayor Vince Cocurullo  
Cr Gavin Benney  
Cr Nicholas Connop  
Cr Ken Couper  
Cr Jayne Golightly (Teams)  
Cr Phil Halse  
Cr Deborah Harding (Teams)  
Cr Patrick Holmes  
Cr Scott McKenzie  
Cr Marie Olsen  
Cr Carol Peters  
Cr Simon Reid  
Cr Phoenix Ruka  
Cr Paul Yovich

### Also in Attendance

Graeme Mathias (Legal Counsel)

### Scribe

N. Pestana (Team Leader, Democracy)

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### Administrative Matters

- Meeting livestreamed.
- Members of the public/press recording during the meeting.

#### 1. Karakia/Prayer

Cr Olsen opened the meeting with a prayer.

#### 2. Apologies / Kore Tae Mai

Cr Reid (late arrival).

**Moved By** Cr Phil Halse

**Seconded By** Cr Marie Olsen

That the apology be sustained.

**Carried**

*Cr Reid joined the meeting at 2.05pm after apologies.*

### **3. Declarations of Interest / Take Whaipānga**

There were no interests declared.

### **4. Decision Reports / Whakatau Rīpoata**

#### **4.1 Fluoride Decision – March 2025**

**Moved By** Cr Gavin Benney

**Seconded By** Cr Simon Reid

That the Council:

1. Notes the letter received from the Director-General of Health dated 18 February 2025.
2. Notes that interim relief has not yet been granted by the Courts, and the Director General of Health's direction requires compliance by 28 March 2025.
3. Notes that interim relief hearing is scheduled for 18 March 2025, so any decision will not be before this date and there is no certainty as to when a decision might be given on the application for interim relief.
4. Notes that Council will not be able to comply with the Director General of Health's direction by 28 March 2025 if wet testing processes does not begin on or before 19 March 2025.
5. Revokes the resolution of 28 November 2024 that stated that Council "Resolves not to add fluoride to the Whangarei District's water supplies as required by the directive from the Ministry of Health (MOH)", to allow staff to commence the wet testing required to meet the Director General of Health's directive by 28 March 2025.
6. Directs staff that if interim relief is granted following the hearing on 18 March 2025, to cease fluoridation of Council's water supplies.
7. Directs staff to delay adding fluoride to the water supply until the morning of 19 March 2025, being the latest date possible to still be able to meet the requirements of the Director General of Health's directive.
8. Directs Mayor and Chief Executive to prepare a press release advising of the forthcoming hearing and recording that

commissioning and wet test processes will commence, and would cease if the relief sought from the High Court permitted.

9. Acknowledges that under the Health Amendment Act 2021 the decision whether to impose community water fluoridation was taken from local government and given solely to the Director General of Health.
10. Notes that the directive given to 14 councils was made in 2022 by the then Director General of Health, Dr Bloomfield and later affirmed by his successor Dr Sarfati.
11. Notes that both Dr Bloomfield and Dr Sarfati have since resigned from their role.
12. Requests the CE and Mayor to write urgently to the current Director General of Health seeking clarity on:
  - i. whether the current Director General of Health stands by the directive to add hydrofluorosilicic acid to the total Whangarei water supply; and
  - i. that the current Director General of Health declares that adding hydrofluorosilicic acid at a level of 0.7 - 1.0 ppm is safe for humans and in particular is safe for pregnant women, babies and infants to ingest.
13. Requests the Mayor and CE write to the Director-General of Health and advises that it is wet-testing (or fluoridating) under protest and without prejudice to its legal challenge.

#### Amendment

**Moved By** Cr Scott McKenzie

**Seconded By** Cr Patrick Holmes

That the Council:

1. Notes the letter received from the Director-General of Health dated 18 February 2025.
2. Notes that interim relief has not yet been granted by the Courts, and the Director-General's direction requires compliance by 28 March 2025.
3. Notes that Council will not be able to comply with the Director-General of Health's direction by 28 March 2025 if wet testing processes does not begin on or before 19 March 2025.
4. Revokes the resolution of 28 November 2024 that stated that Council "Resolves not to add fluoride to the Whangarei District's water supplies as required by the directive from the Ministry of Health (MOH)", to allow staff

to commence the wet testing required to meet the Director General of Health's Directive by 28 March 2025.

5. Directs staff to delay adding fluoride to the water supply until the morning of 19 March 2025, being the latest date possible to still be able to meet the requirements of the Director General of Health's directive.
6. Directs the Mayor and Chief Executive to prepare a press release advising of the forthcoming hearing and recording that commissioning and wet test processes will commence, and would cease if the relief sought from the High Court permitted.
7. Acknowledges that under the Health Amendment Act 2021 the decision whether to impose community water fluoridation was taken from local government and given solely to the Director General of Health.
8. Notes that the directive given to 14 Councils was made in 2022 by the then Director General of Health Dr Bloomfield and later affirmed by his successor Dr Sarfati.
9. Notes that both Dr Bloomfield and Dr Sarfati have since resigned from their role.
10. Requests the CE and Mayor to write urgently to the current Director General of Health seeking clarity on:
  - i. whether the current Director General of Health stands by the directive to add hydrofluorosilicic acid to the total Whangarei water supply; and
  - ii. that the current Director General of Health declares that adding hydrofluorosilicic acid at a level of 0.7 - 1.0 ppm is safe for humans and in particular is safe for pregnant women, babies and infants to ingest.
11. Requests the Mayor and Chief Executive write to the Director General of Health and advises that it is wet-testing (or fluoridating) under protest and without prejudice to its legal challenge.
12. That all legal proceedings cease immediately along with all future expenses associated with those proceedings.

*On the amendment being put Cr Couper called for a division:*

	<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
His Worship the Mayor		X	
Cr Gavin Benney		X	
Cr Nicholas Connop	X		
Cr Ken Couper	X		

Cr Jayne Golightly		X	
Cr Phil Halse		X	
Cr Deborah Harding	X		
Cr Patrick Holmes	X		
Cr Scott McKenzie	X		
Cr Marie Olsen		X	
Cr Carol Peters	X		
Cr Simon Reid		X	
Cr Phoenix Ruka		X	
Cr Paul Yovich	X		
<b>Results</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>

**The Amendment was Lost (7 to 7)**  
**On the casting vote of His Worship the Mayor**

*On the motion being put Cr Connop called for a division:*

	<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
His Worship the Mayor	X		
Cr Gavin Benney	X		
Cr Nicholas Connop	X		
Cr Ken Couper	X		
Cr Jayne Golightly	X		
Cr Phil Halse	X		
Cr Deborah Harding		X	
Cr Patrick Holmes	X		
Cr Scott McKenzie	X		
Cr Marie Olsen	X		
Cr Carol Peters	X		
Cr Simon Reid	X		
Cr Phoenix Ruka	X		
Cr Paul Yovich	X		
<b>Results</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

**The Motion was Carried (13 to 1)**

## **5. Public Excluded Business / Rāhui Tangata**

There was no business conducted in public excluded.

**6. Closure of Meeting / Te katinga o te Hui**

The meeting concluded at 3.23pm.

Confirmed this 27<sup>th</sup> day of March 2025

His Worship the Mayor Vince Cocurullo