WITHAM FOURTH DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of the **Finance and General Purposes Committee** at 47 Norfolk Street, Boston on **Wednesday 14 January 2025**.

Present - P. Richardson (Chairman)

Members: T. Ashton, P. Ashtough-Morris, R. Austin, B. Bowles, C. Cronkhorn (Vice Chairman), C. Hardy, N. Jones, M. Leggott, K. Smith, J. Woods

1. **Apologies for Absence**
The Chief Executive confirmed apologies had been received from J. Grant and J. Ward.

2. **Declaration of Interest**
None

3. **2025/2026 ESTIMATES**
The Chief Executive presented his 11 page memorandum to the Committee, which covered the forecast for the current year, a rate history, and the estimate for 2025/26 showing a suggested rate increase of 8.0%. The Chief Executive confirmed that whilst this increase was one of the highest he had seen during his tenure, some IDBs were severely affected by the energy price hikes and were discussing increases in the region of 30%. Thankfully, this Board were tied into the fixed energy contract until April 2024 so this had not been an issue this year although may impact next year.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the original estimate had shown there would be an anticipated surplus of £62k to be added to the General Reserve, however, pending average rainfall for the rest of the year, the actual figure would be nearer to £120k. This was because the year had been drier than normal so there had been minimal use of the pumps. There had been a slight reduction in Admin costs due to the loss of a staff member. Last year the 5% rate increase had been agreed mainly based on the issue of red diesel. This argument had been won allowing use of red diesel at the pumping stations and some machinery however this had been affected by the significant increase in fuel prices. Circa £100k surplus was due to this.

The Chief Executive referred Board Members to the General Reserve and confirmed the current balance as £500k. With the potential £120k above, this would increase to £620k which would mean that the Board would be slightly ahead of where it wanted to be this year.

> N. Jones – asked if the pay increase had now been agreed? The Chairman confirmed that as of yet, it had not been agreed. The Chairman confirmed that the initial offer made was 2.1% consolidated and a one-off unconsolidated payment of £1,500 to be paid monthly. This offer would have equated to an approximate 8% pay rise for an employee on spine point 14 but this was rejected by the employees.

The Pay & Conditions Board reviewed the offer and offered 2.1% consolidated together with a one-off payment of £1,800 to be paid by way of 2 instalments in April and September. The Union had had a meeting with a few members present who had decided to reject this offer too, although their members had not been given the chance to vote on this improved offer.

The Chairman added that the Pay & Conditions Committee preferred to accept a formula for pay reviews which had thrown up an anomaly during covid years resulting in a higher increase for employees which was honoured by the Board. Only about 30% of the Lincolnshire workforce were