

30 October 2023

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Official information Request: Wairarapa Times Age Article 23 October 2023

I am writing to you in response to your request received 24 October for information relating to the Wairarapa Times Age Article 23 October 2023 entitled: "Meeting called off after threats" and to provide information relating to the meeting that was cancelled as stated in the WTA.

We have assessed your request under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA). I have received information to provide the following response:

- what date was the public meeting set for that was cancelled due to threats made to significantly disrupt the event?

The drop-in session with the Featherston councillors was originally planned for Friday 13th October, then moved to 20th October due to unexpected work conflicts. It was the session planned for the 20th October that was cancelled.

How many public meetings were planned, and what dates were cancelled due to threats made to significantly disrupt event?

This was tentatively planned to be a recurring monthly session. This may be revisited and reinstated at a later date if there is enough interest from the community and sufficient availability from councillors. The session planned for 20th October was cancelled, this was the only event that was affected.

- Where was this and or other meetings being held that were cancelled due to threats made to significantly disrupt the event?

The drop-in session was booked at the Featherston Community Centre.

- what was the purpose of the public meeting/s set that was cancelled due to threats made to significantly disrupt the event/?

The purpose of the drop-in session was to provide an opportunity for community members to have an informal chat with councillors, to raise local issues, present ideas, share general information, and/or ask questions of councillors. Some community members find it challenging to engage with the council in more formal settings, so this session was intended to be a casual and approachable way to interact.

- who, Council staff and Councillors including the Mayor were attending that/those public meeting/s that were cancelled due to threats made to significantly disrupt the event?

Rebecca Gray, Melissa Sadler-Futter, Colin Olds. This drop-in session was organised by councillors and did not involve council staff.

- What was the nature of the threat made to significantly disrupt the planned meeting/s?

Messages sent to the Deputy Mayor that used aggressive and offensive language, and stated an intention to disrupt the day as a protest against recent council decisions. The person sending the messages is known to the councillors and the threat was taken seriously.

- Was that/those threats reported to the police?

There was no formal report to the Police about these specific threats, but had they continued or escalated then that was the planned next step. The decision was instead made to de-escalate the situation by cancelling the session. The drop-in session was being offered as a more accessible way for the community to interact with councillors, and potentially having a loud protest with aggressive language would completely defeat the purpose of the day. This was not a formal council meeting or event, so the decision was made to not use up additional resources in the form of police or council officer time.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly at <https://swdc.govt.nz/lgoima-proactive-release/>, with your personal information removed.

You have a right to request a review by the Ombudsman on this response. Further information about this process can be found on <https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/what-ombudsman-can-help/complaints-about-government-agencies/how-make-complaint> or email info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

Kind Regards



Amanda Bradley
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