

NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING

22 APRIL 2008

2.00 PM

PRESENT: Mr W F Gillespie, Chair presiding
Mr C Lammey, Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
Mr J Beattie
Mr P Bradley
Mr J Campbell
Mr S Clarke
Mr K Harper
Mr A Hatch
Mrs B Gilliland
Mrs P Tally

APOLOGIES: Mr J McKeever
Mr R Pollock

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr L Jones, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Mr T Wright, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Technical Development)
Ms A Conley, Director of Human Resources
Mr T McGonigal, Director of Finance & Performance Management
Mr B Gough, Area Commander, Southern Area Command
Mrs I Hill, Board Administrative Secretary

At the commencement of the Meeting, the Chair informed Members of the death of Assistant Chief Fire Officer Craig's mother and Members extended their sympathy to Assistant Chief Fire Officer Craig. The Meeting observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

The Chair, on behalf of Members, extended his appreciation to Area Commander Gough for hosting the Board Meeting at Southern Area Headquarters.

1 **Apologies**

Apologies were noted.

At this point,
Mrs Gilliland entered the Meeting

2 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 February 2008, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as a true record, subject to amendments suggested by Mr Bradley and Mr Harper, on the motion of Mr Campbell, seconded by Mr Bradley.

Arising from the Minutes:

Equality & Diversity Forum

Members were reminded that at the last Meeting, the Board had approved the formation of an Equality & Diversity Forum and that the Chair had explained that the Board would select a Member as Forum Chair.

Members noted that the appointment of a Board Member as Chair of the Equality & Diversity Forum would be dealt with later in the Agenda.

Draft Investment Strategy 2008-2018 and Draft Budget 2008-2011

The Chair acknowledged that the issue of Capital allocation for NIFRS would be discussed later in the Meeting. He sought an update with respect to Revenue funding.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that he and the Director of Finance & Performance Management continued to work with the Department regarding the matter.

3 Audit Committee Meeting

Members noted the draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit Committee held on 11 March 2008.

Mr Campbell, Chair of the Audit Committee, gave Members an overview of the business discussed at the Meeting. He highlighted that Mr O'Brien, KPMG, had presented his Audit Plan in respect of the 2007/08 audit of NIFRS. Mr Campbell explained that as the Plan had only been tabled at the Meeting it had been agreed to consider it in more detail at the next Meeting. He also referred to the Audit Reports expected to be completed in mid March and explained that it had been felt necessary to convene a Meeting in April in order to consider these Reports.

Members noted that the Minutes of the Meeting of 11 March 2008 would be ratified at the June Meeting of the Audit Committee.

4 Audit Committee Meeting

The draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit Committee held on 17 April 2008 were circulated for the information of Members.

Mr Campbell gave Members a synopsis of the business discussed at the Meeting. He highlighted in particular that Mr D Lynn, NIAO, had advised that the review of corporate performance of NIFRS by the Audit Commission would not be conducted in 2008 due to financial constraints.

The Officers answered Members' questions regarding some of the information which had been presented to the Audit Committee.

5 National Joint Council Matters

Report on Meetings

The Chair informed the Meeting that he had attended a meeting of the full NJC on 13 March and gave a brief overview of the business discussed which had included the 2008 pay settlement.

On 10 April the 6 Lead Members of the National Joint Council had met with the Fire Brigades' Union, at the request of the Union. The Chair explained that the FBU were anxious regarding the roll out of the Protocol and he had highlighted that NIFRS had commenced training in the Protocol with NIFRS Board Members. He stated that the meeting had also discussed the 2008 pay settlement and the Retained Pensions issue and the Chair advised Members of the current position.

Members also noted that the Chair had attended a meeting of the Fire Forum on 11 April.

The Chair highlighted that CLG would be launching its Equality & Diversity Policy on 28 May and the Director of Human Resources would be in attendance.

6 Chair's Business

The Chair informed Members briefly of his activities since the last Meeting. He highlighted in particular a meeting with Jeffrey Donaldson MP with respect to the issue of a Statutory Medal for Firefighters and explained that the Ex-Firefighters' Association was intent on pursuing the matter.

The Chair reported positively on his attendance at a number of Operational Assurance Audits and encouraged Members to attend same.

Referring to LIFE Scheme Graduations, the Chair advised Members of forthcoming Graduations and encouraged their attendance at the Ceremonies.

Register of Interests

The Chair reminded Members of the need to advise of any changes to their Register of Interests form. He stated that in the absence of a response it would be assumed that Members do not wish to make any changes.

NJC Meeting – June

The Chair reminded Members that NIFRS was hosting a reception at the Training Centre for both sides of the NJC on 9 June 2008.

7 Chief Fire Officer's Report

Operational Activities

Members noted details of operational activities during February and March 2008 and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer gave the Meeting a synopsis of incidents of note.

The Chief Fire Officer referred to a collision involving 2 lorries which had occurred in Omagh on 20 March 2008. He explained to Members that Mr McKeever had asked that his appreciation be passed on to the member of NIFRS staff who had come across the incident and rendered assistance and to the personnel who attended the scene. Mr McKeever had also expressed appreciation with regard to the help which had been given to his brother and his family following the incident.

The Officers answered Members' questions regarding various aspects of the information presented.

The Chief Fire Officer circulated NIFRS Board Monthly News Brief outlining a number of key highlights for the information of Members.

Capital Development Projects

Members were reminded that at the NIFRS Board Meeting in February 2008, the Chief Fire Officer had advised them of the proposed capital development projects being undertaken as a result of the ISNI 2 capital monies allocated to NIFRS over the next 3 years. He had also stated that he was working with the Principal Officers and Directors to determine priority needs for the allocation of capital allocations.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that the Principal Officers and Directors had considered that the Fire Station Replacement Programme should be divided into 4 groups and circulated a copy of NIFRS Fire Station Replacement for the information and consideration of Members. He added that it should be recognised that progress in any particular Fire Station Replacement Project will depend on suitable land being available and appropriate capital funds allocated in a given year. He answered Members' questions regarding the information presented.

The Chair reminded Members that the list was a guide and that progress in all cases would depend on suitable land being available and appropriate funding. He acknowledged that some of the priority Stations may be delayed where these requirements are absent whilst opportunities may be taken to meet lower priorities if sites become available.

Members endorsed the proposal for NIFRS Fire Station Replacement as a guide in respect of capital development projects.

NIFRS Capital Allocation 2008/09

Members noted the draft proposal for Capital Allocations 2008/09. The Chief Fire Officer explained that he had worked with the Principal Officers and Directors to determine priority needs for the Capital allocation and also reminded Members that at the last Meeting it had been agreed that some of the available resources would be directed towards the construction of Fire Stations that are shown as a priority for replacement. He gave Members an overview of the proposal.

Members endorsed the draft proposal for the Capital Allocation 2008/09.

Sole Suppliers

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the list of Sole Suppliers for ICT Services, Operational Equipment and Training & Development Systems had been updated. Members noted that no one else could supply these services for the reasons stated. The list of Sole Suppliers was considered by the Board and the Chief Fire Officer answered Members' questions on the information.

Members, on the motion of Mr Campbell, seconded by Mr Bradley, unanimously –

Resolved: **“to approve the list of Information Systems and Communications (ICT), Operational Equipment and Training & Development Systems Sole Suppliers as listed”.**

Update for Charges for Special Services/Hire of Equipment

The Chief Fire Officer explained that in April each year, NIFRS updated the charges it makes for Special Services and Hire of Equipment.

Members noted the proposed scale of charges for Special Services and Hire of Equipment which had been updated in line with annual inflation at 4.2%.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Campbell, seconded by Mr Harper, unanimously –

Resolved: **“to approve the revised charges for Special Services and Hire of Equipment with effect from 1 April 2008”.**

Management Accounts

The Director of Finance & Performance Management gave Members an overview of the Revenue and Capital position for the period ending 31 March 2008. He informed Members that the Management Accounts were an interim report and explained that the final position had not yet been established as work continued towards the completion of the year-end accounts.

At this point,
Mr Harper left the Meeting

The Officers answered Members' questions regarding the Management Accounts.

8 **Equality & Diversity Forum**

The Chair informed the Meeting that Mr McKeever had indicated an interest in the role of Chair of the Forum. There were no other nominations.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Hatch, seconded by Mrs Tally, unanimously agreed that Mr McKeever be elected as Chair of the Equality & Diversity Forum.

It was accordingly –

Resolved: **“that Mr J McKeever be elected as Chair of the Equality & Diversity Forum”.**

9 **Relevant Correspondence**

There was no relevant correspondence.

10 **Sealing of Documents**

Members approved the undernoted documents for Sealing:

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service with –

John Mulholland Motors – Purchase of 25 Skoda Octavia Cars;

William Dowling Limited – Power Upgrade – FRS Headquarters;

Brittania Electrical Services – Appliance Room Door Replacement;

Hetherington Painting & Building Contractors – Redecorations at Fire Stations; and

Kingsway Building & Painting Contractors – Redecorations at Fire Stations.

11 Meetings of the Board and its Committees

Members noted a list of Meetings, etc, scheduled for the remainder of April and the month of May 2008.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
AND THE MEETING TERMINATED
AT 3.45 PM
