

**MIONTUAIRISCÍ NA CRUINNITHE SPEISIALTA DE COMHAIRLE CONTAE
CHIARRAÍ A THIONÓLADH I SEOMRA NA COMHAIRLE, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE,
TRÁ LÍ, AR AN LUAN 4 DEIREADH FÓMHAIR 2010.**

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TRALEE ON MONDAY
4TH OCTOBER 2010.**

PRESENT/I LÁTHAIR

Councillors/Comhairleoirí

R. Beasley	J. Brassil	T. Buckley
M Cahill	P. Connor-Scarteen	B. Cronin
P.J. Donovan	T. Ferris	J. Finucane
S. Fitzgerald	T. Fleming	N. Foley
M. Gleeson	B. Griffin	D. Healy-Rae
M. Healy-Rae	P. Leahy	P. McCarthy
A. McEllistrim	M. Moloney	T. O'Brien
B. O'Connell	M. O'Shea	L. Purtill
J. Sheahan	A.J. Spring	

OIREACHTAS MEMBERS

J. Deenihan T.D.	M. Ferris T.D.	T. McEllistrim T.D.
Sen. P. Coghlan		

APOLOGY

P. O'Donoghue	Sen. N. O'Sullivan	J. Healy-Rae T.D.
T. Sheahan T.D.		

IN ATTENDANCE/I LÁTHAIR

Mr. T. Curran, Co. Manager	Mr. J.D. Flynn, Dir. Of Corp. Services
Mr. C. O'Sullivan, Dir. Of Roads	Mr. J. Breen, Dir. Hsg & Comm & Ent
Mr. G. O'Brien, Mtgs. Administrator	Mr. P. Corkery, Press & Comm. Officer
Ms. B. Reidy, S.S.O. Corp. Affairs	

The meeting commenced at 10.35am.

Mayor P. Leahy took the Chair.

Special Meeting re PSO & Kerry Airport

The Mayor welcomed councillors and Oireachtas members to this very important meeting. The future of the county both from a tourism and economic point of view is dependent on the continuation of the Public Service Obligation contract for Kerry Airport.

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae apologised on behalf of Jackie Healy-Rae T.D. who could not attend the meeting.

Cllr. J. Sheahan apologised on behalf of Tom Sheahan T.D. who could not attend the meeting.

Opening of Tenders

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. M. Healy-Rae, SECONDED by Cllr. M. Moloney it was agreed to approve the opening of tenders for the Supply, Installation & Commissioning of pipe network and ancillary works at Muingaphuca, Killorglin – Closing date: Wednesday 29th September 2010 at 4.00pm.

Vote of Sympathy

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae extended a vote of sympathy to Mr. Tom Sheehy, SE Environment Department on the death of his father.

All members said they wished to be associated with this expression of sympathy.

The Mayor informed the meeting that he would firstly call on those who requested the meeting to speak and they would be followed by Deputy Deenihan who would speak on behalf of the Oireachtas Members.

Cllr. M. Moloney declared that her husband is employed in Kerry Airport but this is far removed from the issue involved. She requested this meeting for the common good of the people of Kerry and to secure the economic development and job prospects for Kerry.

Cllr. Moloney then read the following into the record of the meeting:

“We are here today to talk about the Minister for Transport, Ryanair and the retention of the PSO which will impact on Regional Airports. The withdrawal of Ryanair from the PSO contract has left Kerry Airport in a very vulnerable position. Ryanair tendered for the PSO in 2008 undercutting other airlines and as a result won the contract removing Aer Arann from the route. Under the terms of the PSO, the airline awarded the contract is obliged to provide three flights per day from Kerry to Dublin. Now with only ten months to go in the contract Ryanair intend to withdraw. While they have agreed to put on one commercial flight a day, from November, this is of little benefit to the airport and to the passengers who frequently used the flights.

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The early morning, lunch-time and night-time flights will no longer exist. It is essential that a new airline is awarded the PSO contract to reinstate these flights. However, this is where we have to thread carefully because under the terms of the PSO, only the airline awarded the PSO contract can operate a flight on the route, so it would mean Ryanair, would no longer be able to operate their flights from Kerry to Dublin. We must protect the other routes that Ryanair operates from Kerry Airport, to places such as Frankfurt Hann, Standstead, Alacante, Faro, Dusseldorf and Luton. While Ryanair are know to pull out of an airport overnight they have served Kerry Airport well with these runs and without them the Airport would be in danger of closing.

However, the pressing issue at the moment is to get an Airline to take over the PSO contract and I know that our Oireachtas members in Dublin are all pulling together to ensure that this is sorted out. Every organisation in this county is rallying behind the airport and that is why we are here today, to do the same, to show our support and to do whatever we can to help.

This is a very serious issue for our county and the reduction in flights will have an adverse effect on Tourism and indeed on Enterprise in this county. If business people who use this flight for day return to carry out business or meetings cannot have this facility available they may decide to take their business elsewhere.

On this occasion, I am asking all public representatives from all persuasions to pull together and not make a political football out of the matter, we all have contacts in Dáil Éireann and I would ask that you contact them and tell them that we here in Kerry need our airport, we need the PSO contract to make the flights viable for any airline to operate. To save us all repeating ourselves here today, my colleague Cllr. Spring will fill you all in on the facts and figures of the cost to the Airport of loosing the PSO. As well as securing an airline to take over the PSO contract immediately we must keep the pressure on the Government to retain the PSO and make sure that the Minister does not abolish it in the forthcoming Budget or else we will be back here again in July trying to safeguard the future of Kerry Airport.

I would suggest that we seek a meeting with the Minister for Transport for the Mayor and County Manager and that we also immediately write to the Minister expressing our concerns on the matter and requesting him not to abolish the PSO at all cost."

Cllr. T. O'Brien said as a Director of Kerry Airport he was very disappointed with recent developments and he hoped that the PSO contract would be honoured.

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Cllr. M. Gleeson referred to a headline in the Irish Examiner that day which read 'Work with us Minister' where the 'us' refers to the people of Kerry. Cllr. Gleeson then read the following statement into the record of the meeting:

"A Mhéara, I'm not quite sure if the airport should be the principal focus of our discussion. Maybe the fate of the country should be. The country, its finances and its international reputation are in total tatters. And nobody is answerable and nobody is ultimately being held to account.

On Thursday I attended, at the invitation of the German Ambassador, the celebration of the 20th anniversary of German unification, I was informed that the economy of that country is growing steadily at some 2.2% despite all the difficulties posed by that reunification. Meanwhile Ireland disintegrates. But the airport and its number of flights is our reason for being here. But no, that is not quite correct either. The real reason that we are here is to contemplate the very future of our county.

I was proud and privileged to represent my county on the great stage that is Croke Park. I was extra proud to do so because at that time I was living at some remove from it and understood with extra clarity the obstacles that presented themselves to the people living in a place so far removed from the introverted economists and planners who strutted around the capital.

I recall the torment of traffic jams in Naas, Newbridge, Kildare and Portlaoise as I sweated about making an important game on a Friday evening in Kenmare. I know the frantic pressure of racing along the quays to make the train at Heuston. And worst of all I always had a gut feeling that nobody who really mattered gave a damn, or ever would give a damn.

The Minister has said that the road infrastructure has substantially improved. It has from Galway to Dublin. It has from Waterford. But is certainly hasn't from Kerry, not through Barraduff and onto Mallow, not from Ballyvourney onto Macroom and not from Abbeyfeale onto Newcastlewest.

The economy of Kerry cannot prosper without a dynamic airport. The economy of the country cannot prosper unless vibrancy is encouraged and facilitated. And Kerry is or should be treated as part of the country. Our peripherality has always been ignored. Our special needs have always been neglected.

But Government has no qualms about accepting the vast amounts of revenue that accrues annually to the Exchequer particularly from the many tourists who deeply appreciate the richness of our county. The C.I.E. bus was my mode of transport during my Dublin years – a heavily subsidised Dublin bus. But that was Dublin and that still is Dublin – a still subsidised Bus service.

And all men kill the thing they claim to love. The coward does it with a kiss - the brave man with a sword. The Government does it best of all with absolute neglect. The neglect of Kerry continues and our isolation is re-enforced and our economy is under terminal threat."

Cllr. B. Cronin said all members are concerned about the future of Kerry Airport which is a vital gateway for tourism, growth and the development of our county. Kerry County Council has been very involved in Kerry Airport for many years. The recent announcement by Ryanair is devastating for both the Airport and the county. The continuation of the Kerry/Dublin route together with all other routes is crucial for the county. The consensus appears to be that Kerry County Council should not get involved between Michael O'Leary and Minister Dempsey as in the process we could lose Kerry Airport. Kerry County Council must do everything possible to ensure the PSO is retained and honoured. The Minister should resolve the current impasse with Ryanair or arrange for another carrier to take over the route. The current difficulties will not be easily resolved and the Minister should consider re-negotiating the contract if appropriate. He said he was anxious to see Kerry Airport develop. The future of Kerry Airport is in jeopardy unless the present difficulties are resolved. He called on all Oireachtas members to use their influence to ensure the current difficulties are resolved.

Cllr. A.J. Spring concurred with the views expressed by previous speakers and said there are two issues at stake (1) to ensure the present PSO contract is honoured and (2) the continuation of the PSO from July 2011. A special meeting of Tralee Town Council was convened the previous Tuesday night to discuss this very important issue. In excess of 419,000 people travelled through Kerry Airport last year with 120,000 using the PSO route. Tourism is the largest employer in Kerry and each tourist that went through Kerry Airport spent €500 per day while in Kerry. There are 150 people employed in Kerry Airport. He discussed this issue with Michael O'Leary of Ryanair and Pádraig Ó Céidigh. Mr. O'Leary's problem emanates from Clause 10(a) of the PSO contract which states that he is entitled to compensation because of the levy put on passengers by the Minister. In the past Pádraig Ó Céidigh also sought compensation from the Minister and while he did not receive any compensation he upheld the service. Mr. Ó Céidigh is considering the possibility of being in a position to take over the PSO route from 1 November. It is likely that Clause 10(a) will end up either in Court or in Arbitration. The vast majority of people using Kerry Airport travel with Ryanair. Cllr. Spring said that while he appreciated what the Oireachtas members were doing members should not underestimate their power. Every effort should be made to get the operators and the Minister to enter into discussions with a view to reaching an early resolution.

Deputy J. Deenihan thanked the Mayor for inviting Oireachtas members to the meeting. He said it is important that the members of Kerry County Council and Oireachtas members work closely on this very challenging issue. Kerry Airport is one of the main economic drivers in the county. Executives from the largest

companies in Kerry travel all over Europe and the Kerry/Dublin link is vital to them. If that facility is removed it will have a damaging effect on the economic life of the county. He thanked Management for providing him with a copy of the briefing document as it outlines the economic significance and the implications for the county if the PSO contract is not honoured. The proposed new flight schedule by Ryanair will mean if someone wants to do business in Kerry they may have to stay 2 nights to allow them time to do their business. Last Wednesday Deputy John O'Donoghue organised a meeting for all Oireachtas members with the Minister for Transport. All Oireachtas members from the county attended this meeting and this demonstrates how seriously they are taking this problem. On that occasion the Minister advised Oireachtas members that he would be taking the legal route because Ryanair did not give three months notice. He advised them to contact Aer Arann and Ryanair with a view to considering other options. Deputies J. Healy-Rae, J. O'Donoghue and himself would be meeting Mr. Ó Céidigh the following Wednesday with Minister Dempsey. Aer Arann are in Examinership but he anticipated there would be an announcement that week which should resolve their position. Deputy Deenihan informed members that he would meet with Mr. O'Leary the following Wednesday and he hoped Deputy O'Donoghue would also attend this meeting. He intended to report back to his Oireachtas colleagues on Thursday on the meeting. He pointed out that Michael O'Leary and Ryanair are still very important for Kerry Airport as they operate many other flights from there. Kerry Airport is caught in the middle and it is important to be very careful on how we proceed. Again Deputy Deenihan thanked the Mayor and members for the invitation to attend the meeting and he said he would report back to the County Manager in a month.

Cllr. B. O'Connell concurred with the sentiments expressed by previous speakers. The importance of Kerry Airport cannot be over stated. It is critical that the current flight schedule is maintained. These flights are mostly used by business people. There are 118 people employed directly at Kerry Airport and there is also 30 Ryanair staff. The Government would have to pay €2.58m in social welfare if they loose their jobs. Kerry needs the Ryanair service and it is imperative the current difficulties are resolved immediately.

Cllr. T. Fleming said it is very evident we need a strategic approach to this problem and Oireachtas members, Kerry County Council and Tralee Town Council members must all work together. It is important to retain the flights to Germany, Portugal etc. from Kerry Airport. The future of Kerry Airport is dependent on Ryanair. If this difficulty is to be resolved at a political level he had every confidence in the Oireachtas members for Kerry and Minister Dempsey to achieve this. It is important to co-ordinate the efforts of all groups if progress is to be made. He called on the Mayor and Manager to co-ordinate this campaign. In conclusion Cllr. Fleming commended all involved in this campaign.

Cllr. J. Finucane welcomed the meetings taking place at present in an effort to resolve this difficulty. However, these talks cannot go on indefinitely. From

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November the number of flights to and from Dublin will be reduced. The argument put forward by Ryanair for the reduction in the number of flights is an economic one. They claim that since they signed the PSO contract the Minister introduced a €4 tax on a return fare. There has also been a 40% increase in the Dublin AA charges. Taking both these increases together it resulted in an additional cost per passenger of €19 which is excessive. He asked if Michael O'Leary is pre-empting a decision to be taken in the Budget. Mr. McCarthy in the Bord Snip Report recommends abolishing the PSO contracts. This is not the first time that the Minister and Ryanair have disagreed. In the past the Minister refused to meet Michael O'Leary in relation to the hanger in Dublin Airport and as a result jobs were lost and he would not like to see that happen in Kerry. At a recent seminar a speaker from New Zealand said our approach to tourism is outdated. We must now tax our way out of this recession or encourage development. He called on the Minister for Transport to act on behalf of the citizens of Kerry and to meet with Mr. O'Leary with a view to resolving this issue.

Cllr. J. Brassil complimented the Mayor and members who sought the special meeting on their foresight. It is important to show concern regarding the proposal to reduce the number of flights to and from Dublin. He complimented the Oireachtas members on their work to-date on this matter. However he urged caution and said he hoped everyone would speak with one voice to seek one objective and that is the continuation of the existing flight schedule after October if and when Ryanair pull out and to safeguard a continuation of the PSO from July 2011. The previous carrier, Aer Arann, ran a very effective service which worked well. Aer Arann subsequently lost that contract and he believed that Ryanair did not provide an ideal service. They made their decisions based on profits. It is important to send out two clear messages from the meeting (1) Kerry needs the current service to continue and (2) we must ensure that the PSO continues after the Budget. Oireachtas members or councillors should not get involved in any other arguments.

Cllr. T. Ferris agreed with the points made by previous speakers and said the arguments are similar to those expressed at the recent meeting of Tralee Town Council. It would be detrimental to the county if the service was discontinued at a time when we are trying to attract industry into the county. She accepted that travel times have reduced as a result of improvements to the road and rail infrastructure. Kerry cannot compete for investment unless the present level of service is retained at Kerry Airport. It is imperative that the PSO is retained. She was satisfied that Kerry is in excess of three hours from the capital and for this reason she believed it should be possible to retain the PSO. She commended all Oireachtas members for their efforts in trying to resolve this issue. She pointed out that some of the present flight times are not suitable. Cllr. Ferris said she presumed the Mayors of Killarney and Listowel would also attend the meeting with Michael O'Leary later that week. She asked Oireachtas members to encourage Minister Dempsey to seek the enforcement of a legally binding contract as she believed there has been a breach of conditions.

Cllr. S. Fitzgerald thanked the Mayor for calling the Special Meeting to discuss this most important issue. He also thanked the Oireachtas members for their dedication and commitment to finding a resolution to this difficulty. Oireachtas members or councillors should not get involved in the arguments between the Minister and Ryanair. Ryanair and Aer Arann have difference philosophies – Aer Arann is a social airline. Kerry needs this service and he asked would the business people of Kerry consider setting up their own service. Mr. Padraig Ó Céidigh did this and he was very successful. This could be a long term solution for Kerry. Ryanair has been very good to Kerry by operating flights to a number of European destinations. However, Aer Arann want to protect the western counties and while they are presently in Examinership he hoped they could resolve their current difficulties.

Cllr. N. Foley said it is extremely important that Kerry County Council shows leadership and unanimity on this issue. She acknowledged the unanimity of Oireachtas members in their determination to resolve this very difficult problem. It is important that the debate is constructive and productive. Cllr. Foley said it is important to acknowledge that Ryanair provides a service to other destinations from Kerry Airport. She emphasised the need to ensure that a good service is provided at Kerry Airport especially on the Kerry/Dublin route. Members should not engage in an argument as to whether another airline carrier should be considered but should focus on the provision of a proper service of 3 flights in and out of Kerry Airport each day. In relation to the retention of the PSO Cllr. Foley said Kerry is in a strong position as we are more that three hours from Dublin. In conclusion Cllr. Foley said Oireachtas members and members of Kerry County Council and Tralee Town Council speak with one voice on this matter.

Cllr. B. Griffin welcomed the holding of a special meeting and acknowledged the attendance of some Oireachtas members at the meeting. He also acknowledged their swift action on this very important issue. In the 15 months since he became a member of Kerry County Council Kerry Airport has rarely been mentioned which is surprising for such an important piece of infrastructure. In December 2009 he submitted a Notice of Motion which read as follows:

“That Kerry County Council would forge closer diplomatic links with regions and cities connected directly to Kerry via the air route to Kerry International Airport such as Frankfurt and London and given the importance of the Cork Swansea sea link as a means of indirect access to Kerry, the Welsh City of Swansea.”

In March 2010 he submitted the following motion:

“That Kerry County Council liaises with representatives of Kerry Airport, Aer Arann and Ryanair with a view to assisting in any way it can with the future

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viability of existing or potential new routes into and out of Kerry Airport, given the important access to the county with these airlines provide through Kerry Airport.”

Cllr. Griffin said he also submitted a motion for the July meeting regarding twinings with areas served by Kerry Airport. The impact of the reduction in the number of flights to and from Kerry Airport will be huge on business. It is important to be very careful regarding the relationship between Ryanair and Kerry Airport. Tourism in Kerry has benefitted hugely as a result of the additional Ryanair flights to and from European destinations. It is vital that a united approach is taken by everyone to this problem. Government charges are adding to the cost of doing business and this is ultimately resulting in job losses. There should be an incentive to travel. Kerry Airport is crucial for the development of the county. He called on Minister Dempsey to meet with Michael O’Leary with a view to resolving this issue.

Cllr. T. Buckley welcomed the holding of the special meeting and he acknowledged the work done by everyone on this issue to-date. This is one of the most critical issues facing the county for some time and everyone must work together to ensure flights are retained.

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae welcomed the Oireachtas members present at the meeting and again apologised on behalf of Deputy Jackie Healy-Rae who was unable to attend the meeting. Deputy Healy-Rae suggested that Deputies John O’Donoghue and Jimmy Deenihan should act as spokespersons for all Oireachtas members and meet with Mr. Ó Céidigh. He applauded the efforts of all groups who are working together to try to achieve a satisfactory solution. It is important to reach a solution to ensure the viability of the airport as it is one of the greatest assets we have in Kerry. He acknowledged that there has been a lot of investment in the county and access is improving. However further improvements are still required.

Cllr. A. McEllistrim welcomed the ongoing discussions in relation to the PSO. There should be a clear objective agreed at the meeting that everyone would work to safeguard the three daily flights to and from Dublin. She called on the County Manager to liaise with all parties involved in meetings and to ensure that members are kept up to-date on any developments.

Cllr. R. Beasley welcomed the Oireachtas members present and said that he hoped discussions would continue with Aer Arann and would reach a successful conclusion. The importance of Kerry Airport to the county cannot be over stated and early morning and late evening flights are essential for business people. The PSO contract was entered into and must be honoured. The importance of this service must be emphasised to the Minister for Transport

Cllr. D. Healy-Rae supported the call for the retention of the Kerry/Dublin service. He thanked all Oireachtas members for their efforts to ensure this service is

retained. The size of the aircraft used by Ryanair is not economic. The Aer Arann planes were more suited to this route. It is important to cater for business people with early morning and late night flights. The proposed schedule by Ryanair from 1st November is not suited to the needs of business people. He acknowledged that the road infrastructure has improved and the Castleisland By-Pass will open shortly. In conclusion Cllr. Healy-Rae said he fully supported the campaign to ensure the retention of this most important service for the county.

Cllr. M. Cahill welcomed the holding of the special meeting and said that members do not understand the PSO process. Kerry Airport is critical for the economy of the county. It is impossible to calculate its impact on jobs and tourism. He asked that every effort would be made to ensure that the full service is retained. He welcomed the Oireachtas members present at the meeting and said they are working together on this very important issue. In conclusion he said he believed the Minister for Transport would understand how important Kerry Airport is for the county and the correct decision would be made.

Cllr. P. McCarthy said Deputy Deenihan indicated that the Minister said he is pursuing the legal avenue, however, he hoped this would not be the only avenue he is pursuing. There is serious concern that Ryanair is a major company and they can survive without Kerry Airport. He wished Oireachtas members well in their efforts to resolve this issue and said he hoped this issue would not impact adversely on the proposed pharmaceutical development in Tralee. He acknowledged that overall travel times have been reduced but said bottle necks still exist. He was convinced there was a strategy in Cork and Limerick to maintain a barrier with Kerry. If it was in the interest of the county to upgrade the road from Lissarda to the county bounds the works would be done. He asked Oireachtas members when the road from Macroom and Limerick to Kerry would be improved. He PROPOSED that the Manager of Kerry Airport would be invited to a meeting to update members on plans for the airport.

Cllr. J. Sheahan welcomed the Oireachtas members present and apologies on behalf of Deputy Tom Sheahan who was unable to attend the meeting. He said the size of the planes used by Ryanair and the flight times are not suitable. The Minister has an important role to play in protecting jobs and tourism in the county by ensuring the PSO contract is honoured. He hoped that by putting pressure on the Minister the future of Kerry Airport would be secured.

Cllr. P. Connor-Scarteen seconded Cllr. Moloney's call for a meeting between the Minister for Transport and the Mayor and Manager. He called on the Government not to abolish the PSO. This issue arose because of government charges and these need to be reviewed. The people of Kerry do not care who provides the service once it is there. All options must be explored including discussions with Ryanair and Aer Arann. He raised this issue at a recent CDB meeting and all 32 agencies present said the loss of the flights would be devastating for Kerry. If the CDB can assist in any way they are willing to do so.

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Cllr. T. Buckley **SECONDED** Cllr. McCarthy's proposal that the Manager of Kerry Airport would be invited to a meeting to update members on plans for the airport.

Cllr. M. O'Shea said it is important to have unity among Oireachtas members and councillors on this issue. Kerry Airport is the corner stone of our future. He asked that members would be briefed by an Oireachtas member at the October meeting on any developments following their meetings with the airlines and the Minister.

Mayor P. Leahy thanked all members and Oireachtas members for attending the meeting. He pointed out that Cllr. Moloney proposed that the Mayor and the Manager should seek a meeting with the Minister for Transport to discuss this issue.

Cllr. J. Finucane **PROPOSED** that the members of Kerry County Council would meet with Michael O'Leary of Ryanair.

Cllr. M. O'Shea suggested that Oireachtas members should be given more time to have meetings with the airlines and the Minister and a decision could then be taken on the 18th October at the October Council Meeting on what further action should be taken.

Cllr. M. Moloney pointed out that the time for the Budget is coming near and it is important to ensure that the PSO is not abolished. She added that her proposal still stands.

Cllr. T. Fleming requested advice from the County Manager on this issue.

Cllr. M. Healy-Rae said that while he respected Cllr. Moloney's proposal the Kerry Oireachtas members met with the Minister last week and it would not be appropriate for the Mayor and the Manager to seek a meeting to discuss the same issue.

Cllr. Moloney suggested that following the upcoming meetings which the Oireachtas members have undertaken a deputation could then be sought with the Minister if no progress is made. In the meantime she asked that a letter outlining members concerns and calling for the retention of the PSO would be forwarded to the Minister immediately.

Cllr. S. Fitzgerald **PROPOSED** that consideration would be given to the leasing of two aircrafts with a view to operating our own service in Kerry.

Deputy J. Deenihan informed members that during their meeting with the Minister last week he referred to the Value for Money Report on the PSO's which will be published next week. He said he thought this would be favourable for Kerry. He

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said it is important to have a co-ordinated approach and to be careful not to send out mixed messages.

Mr. T. Curran, County Manager, said that he is a Director of Kerry Airport and he agreed with Deputy Deenihan. The retention of the Kerry/Dublin flights is in the best interests of the county. He welcomed the lead being taken by Oireachtas members and their continuing liaison with the other airline. He agreed with the suggesting by Cllr. Moloney that a letter should issue to the Minister for Transport outlining members concern regarding the reduction in the number of daily flights. He agreed also that it would be appropriate to await the outcome of upcoming meetings before seeking a deputation with the Minister. If Deputy Deenihan feels that they are not making progress then consideration can be given to seeking a deputation with the Minister.

Cllr. J. Finucane said that Deputy Deenihan said the Minister is considering the legal options. If that is the case it will take a long time and in the meantime aircraft are being transferred to other airports. If the opportunity arises to meet with Michael O'Leary members should avail of it as Ryanair are critical for Kerry Airport.

Cllr. B. Griffin asked if the Council is calling on the Minister to meet with Ryanair.

Cllr. T. Ferris said members should call on the Minister to meet with all airlines.

Cllr. B. Griffin said a message should be sent to the Minister that members of Kerry County Council want to see him take action on this issue.

Cllr. M. Moloney thanked the Mayor for holding the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12.25pm.

Gerard O'Brien
Meetings Administrator

Mayor of Kerry