

AYRSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday, 12th September 2007 at 2.00 p.m. within
Cunninghame House, Irvine.

Item 1 - Sederunt.

Present:

East Ayrshire Councillors: Alan Brown and Tom Cook.

North Ayrshire Councillors: Robert Barr, Andrew Chamberlain, John Moffat and Ryan Oldfather.

South Ayrshire Councillors: Douglas Campbell (Chair) and Ian Douglas.

In Attendance: William Sommerville, Assessor; Alastair Kirkwood, Depute Assessor; Eileen Howat, Treasurer; Colin Hastings, East Ayrshire Council; Gwyneth McKinlay, North Ayrshire Council; William Pollock, Administration Manager, South Ayrshire Council (for Clerk); Asif A. Haseeb, Audit Scotland (External Auditor); and Avril Gerrish, Committee Administrative Officer, South Ayrshire Council.

Apologies: Councillor William Crawford, East Ayrshire Council;
Councillor William Menzies, East Ayrshire Council;
Councillor Andrew Filson, East Ayrshire Council;
Councillor Elisabeth Marshall, North Ayrshire Council;
Councillor Alan Munro, North Ayrshire Council;
Councillor Andy Campbell, South Ayrshire Council;
Councillor Ian Fitzsimmons, South Ayrshire Council; and
Councillor Mike Peddie, South Ayrshire Council.

Item 2 – Minutes of Meeting held on 26th June 2007.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Board held on the 26th June 2007 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

Item 3 - Matters Arising.

Item 9 (ii) – Electoral Registration.

The Assessor reported that with reference to making representation to the Scotland Office to allow those appointed as power of attorney to sign on behalf of voters for whom they acted, there had been no progress as the legislative document was still at the stage of a work in progress, but advised that formal representation would be made when draft legislation was received.

Item 12 – IRRV Conference.

The Assessor reported that Councillor John Moffat had attended the IRRV Conference on 5th September 2007 at Crieff Hydro.

Item 4 - Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board – Audited accounts for the financial year to 31st March 2007.

There was submitted (circulated) a report dated 4th September 2007 by the Treasurer

- (1) advising
 - (a) that Audit Scotland had undertaken its audit of accounts of the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, and the Code of Audit Practice approved by Audit Scotland for the financial year to 31st March 2007; and
 - (b) that the audited annual accounts for the financial year to 31st March 2007 and the proposed independent auditor's report were attached to the report for information;
- (2) outlining key issues as identified by the Auditors in the report as follows:-
 - (a) that there were no qualifications to the audit certificate; and
 - (b) that the accounts had shown an accumulated surplus of £140,794 as at 31st March 2007 and that the Board had already committed £74,787 to meet expenditure in 2007/08 and £30,000 to meet the costs of implementing single status and changes to electoral administration and proposals for the use of the remaining £36,007 would be submitted to the next Board meeting;
- (3) reporting
 - (a) that recognised best practice required the Board to consider the draft audited financial statements and the proposed independent auditor's report and recommending that the Treasurer signs the accounts; and
 - (b) that the Treasurer had provided assurances to Audit Scotland during the course of audit in a management representation letter as contained in Appendix 4; and
- (4) reporting that the Annual Report to Members would be submitted to the next meeting of the Board on 15th November 2007.

Decided: to instruct the Treasurer to sign the accounts and submit copies to Audit Scotland by 30th September 2007.

Item 5 – Revenue Monitoring Report 2007/08 – Period to 31st August 2007.

There was submitted (circulated) a report dated 4th September 2007 by the Treasurer

- (1) advising that the Revenue Estimates for 2007/08 had been approved by the Board on 21st November 2006; and
- (2) detailing the income and expenditure for the period to 31st August 2007 compared to the approved Revenue Estimates and outlining an underspend of £31,102.

Decided:

- (a) to approve the contents of the report; and
- (b) to instruct the Treasurer to provide updated figures to the next meeting.

Item 6 – Non-Domestic Rating.

There was submitted (circulated) a report dated September 2007 by the Assessor outlining the current position with reference to Non-Domestic Rating.

Decided: to note the position.

Item 7 – Council Tax.

There was submitted (circulated) a report dated September 2007 by the Assessor

- (1) advising that the survey and banding of new houses was continuing with a view to achieving or improving on the performance targets; and
- (2) outlining the current position on clearing appeals as detailed in the report.

Decided: to note the position.

Item 8 – Electoral Registration.

There was submitted (circulated) a report dated September 2007 by the Assessor

- (1) advising
 - (a) that the registration forms for this year's canvass had been issued in the week commencing 27th August 2007;
 - (b) that first reminder forms would be posted to properties where no return had been made in September and that a door-to-door canvass would be undertaken in urban areas with a second postal form issued to properties in rural areas; and
 - (c) that staff from the three Ayrshire Authorities had been recruited to assist in this exercise; and
- (2) reporting
 - (a) that the Scotland Office was proposing to introduce personal identifiers for absent voters in Scotland;
 - (b) that the Electoral Registration Officer and Principal Administration Officer would be attending an Absent Voting Identifiers and Performance Standard Seminar in Edinburgh on 3rd October 2007; and
 - (c) that the Electoral Commission was moving forward with work on the development and roll-out of performance indicators and a financial information survey as part of its statutory duty to set and monitor performance standards for electoral services and to collect information on the costs of electoral services from Electoral Registration Officers, Returning Officers and Referendum Counting Officers.

The Assessor further advised

- (i) that he had leaflets for distribution to members entitled "Look Out For Your Right to Vote" requesting that they might display them in their surgeries; and
- (ii) that there would be a press-release being issued over the next few weeks reminding the electorate to return registration forms for this year's canvass.

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

Item 9 – Staffing.

There was submitted (circulated) a report dated September 2007 by the Depute Assessor outlining the current staffing position.

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

Item 10 – Any Other Relevant Business.

Visit to Valuation Offices.

It was agreed that a visit could be arranged to the Board Offices at Wellington Square, Ayr, the next time the meeting was held in Ayr on 15th January 2008.

Item 11 - Date of Next Meeting.

The Board noted that the next meeting would take place in Greenholm Street, Kilmarnock on 15th November 2007 at 10.30 a.m.

The meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.