

District council meeting of 2 December 2020

Convened and announced on 26 November 2020

Present: ZOVILE-BRAQUET Marion (CSV), Mayor, SCHILTZ Fernand (LSAP), Deputy Mayor, JUNGBLUT Tom (CSV), Deputy Mayor, LORENT Guy (DP), EIFES Eric (DP), DI GENOVA Jean-Pierre (CSV), LAKAFF Laurent (CSV), ARRENSDORFF Jean-Jacques (Déi Gréng), SCHMIT Claude (Déi Gréng), WEYMERSKIRCH Patrick (LSAP), Councillors, TAZIAUX Tim, Acting Municipal Secretary, REIFFERS Cindy, Secretary

Apologies: SCHMITZ Jean-Pierre (CSV)

Before the start of the meeting, the Mayor said a few words in memory of the recently-deceased former Contern District Council employee, Frank Braun.

On behalf of the Cabinet and of the District Council, she expressed her condolences to his two children, his mother and his family.

1. Determination of venue for the district council meeting

The district council unanimously approved the Cultural Centre in Moutfort as the venue for this district council meeting.

2. HR matters

In closed session

3. Termination of 2 tenancy agreements

The district council unanimously agreed to accept the termination of two tenancy agreements. These were tenancy agreements with refugee families who had been able to build up a life in their new home country, with the help of the district council, and were now able to buy or rent a home independently on the open housing market. The district council was also unanimously agreed in noting that one of the families was already moving out of its accommodation early and that it was not required to repay the rental charges still outstanding.

The Cabinet will take advice on how the released premises can be used in future.

The Mayor wished both families every success for the future.

4. Presentation of the council budget

The Mayor explained how difficult it was to undertake planning work in the current health crisis. Accordingly, it had not been possible to implement various projects this year, technically and practically. However, the Cabinet had put an emphasis on making the district fit for all future events.

The Deputy Mayor for Finance, Tom Jungblut, presented the council budget for 2021. He explained that the council budget underlines the Cabinet's efforts to pursue coherent and sustainable policies. Investments should be made with vision and for the long term, and the council should not live beyond its means.

Under Regular income, a € 1.9 million fall in income was noted in the amended budget via the global funding for the municipalities (Fond de dotation global des communes). The forecasts for 2021 are € 12 million. By comparison, in 2020 it was € 13.2 million.

Under Regular expenditures, an item for € 15,000 was created, covering the delivery service for the elderly and vulnerable persons during the health crisis.

The expenditures invested in internal and external communications extend into 2021. Rising staffing costs are associated with the growth in the municipality. Maintenance of buildings and of the vehicle fleet is ensured, in spite of a financially prudent approach.

The Cabinet is placing particular emphasis on the upkeep of public spaces, since this year and next year particularly large numbers of residents will be spending time outdoors, due to the current crisis, but will have to forego events. This item was costed at € 219,000.

€ 600,000 is being invested in maintaining the water supply network and protecting water sources. € 1,732,000 in the amended budget was attributable to the purchase of water, although in the 2021 budget this reduces significantly, to € 521,000.

Extraordinary income shows € 4.3 million in the amended budget and € 10.2 million in the budget for 2021.

Under Extraordinary expenditures, the focus is on the key projects which the district of Contern needs to remain functioning and to take account of future growth. A further focus is on sustainability, environmental protection, climate policy and the safety of our residents.

Sustainability and climate impact are reflected in residents being offered the opportunity of heating their home with sustainable raw materials, via a district heating network. Electric mobility likewise continues to be encouraged, and non-motorised transport is being supported with funding of € 100,000. There is € 600,000 in support for affordable housing.

Investment in the young generation is reflected in the “Séchère Schoulwee” initiative, itemised at € 500,000. One new play area is envisaged, at a cost of € 45,000.

€ 100,000 is being committed for renovating the mortuary in Moutfort.

Investments in water management are planned not only as regular expenditure, but also as extraordinary expenditure. These expenses total around € 500,000 and cover, inter alia, renewal of the water pipes in Um Kinert and resumed operation of the Milbech water source.

There is a € 5.5 million provision for the purchase of properties and land. It was not possible to complete the acquisition of Conterstuff café-restaurant, which was outstanding and is being carried forward to 2021.

Further major items are the construction of a new sports hall, renovation of the “An Henkes” cultural centre, and the school extension.

Total exceptional expenditures come to € 13,674,670.

- Despite the high investments, a positive balance of € 400,000 is posted.

Contern district council has debts of € 14,616,494.29, and is thus posting a per capita debt of € 3,700. Annual rates are around € 1,000,000.

Jean-Jacques Arrensdorff provided information on his request to SIAS (Syndicat intercommunal pour l'assainissement du bassin hydrographique de la Syre, the inter-communal association for nature conservation in the Syre drainage basin) that it should take on management of the house-martin and artificial nests in the whole SIAS area. The Mayor explained that the Cabinet wanted to engage more residents in the house-martin project and encourage them to take part, and for that reason had already been in discussion with Marc Thiel from SIAS.

The council budget was now being issued to the members of the Finance Committee for scrutiny.

5. Approval of income

Income totalling € 9,897.05 was unanimously accepted for 2020.

6. Announcements and councillor questions

The Mayor announced that, for the known reasons, no Festival of the Third Age could be held. For anniversary celebrations, such as golden weddings, flower arrangements were being delivered to the residents in question. Every resident celebrating a birthday with a zero at the end was given a "Loterie Nationale" advent calendar.

The council's staff also had to miss out on the annual Christmas party, and as a gift were receiving an 'eat out to help out' voucher which can be redeemed in local cafés and restaurants.

54 tablets, 9 laptops and 11 computers were handed over to the school. In these crisis times, the Cabinet considers it important that all pupils should be able to take part in home schooling. Additionally, there is provision in the 2021 budget for the purchase of a dedicated server for our school.

The Mayor announced that the Cabinet has purchased an intercom system costing € 30,000, in order to ensure better sound quality and acoustics when holding district council meetings and for all other events in the large hall of the Moutfort Cultural Centre in future. This is financially more sensible than paying hire charges of € 1,600 per meeting. This system can operate with a total of 138 microphones. Particularly during these coronavirus times, this is vital equipment which can be used at all smaller and larger events, including those organised by our clubs and associations.

Patrick Weymerskirch reported on a SICEC video-conference (Syndicat intercommunal ayant pour objet la construction, l'entretien et l'exploitation d'un crématoire, inter-communal association for crematorium construction, maintenance and operation) held on 26 November 2020, in which the amended budget for 2020 and the budget for 2021 were accepted.

Jean-Jacques Arrensdorff inquired whether it would be possible to receive the budgets for all such associations, and the Mayor agreed to this.

The Mayor thanked Tim Taziaux, Acting Municipal Secretary, and Laurence Bauler from the Council Administration's Finance Department for their committed work on the council budget.

Patrick Weymerskirch provided information on the video-conference with François Bausch, Transport Minister, concerning developments on the RGTR transport network. Fernand Schiltz, Deputy Mayor, added that it was possible to download a summary and a PowerPoint presentation following the conference, at Emwelt.lu, and that an interactive map was available at RGTR.lu.