



Kojonup Bush Fire Advisory Committee Minutes

22nd February 2016

TO: COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NOTICE is hereby given that a meeting of the Kojonup Bush Fire Advisory Committee was held in the Reception Lounge, at the Shire of Kojonup, Albany Highway Kojonup on Monday, 22nd February 2016 commencing at 7:30pm.

SHIRE OF KOJONUP

**AGENDA FOR THE KOJONUP BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
TO BE HELD ON 22nd February 2016**

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A G E N D A

1 DECLARATION OF OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF GUESTS

Rob Cowie declared the meeting opened at 7.30pm and alerted the meeting of the procedures for emergencies including evacuation, designated exits and muster points.

2 ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

Members

Mr Ned Radford	Councillor
Mr Robert Sexton	Councillor
Mr Digby Stretch	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
Mr Tony Fisher	Deputy Bush Fire Control Officer
Mr Roger House	Senior Bush Fire Control Officer
Mr Geoff Gale	President of the Kojonup Bush Fire Association
Mr Robert Cowie	Administration/Regulatory Officer
Mr Rick Mitchell-Collins	Chief Executive Officer
Mrs Denise Berryman	Secretary of the Kojonup Bush Fire Association
Mr Paul Retallack	Senior Ranger

Mr Geoff Fisher	Kojonup Community Member
Mr Bob Francis	Kojonup BFB Member

APOLOGIES

Mr Mort Wignall	Manager of Regulatory & Community Services
Mr Murray Gibbs	Senior Bush Fire Control Officer

3 Call for Nominations and the Election of the Presiding Member

The previous Presiding member no longer serves on the Shire Council so therefore a new Presiding Member is required to be elected

The committee calls for nominations to the position and if more than one nomination is received a vote will take place and the Presiding Member will be duly elected.

Denise Berryman nominated Mr Sexton for the position of presiding member and he accepted the nomination.

Mr Sexton was elected unopposed

Mr Sexton took over as chair of the meeting.

4 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE

Nil

5 APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

ORDINARY MEETING 5th October 2015

COMMITTEE DECISION

Moved Ned Radford, seconded Tony Fisher that the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of KBFAC held on 5th October 2015 be confirmed as a true record with the following amendment:

Item 10.4 – Fuel Card Offer. Digby queried the motion regarding the offer of monies to the Zulu's. the minutes have his name as seconding the motion and it is doubtful that Digby did this as he would benefit from the motion.

CARRIED/~~LOST~~ 8/0

7 ANNOUNCEMENTS by the Presiding Member without discussion

Nil

8 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

Nil

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil

10 **ITEMS****10.1** **Ownership of Kojonup and Muradup Fire Trucks**

The DEFS trucks, if push came to shove can the CBFCA refuse to allow the trucks to leave the district?

The real question is "who actually owns the trucks?"

Digby responded to this by saying there has never been any issue when we have declined to send the trucks. Digby will broach this subject at the next DOAC meeting in April.

10.2 **Aerial Inspection Report**

After the aerial inspection we seem not to have a report back to the Council "state of our district in respect to fire risk".

Were there any properties at risk or any infringements handed out?

This season's inspection were very successful with only two properties requiring further attention from the Ranger. There has not been a report put before council, but Paul is happy to comply with this request going forward.

The common belief is that the ethos around the Shire is very good and compliance is substantially better than 5 to 10 years ago.

The dates of the Prohibited Burning Season were discussed and the possibility of bringing the dates forward was raised. Digby and Geoff Gale will raise this as a discussion point at the Bushfire Association AGM.

10.3 **Muradup Town site**

A look about the town of Muradup shows that a number of properties are not prepared to be "fire safe", what is our tolerance to this?

It was discussed that the "Fly-over" does not look at the town site of Muradup, so a detailed general inspection. There needs to be some work carried out to clean up around the river and the railway lines. This work may be carried out by the Shire Depot.

10.4 **Kojonup VFRS**

Our town truck (small red one from across the road) has been to the fires and I have good reports as to their effectiveness. We do not include these people in our BFAC, and should we have them as part of our formal structure as of right? It is recognized that they are independent however it has shown in other places that we all need to be on the same page

The committee has no objections to inviting the KVFRS to be included in the BFAC. Rob Cowie and Robert Sexton to draft an invite prior to the next meeting.

10.5 FCO Rights

The powers of the FCO's and Fire Officers have been called into question in some places or at best confused some people. Should an annual education and induction process be conducted to ensure improved understanding of the execution of their duties?

The rights and regulations are covered in the FCO Training course. This is not discussed at the Radio Ops meeting prior to the season as it would be overload of information. Roger House suggested that there be a simple “cheat sheet”? Digby said that this is mostly covered in the Emergency Contact book, but this can be looked at for improvement if required.

Robert Sexton stressed that all FCO's are appointed by the Council and as long as all decisions are made in the correct and lawful manner, Council would back to them with all resources.

10.6 Cost of External Contractors at Fire

*The cost of Wrights bulldozing at fires.
Is this amount being forwarded onto DFES or is this the Shire's responsibility or the property owners responsibility?*

The common belief that the cost of these contractors were being picked up by DFES is incorrect. The current process is the Shire is responsible for all fires until they become so large that the fire needs to be handed over to DFES control (usually level 2 or above). Currently the contractor's cost comes to approx. \$6500. The work carried out by external contractors is for the immediate fire risk and any other work is to be paid for by the land owner.

Digby Suggested that the shire needs to invest in getting more people accredited in tree felling to assist with fires.

10.7 New Communication Tower Update

Progress report on the Communications Tower by CEO.

Rick Mitchell-Collins informed that because of the concerns and issues raised by Kojonup, the federal government is changing the wording of Emergency Services to include reference to Local Government. Telstra is willing to accommodate LG's for inclusion of extra hardware on the towers being constructed. Telstra and DFES are in discussion as to which is the best tower.

Digby suggested that Rick write to DFES promoting the use of the Telstra tower. Rick will distribute any further information to BFAC members.

10.8 SEMC Report on recent Fires

The SEMC have released the report on the O'Sullivan (Northcliffe) and Lower Hotham (Boddington) fires that occurred in Jan 2015.

It was suggested that one of the main issues was that DPAW and DFES have different command modules and until; this was worked through, problems will continue at major fires.

10.9 Office of Bushfire Risk Management – Working Group Permit Burns

Steve McDonald from DFES in Albany has asked if we would be interested in providing a delegate to assist in a working group for the new Fire Permits. Would anyone be interested in participating?

Digby elaborated on the Fire Permit and OBRM. The bushfire risk mapping is incomplete and erroneous. It will only cause more problems for rural communities.

Kojonup will need to continue to be vocal in regards to the new fire permits. Digby will consult with Steve McDonald regarding the working group.

10.10 CESM Update

CEO to update committee on CESM position

Rick spoke of the increased regulatory and risk requirements that are saturating all local governments. The amount of paperwork is becoming overwhelming. Currently Fire and Emergency Services are not being paid enough justice. If there is a possibility to have DFES pay for a portion of the salary, the Shire would be negligent in its duties if this wasn't explored fully.

Digby reiterated the Bushfire Association stance that a CESM is not required. Other chiefs from shires with CESM's have indicated that the CESM doesn't add any value to fire fighting.

Tony Fisher asked if the Shire was getting any pressure from DFES to head down this path.

Rick responded that there isn't any pressure and that the way that fires are handled is not in question. Kojonup does fire with exceptional results. It is the other areas of Emergency Services where we are poor. The CESM position will help to co-ordinate auxiliary services in a fire situation, not take over the running of the fire

11 MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

- Reserve Burning

Digby introduce Geoff Fisher. Geoff spoke about his thoughts regarding the lack of scheduled and controlled burning that takes place in the Shire. This is something that needs to be initiated as soon as possible to ensure the safety of the community. The first thing needs to be sorted out is who actually owns the reserves and how is it possible to gain access to these to initiate a controlled burn. The shire will produce a Fire map for the AGM so that each brigade can pinpoint areas of concern within their own area and a strategic list can be created.

There were some queries regarding flora and fauna issues in a controlled burn. All of these things need to go before another government body (DPAW?) for approval.

Robert Sexton and Geoff Fisher will work together to keep this issue moving forward.
- The SMS system for emergency warnings is working very well. The relatively low cost is good to know, but we need to be cautious of over use.

- **Handheld Radios**
Digby has been trialling an new handheld. It is working well and he suggests that the Shire look at purchasing a handheld radio for each brigade FCO to be passed on at the season changeover.
Rob will look at the budget issues for this
- The weather scheds are currently working well twice a week. Roger asked if there were too many people asked when the discussion about a fire ban was taking place. All Zulu's are open to change if required. To be discussed at the AGM
- **Zulu Succession**
Tony will be taking over as Chief at the AGM. The search for more Zulu's is ongoing
- The DFES Fuel card offer was taken up by all brigades. This is great news.
- The phone at the airstrip is currently not being used, The BFAC agreed that they have no issue with discontinuing this service. Rob Cowie to discuss with other Emergency Services to ascertain use.

12 **NEW BUSINESS**

(Of an urgent nature, introduced by a decision of the meeting).

13 **NEXT MEETING**

To be held after the Bushfire AGM. Possibly the 18th April. This will be confirmed.

14 **CLOSURE**

There being no further business to discuss, the Presiding Member, thanked the members for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 9:30 pm.