

# NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

## MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING

11 APRIL 2016

11.40 AM

PRESENT: Ms C McKinney, Chairperson presiding  
Mr D Ashford, Interim Chief Fire & Rescue Officer  
Mr J Barbour  
Mr C Enright  
Mr A Hanna  
Mr K Henning  
Mr R Irvine  
Mr P Martin  
Mr G Smyth

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Graham, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Operational Support)  
Mr G Thompson, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Operations)  
Mrs L Cuddy, Director of Planning, Performance & Governance  
Mrs J Kelly, Director of Finance  
Ms I Hill, Board Administrative Secretary

### **Item 1: Apologies**

Apologies were noted from the Director of HR and the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Community Protection).

### **Item 2: Declaration of Interests**

The Chairperson sought clarification as to whether any Members of the Board wished to declare any potential conflict of interest with any of the business items on the Agenda. Members confirmed that there were no apparent conflicts of interest.

Mr Hanna referred to his position as a non-executive Member of the BSO Board and declared a potential conflict of interest. Mr Hanna stated he would absent himself as appropriate should he or the Chairperson consider that there was a conflict. This was noted by the Members.

The Chairperson noted that, with regard to Paragraph 21 of the Code of Accountability for Board Members, Mr Irvine, Mr Martin and herself had previously declared, as appropriate, conflicts of interest. She advised that Mr Enright must formally declare any business interests, position of authority in a charity or voluntary body in the field of health and social care, and any connection with a voluntary or other body contracting for NIFRS' services, and also any Directorships and other significant interests held.

Mr Enright declared that he had no conflicts of interest.

### **Item 3: 2016/17 Budget Proposals**

A Briefing Paper relating to NIFRS draft Financial Savings Plan 2016/17, along with the draft response to DHSSPS was circulated for the consideration of Members.

The Interim Chief Fire & Rescue Officer outlined the background to the draft Savings Plan noting that DHSSPS had confirmed a budget reduction of 1.5% from the opening RRL of £69,777,855 reducing the NIFRS budget allocation by £1.05m. He stated that the Director of Finance would outline the detail of the Savings Plan. He also advised Members that full detail will be presented to the Resources Committee.

The Chairperson acknowledged the pressure on the Corporate Management Team in developing the budget proposals and Savings Plan but expressed her discontent with regard to key papers such as these being tabled on the day for consideration by the Board.

The Interim Chief Fire & Rescue Officer acknowledged the comments of the Chairperson. He then outlined the timeframe for developing and submitting NIFRS proposals to DHSSPS.

The Director of Finance advised Members that the deadline for NIFRS' response to be submitted to DHSSPS was 8 April 2016. She noted that DHSSPS had been advised of the Special Board Meeting being convened on 11 April 2016 to consider the budget proposals and the draft Financial Savings Plan 2016/17. She explained the timeframes and processes for developing these documents and also the Annual Business Plan. She highlighted that the Savings Plan was in draft and explained that the Board would need to consider the draft Plan, the Annual Business Plan and the proposed budgets in parallel.

The Director of Finance informed Members that DHSSPS had agreed that the documents were circulated for Board consideration and noted that NIFRS' response will include a reference to the Board having full opportunity to consider the 2016/17 budget proposals along with its Annual Business Plan.

The Director of Finance gave Members a detailed overview of NIFRS 2016/17 Revenue Budget proposals. She referred to the additional National Insurance and Superannuation costs and informed Members that DHSSPS has confirmed these costs are not included in the reduction and NIFRS will receive funding for same. These costs have therefore been excluded from the Savings Plan. The Director of Finance drew Members' attention to the risks/pressures which will be monitored closely as the year progresses and provided a synopsis of the key risks.

The Chairperson invited Members' questions/comments.

The Director of Finance answered Members' questions relating to the information presented.

Discussion took place regarding the IT services proposal.

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At this point,  
Mr Hanna left the Meeting (12.05 pm).

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The Director of Finance referred to the draft Savings Plan 2016/17 and gave Members a brief overview. She emphasised that the risks have been identified and she summarised the 2 high risk areas as detailed in the Risk Assessment section of the Savings Plan. She stressed that NIFRS will work towards delivering savings but noted the funding pressures identified at this stage.

The Chairperson invited Members' comments/questions.

In response to a question from Mr Enright, the Officers provided clarification in relation to the crewing proposals.

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At this point,  
Mr Martin left the Meeting (12.15 pm)

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Members noted the draft letter in response to DHSSPS correspondence of 21 March 2016. The Director of Finance gave an overview of the letter and stated that it is clear that the Savings Plan is a draft and not approved by the Board. This was noted by Members.

Mr Henning commented that there was considerable detail in the paperwork which had been tabled to Members. He felt that further consideration of them was necessary. He indicated that he was content with the draft letter and sought assurance from the Director of Finance that DHSSPS was also content with same. The Director of Finance confirmed that DHSSPS was content with the draft response. Members noted this assurance.

The Chairperson referred to NIFRS' draft response. She asked Members if they were content for the letter to be submitted to DHSSPS. Members then unanimously agreed that NIFRS' draft response be submitted.

The Director of Finance explained her view that the Annual Business Plan and the budget needed to be agreed together. She further explained the budget proposals will be presented to the Resources Committee with the Business Plan being presented following consideration by the Corporate Management Team. She reiterated the need for the Board to consider all the documents in one pack. The Chairperson advised that Members required the necessary time to prepare and give consideration to all of the documents.

The Chairperson noted that Recruitment & Selection Training was being arranged for Board Members.

The Chairperson stated that, mindful of the considerable number of work streams under way, she would wish the budget and Business Plan to be presented to the Board week commencing 16 May.

Following a suggested amendment from Mr Irvine, the Director of Finance stated that she would amend the content relating to crewing prior to submitting the documentation to DHSSPS. This was noted by Members.

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At this point,  
the Corporate Management Team left the Meeting  
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The Chairperson noted that the Board was content for NIFRS' response regarding its Financial Savings Plan 2016/17 being submitted to DHSSPS.

The Chairperson referred to discussions at a Meeting that morning when a number of decisions had been taken in respect of the CFRO recruitment process. She sought re-confirmation that the Board were content for her to inform DHSSPS and other stakeholders of the criteria agreed by the Board.

**Members confirmed they were content for the Chairperson to share the criteria.**

The Chairperson advised Members that she and Mr Hanna, Vice-Chairperson, would be meeting with the Head of HR Advisory later that week.

The Chairperson noted that Members had also approved the following:

- that the OPA with SIB should be populated when all elements agreed; and
- that the Business Case supporting SIB's role in the recruitment process be submitted to the Director of Planning, Performance & Governance for sign off.

Referring to the report on the Audit of Governance, the Chairperson stated that there were a number of elements which she had discussed and given her view on to the Chairman of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee.

**Item 4: Contract Management Issue - Estates**

It was noted that the Board had been updated on this matter at the Closed Session Meeting held immediately prior to the Special Meeting.

Mr Henning stated that a report was anticipated by 20 April and advised colleagues that he would report back to Members when it was complete.

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THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS  
AND THE MEETING ENDED  
AT 12.30 PM

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