

District council meeting of 30 November 2022

Convened and announced on 24 November 2022

Present: ZOVILÉ-BRAQUET Marion (CSV), Mayor; SCHILTZ Fernand (LSAP), Deputy Mayor; JUNGBLUT Tom (CSV), Deputy Mayor; ZHU, Dali (DP), DI GENOVA Jean-Pierre (CSV), SCHMITZ, Jean-Pierre (CSV), LAKAFF Laurent (CSV), ARRENSDORFF Jean-Jacques (Déi Gréng), WOLTER Laurence (Déi Gréng), THIERIE Geoffrey (LSAP), Councillors; TAZIAUX Tim, Acting Municipal Secretary; SCHILTZ Nadine, Secretary.

Apologies: EIFES Eric (DP)

1. Presentation of the Council budget 2023

Mayor Marion ZOVILÉ-BRAQUET (CSV) invited the Deputy Mayor for Finance, Tom JUNGBLUT (CSV), to present the Council budget 2023.

Deputy Mayor Tom JUNGBLUT (CSV) was pleased to present the 2023 budget, which despite difficult circumstances was matched to the requirements of Contern district and characterised by financial stability.

Under **regular income**, particular emphasis should be given to the local business tax revenues, which remain constant at €2,039,794.20 despite the economic crisis. Income from the Global Municipal Endowment Fund ("Fonds de dotation global des communes") is €14,968,357.90, above the 2022 income by almost €900,000 in the 2023 budget. Thanks to regular investment in real estate, the regular rental income is also growing, generating a constant annual income of €372,000. In addition, the parking spaces in the Rosswénkel industrial area, for which charges are being levied from 2023, will generate additional, regular income of at least €50,000.

Regular income for the financial year 2023 totals €22,052,645.82, which is close on one million euros in extra income compared to the posted figure in the amended budget 2022.

Under **regular expenditure**, Deputy Mayor Tom JUNGBLUT (CSV) noted that prices had risen across the board – a fact reflected in many items in the 2023 budget, such as costs for post and telecommunications, insurance, pellet costs and communications expenditures. The communications expenditures total €205,000 and are thus around €35,000 higher than in the 2022 financial year, attributable primarily to a price increase in printing costs of 20%.

The item for salaries continues to grow, partially due to the index tranche being applied in the coming year, and an upcoming change of generations and personnel, together with fresh appointments at district level. Several posts here need to be dual-filled temporarily due to holidays and upcoming retirements, in order to guarantee a seamless handover. In consequence, social and pension costs are also increasing proportionally.

The public lighting continues to be modernised and replaced using energy-saving LED lamps. €140,000 is set aside for this. On repairs, the intention is to use more efficient replacement parts.

In the 2023 budget, €315,000 is allocated for purchase of new equipment and machines for special tasks, such as carpentry works. That way, the Cabinet intends on the one hand to meet the new requirements of the steadily growing district with growing infrastructure and a larger road network, and on the other hand to be less reliant on external specialists. To ensure greater transparency over these expenditures, separate items have been formed in the 2023 budget for the various specialist departments in the district's workshops.

One key syndicate of which the district is a member is the SIAS syndicate. However, here too the costs of membership are rising annually. The contribution to protecting nature is rising to €159,000, which is up €20,000 on the previous year. For water conservation, €82,000 is set aside in relation to the costs for the Water portfolio-holder. The contribution to the recycling facility in Munsbach totals €518,000. The Cabinet does not want to economise on items for climate and nature protection, but is looking to invest further to preserve the environment sustainably for the next generations.

Due to the offer of free childcare, the operating costs of the Spillkëscht nursery, the Maison Relais and the Youth Centre are necessarily increasing. The costs of the Maison Relais alone for 2023 come to €866,670, which is €200,000 more than the previous year.

For 2023, €900,000 is planned for drinking water. This is €300,000 more than in 2022, due to the growing demand for water from the steadily growing population and from the industrial area. It should be noted here that the water is currently almost entirely bought in, because the Millbech source still cannot be used. The price at which the district buys in water from SEBES has more than doubled since 2017.

The Cabinet is particularly committed to child well-being and to the district's young residents, and accordingly is committing €67,000 to maintaining the play areas and the multi-sports pitch.

A total of €400,000 is assigned to cover the rising costs of heating the cultural centres, sports halls, and the school and council buildings. On top of this, there are the costs of electricity and wood chips.

The contribution to the costs of the music teaching organised by the UGDA is €444,162 for next year. The state subsidy for this is €200,000. The remaining part of this expense is viewed by the Cabinet as a good investment in culture. In addition, €10,000 is planned for Music Week, €139,000 for the Summer of Culture and €50,000 for the Christmas market.

Free school books are costing the district €50,000. This represents an increase of around €5,000. Expenditure on school IT equipment and computer programs totals €77,000.

In total, the costs of regular expenditure in the 2023 budget come to €21,284,510.41.

That means that the regular budget is posting a surplus of €768,135.41. The Cabinet can consequently satisfy the Finance Committee's desire for a balanced budget with a positive surplus. This has been achieved despite generally rising prices, higher contributions to syndicates, and growing expenses for nature, environmental and water protection.

Under **extraordinary income** in the 2023 budget, the Cabinet is including part payments of grants on various building projects. A sum of €250,000 is being received for the project to create affordable housing in Oetrangle, located in Rue de l'Eglise, €750,000 for construction of a new sports hall, and €86,905 for Phase 2 of the Henkeshaus renovation.

In this context, income of €1,000,000 for the issue of planning permissions in the regular income budget should be noted. These sums continue to guarantee growth in the district.

In addition, as in the previous year, further income of €6,977,760 is being received for the sale of land located in the PAP Contern South. The delay in the sale of these plots has been due to the pandemic and the excavations conducted by INRA. The district is receiving €1,400,000 in the same PAP for the construction of five affordable homes.

The district council's share in the Foresters' Hall is to be sold to the state, for €500,000. The state has always owned the land, and is the part-owner of the existing hall.

To maintain balance in the extraordinary budget, a loan of €6,500,000 is being arranged.

Extraordinary income therefore totals €17,880,665.

Under **extraordinary expenditure**, the Cabinet is pleased to report the start of a number of planned projects. Implementation of the shared space in Contern has a budget of €1,750,000 in the 2023 budget. The Conter Stuff renovation is set to start next year, with €350,000 set aside for studies and construction supervision, and €1,500,000 for works. This represents only the first part of the costs, totalling around €7,000,000, for the renovation.

€235,000 is being invested in vehicles for the Technical Services department.

In addition, €180,000 is already planned in the 2023 budget as Contern district's contribution to the new building at the recycling facility in Munsbach, even if this project still requires further discussion in council and the definitive cost estimate is not known at this time.

Moreover, improvement works are needed to the drainage system. €1,500,000 is set aside for this SIDEST project.

€200,708 is planned to provide further affordable housing. €1,400,000 is planned for the project to create affordable rental homes in Oetrangle, located in Rue de l'Eglise. For the project in the PAP Contern South, €1,000,000 is planned for housing and €1,500,000 for infrastructure works.

A total of €610,000 is planned for implementation of traffic-calming measures in “Op der Millbech”. However, there are extraordinary expenses to be met in addition to this, such as replacing pipework for €1,000,000, renovating the water tank for €175,000 and purchasing a modern filter system, at a cost of €1,450,000. These expenses are to treat drinking water from our own spring water. Further expenses are €2,650,000 for the new sports hall, €1,550,000 to enlarge the school and Maison Relais, and €250,000 to enlarge the Spillkëscht nursery. In addition, €400,000 is set aside for work on some models for a new council building.

Extraordinary expenditure therefore totals €20,032,667.75.

Contern district has repayable debts totalling €12,568,907.18. Of this, €1,004,923.62 is paid off annually, and €49,564.90 in interest repaid. This corresponds to a per-capita debt of €2,923 – an exceptionally low figure compared to debt in other local authorities.

In conclusion, Deputy Mayor Tom JUNGBLUT (CSV) explained that the 2023 budget was characterised by a number of projects that are only in their early stage, and that these will continue to have a financial impact on the council finances in the coming years. However, the council’s financial position was healthy, and no new loans had been taken out during this legislative period – instead, the financial position had been strengthened, in order to make the finances fit for tomorrow. He said it meant they could face up to the challenge of rapid growth in population without having to reckon with financial upheaval. The planned expenditures were necessary to ensure maintenance and new building of various infrastructures and to satisfy the requirements of residents, national policies and the environment.

Mayor Marion ZOVILÉ-BRAQUET (CSV) thanked the Deputy Mayor for this excellent summary and asked whether the council had any questions or wanted further clarifications. The Cabinet was available to provide any explanations needed.

The council budget was issued to the members of the district council for scrutiny.

Deputy Mayor Tom JUNGBLUT (CSV) left the room.

2. Charging arrangements for Meals on Wheels – Adjustment

Mayor Marion ZOVILÉ-BRAQUET (CSV) advised that Servior was increasing the price of the Meals on Wheels service to €12.01 per meal from 1 January 2023. Consequently, at its last meeting with the cabinets of the SIAS district councils, the Cabinet had decided to adjust the price to €13.00 per meal.

The district council unanimously approved the adjustment to the charging arrangements for the Meals on Wheels service.

3. Charging arrangements for home help – Adjustment

Mayor Marion ZOVILÉ-BRAQUET (CSV) advised that ProActif was increasing its hourly rate from €12.70 to €13.45 from 1 January 2023. That was still a very cheap rate.

The district council unanimously approved the adjustment to the charging arrangements for the home help service.

4. Approval of an agreement – ProActif 2023

Mayor Marion ZOVILÉ-BRAQUET (CSV) presented the ProActif agreement for 2023, in which it is stated that the prices are being increased by 10% from 1 January 2023.

The district council unanimously approved the ProActif agreement for 2023.

5. Approval of a document – Emphyteutic lease in Contern

The district council unanimously approved the emphyteutic lease document for a detached house, located in the affordable housing project PAP Contern South.

6. Approval of changes to the traffic orders for Contern district – Temporary changes

Mayor Marion ZOVILÉ-BRAQUET (CSV) presented the changes to the traffic orders in relation to the building site in the centre of Contern to install the 30 kph zone. These changes will take effect from 27 February until the end of the works.

The district council unanimously approved the temporary changes to the traffic orders for Contern district.

7. Exceptional grant – Walburga Contern a.s.b.l.

The district council unanimously granted the Walburga Contern a.s.b.l. association an exceptional grant of €600 as a contribution towards expenses for the musical accompaniments at its traditional Advent market.

8. Exceptional grant – Harmonie Moutfort-Medingen a.s.b.l.

Mayor Marion ZOVILÉ-BRAQUET (CSV) stated that the Cabinet had initially proposed an exceptional grant of €4,000 to support the Harmonie Moutfort-Medingen a.s.b.l. music association with the purchase of new uniforms. However, in the interim the Cabinet had taken the decision to raise this sum to €6,000, in recognition of the orchestra's constant commitment in and for the district on numerous occasions.

The district council voted unanimously to grant Harmonie Moutfort-Medingen a.s.b.l. an exceptional grant of €6,000.

9. Approval of resignation by a member from a committee

The district council unanimously accepted the resignation of Ms Marie-Rose Cloos as a member of the 3rd Age Committee.

Mayor Marion ZOVILÉ-BRAQUET (CSV) thanked Ms Marie-Rose Cloos for her service for decades on the committee.

10. Approval of income

The district council unanimously approved income of €44,373.00 for the financial year 2022.

11. Announcements and councillor questions

Mayor Marion ZOVILÉ-BRAQUET (CSV) announced that the district council meeting originally scheduled for 7 February 2023 unfortunately needed to be moved to an earlier date, due to an opinion. She proposed moving the meeting forward to 25 January. The district council agreed with this proposal.

She also reminded members about the After Work event, the Christmas market followed by a visit from St Nicholas and the ContArt exhibition, being held from 2 to 4 December in Moutfort park.

Deputy Mayor Fernand SCHILTZ (LSAP) reflected on the "Repair Café". There were 20 registrations, with 35 broken items, of which 50–60% could be repaired. Those who attended were thoroughly satisfied.

He advised that the Cabinet had decided to take part in the initiative planned by the SIAS syndicate to distribute free packs of wildflower perennials to residents, on request, until 31 January. The intention behind this was to ensure more sources of pollen and nectar for pollinators in the district. The offer would run for as long as stocks lasted.

Councillor Jean-Jacques ARRENSDORFF (Déi Gréng) asked why the drinking water in Moutfort had had a strong and noticeable taste of chlorine for some time.

Mayor Marion ZOVILÉ-BRAQUET (CSV) advised that a new chlorination product was probably being used. She assured him that she would contact Technical Services about this matter and seek a solution.

Councillor Laurent LAKAFF (CSV), who is Chair of the Youth Committee, extended an invitation to the winter cinema in the school on 15 December.

An attentive resident asked whether the tree by the old post office was not being illuminated this year. Mayor Marion ZOVILÉ-BRAQUET (CSV) explained that this year, in the interests of energy-saving measures, only the illuminated deer would be providing the Christmas cheer in the district.