

NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING

11 DECEMBER 2009

2.00 PM

PRESENT: Mr W F Gillespie, Chair presiding
Mr C Lammey, Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
Mr P Bradley
Mr K Harper
Mrs B Gilliland
Mr R Pollock

APOLOGIES: Mr J Campbell
Mrs P Tally

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms A Conley, Director of Human Resources
Mrs I Hill, Board Administrative Secretary
Mrs H Robinson, DHSSPS

Prior to the commencement of Business, extracts from The Fire & Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and NIFRS Code of Procedures on Recruitment & Selection were circulated for the information of Members.

The Order states that the appointment of the Chief Fire & Rescue Officer will be made by non-executive Board Members, with the Code indicating that the selection Panel will consist of the Chair and 4 other Board Members.

1 Apologies

Apologies were noted.

2 Process for Recruitment of Chief Fire Officer

The Chair circulated a statement to Members for information. The statement briefly outlined the process for the recruitment of a Chief Fire & Rescue Officer but in particular detailed the background to difficulties relating to this process as a result of the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety requesting that the Permanent Secretary would be a member of the Panel. Members noted the Chair's suggestions for addressing those difficulties.

Mr Bradley referred to the existing Code of Procedures on Recruitment & Selection and sought clarification as to when the revised Code of Procedures would be implemented, The Chief Fire Officer explained that although the consultation on the revised Code of Procedures on Recruitment & Selection had been completed, the Equality Commission had recommended that the revised Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection be subject to full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). He stated that the existing Code of Procedures therefore remained current.

Copies of the draft Job Description, Person Specification and Conditions of Appointment were circulated for the consideration of Members.

Following discussion, the Board, on the motion of Mrs Gilliland, seconded by Mr Pollock, unanimously –

Resolved: **“to approve the Job Description, Person Specification and Conditions of Appointment for the Chief Fire & Rescue Officer subject to minor amendments”.**

With regard to the Department’s request that the Permanent Secretary be involved in approving the Job Description, etc, Members felt that these documents were for approval by the NIFRS Board as the employing body and not a matter for the Panel.

The Chair referred to the Department’s request that the Permanent Secretary be a member of the Panel and the Director of Human Resources read a proposed form of words relating to the constitution of the Panel should the Members be in agreement that the Permanent Secretary be included on the Panel.

The Director of Human Resources asked Members to note that the Permanent Secretary and Sir Ken Knight (Assessor) would be required to attend the Panel training.

Following a detailed discussion, and on the motion of Mr Bradley seconded by Mr Lammey, a vote was taken and it was unanimously –

Resolved: **“That the Board accede to the request from the Department and that, accordingly, the provision for the composition of the Panel contained within Section 2 of the Code of Procedures on Recruitment & Selection (Paragraph 2.5) be augmented on this occasion to include the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Mr Andrew McCormick”.**

Members noted that Mr McCormick and the Assessor, Sir Ken Knight, as for all other Panel Members, would be required to attend Panel training in accordance with the Code of Procedures (Paragraphs 1.13 and 1.16):

Paragraph 1.13

“Individuals who participate as members of Shortlisting and Interview Panels will receive training in all aspects of the Recruitment and Selection process”; and

Paragraph 1.16

“No Officer or Member shall participate unless he or she has undertaken the training.

Training will be arranged on a formal and structured basis in order to brief Officers and Members on new best practice developments and new legislative requirements as they arise.”

The Chair explained that the Panel could not make the appointment as, in accordance with The Fire & Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, the appointment must be made by NIFRS Board non-executive Members. The Panel would conduct the interviews and then make a recommendation to the Board and based on that the non-executive Members would formally make the appointment, subject to the approval of the Department. Members noted that it would be necessary to convene a formal Meeting of the Board to make the appointment.

3 Appointment of Selection & Appointment Panel

A copy of the draft timetable for the appointment of Chief Fire & Rescue Officer was circulated for the information of Members.

The Chief Fire Officer stressed the importance of establishing the Panel that day.

Mr Pollock suggested that it would be a useful exercise if all Board Members were to attend the Panel training.

It was unanimously –

Resolved: **“that all non-executive Board Members attend the Panel training and provisionally the Panel consist of Mr W Gillespie, Chair, Mr P Bradley, Mr J Campbell, Mrs B Gilliland and Mr R Pollock”.**

4 Chair’s Business Grievance Appeal

The Chair reminded Members that the Board, at its November Meeting, had established a Panel to hear a Grievance Appeal and sought Members’ permission, should there be difficulties in agreeing a mutually convenient date for all concerned and in the interests of progressing the matter, that the Hearing proceed with only 3 Members. This was agreed.

The Chair referred to the Job Description, etc, for the appointment of Chief Fire & Rescue Officer, and explained to Members that those documents would be forwarded to the Permanent Secretary, in his capacity as a Department Representative, for information. He stated that should the Permanent Secretary make any substantial comment, a further Special Board Meeting would be convened.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
AND THE MEETING TERMINATED
AT 3.40 PM
