

Patrick Thomas

Email – fyi-request-20972-f72ba565@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Thomas

I refer to your request dated 29 October 2022, which raised various questions relating to the Council's appointment of Mr Peter Beggs as its Chief Executive. The Council is treating your request as having been made under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

The Council ran a rigorous recruitment process, with the assistance of professional consultants. The vacancy for Chief Executive was advertised as is required under clause 34, Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002. The process was also designed to ensure that the Council addressed the elements in clause 33, Schedule 7 of that same Act (which obliges the Council, when making an appointment, to have regard to the need to appoint a person who will meet certain requirements).

The Council ultimately determined that Mr Beggs was the best candidate for the role. The Council was aware of Mr Beggs' dismissal from his previous role at Antarctica New Zealand, and thoroughly canvassed matters with him as part of the recruitment process.

I am satisfied Peter had been transparent during the interview process and discussions with referees had been exhaustive. I am not in a position to discuss these matters any further, as I am conscious of the need to protect Mr Beggs' privacy.

I am confident that the Council made a sound decision in its appointment of Mr Beggs. My experience of working with Mr Beggs for the last three years is that he is serving the Council, and our community, well.

You also asked whether Mr Beggs has direct access to the Council's funding accounts.

Mr Beggs, like several senior employees, is able to charge expenditure to the Council's accounts (via Council credit card, direct reimbursement, or invoicing via the Council's finance system). All methods ultimately require sign-off by myself or a member of the Executive Leadership Team.

Other controls, contained in the Council's Delegations Manual, apply to officers' ability to incur or approve expenditure. Under this Manual, all Council purchases over \$250,000 must be approved by the Council (by elected members at a Council meeting).

I have had no cause for concern about any expenditure authorised by Mr Beggs.

In response to your comment that Peter was accused of gross overspending at his last job – this is incorrect – there was no accusation or finding of gross overspending.

I trust this addresses your concerns. If you are unhappy with the handling of this request, you have the right to complain to the Ombudsman (see www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andy Watson'.

Andy Watson
Mayor – Rangitikei District Council