

NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING

24 FEBRUARY 2009

2.00 PM

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

APOLOGIES: Mrs P Tally

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr L Jones, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Mr P Craig, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Community Development)
Mr T Wright, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Technical Development)
Miss A Conley, Director of Human Resources
Dr D Michail, Director of Planning & Corporate Affairs
Mr T McGonigal, Director of Finance & Performance Management
Mrs C McNally, Corporate Communications Manager
Mrs I Hill, Board Administrative Secretary

Prior to the commencement of Business, the Chair expressed his sadness at the tragic death of Firefighter Paul O'Brien.

1 **Apologies**

Apologies were noted.

2 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 January 2009, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as a true record, on the motion of Mrs Gilliland, seconded by Mr Bradley.

Arising out of the Minutes:

Portstewart Fire Station – removal of Second Fire Appliance

The Chair reminded Members of the background relating to the Board's evidence-based decision to remove the second appliance from Portstewart Fire Station. He referred to the Minister's press statement, which had been issued after a meeting with the Chair and Chief Fire Officer.

The Chair read the Minister's statement: "I have met with Bill Gillespie, Chair of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Board and Colin Lammey, Chief Fire Officer, Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service, to discuss their proposals to remove one fire appliance from Portstewart Fire Station. The decision on this proposal is currently with me and I am considering what action to take. I will make a decision in due course."

Members expressed concern regarding the current position and sought clarification regarding the role of the Board in such decision-making processes. They referred to the detailed and lengthy process which had been undertaken in determining its decision and called into question the value of their work and their enthusiasm if similar exercises were necessary in the future.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Chair would seek clarification from the Department on the issues raised by Members.

3 Service Support Committee Meeting

Members noted the draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Service Support Committee held on 3 December 2008.

4 National Joint Council Matters

Report on Meetings

The Chair explained to Members that a meeting with the Retained Firefighters' Union scheduled to take place on 3 March had been postponed and would now be held on 17 March 2009.

He also informed Members of his attendance at the Fire Forum on 6 February 2009 and highlighted that the main item of business had been the Audit Commission's Performance Assessment Document. He stated that it was an interesting document and copies were available to download.

It was noted that the next meeting of the National Joint Council was scheduled to take place on 25 March 2009.

5 Chair's Business

The Chair informed Members of his activities since the January Meeting of the Board.

Letter from Mrs D Donnell

The Chair referred to a letter which he had received from Mrs Donnell. It was noted that all Board Members had received a similar letter.

The Chief Fire Officer informed the Meeting that he had also received a letter from Mrs Donnell and advised Members that he had replied setting out the processes which Mrs Donnell's husband could follow if he wished to pursue the issues which were referred to in the letter.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Chair would forward a letter to Mrs Donnell referring to the Chief Fire Officer's letter.

Board Meeting – 24 March 2009

In order to facilitate the Chair's attendance at an NJC Meeting, it was agreed that the March Board Meeting would be convened at 1.30 pm.

LIFE Scheme Graduation – Westland

The Chair advised the Meeting that he would be unable to attend the above Graduation on 27 March and encouraged Members' attendance.

6 Presentation on Draft Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009

Members were aware that the Fire Safety Section of the Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 had not been enacted. It was noted that the consultation process on the Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 to bring this Section of the Order into force began recently and it is expected that they will come into statute in June of this year. Members had requested that they be given an overview of the legislation and how NIFRS will fulfil its statutory obligations when the Regulations come into force.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Craig gave Members a presentation on the Regulations, how they will be implemented and the impact on the Fire Service. He answered Members' questions regarding aspects of the information presented.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding the consultation exercise, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Craig confirmed that it was anticipated that a response be made by the Board and also NIFRS. He explained that Community Safety Officers were currently compiling information which would assist in developing a response to the consultation exercise.

It was agreed that Assistant Chief Fire Officer Craig would prepare a draft response for presentation to the Service Delivery Committee and subsequently the NIFRS Board.

The Chair thanked Assistant Chief Fire Officer Craig for his presentation.

7 Chief Fire Officer's Report

Operational Activities

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer gave Members a synopsis of the operational activities and incidents of note during the month of January 2009.

Management Accounts

The Director of Finance & Performance Management gave Members a detailed account of the financial position for the period ending 31 January 2009. He answered Members' questions regarding the information presented.

8 Relevant Correspondence

A pack containing relevant correspondence was circulated to each Member. The Chair informed Members of the contents -

- Copy of Permanent Secretary's letter dated 10 December 2008;
- Copy of Chairman's letter of 19 December 2008 to Permanent Secretary;
- Copy of Permanent Secretary's letter dated 28 January 2009;
- Copy of DHSSPS Investigation Report;
- Draft Analysis, Comment and Action Plan.

The Chair explained that, in order to give Members time to read the documentation, the correspondence would not be discussed at the Meeting but that a Workshop would be convened. It was agreed that a Workshop be held on 3 March 2009.

9 Sealing of Documents

Members approved the undernoted documents for Sealing:

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service with –

Bel-Air Refrigeration Limited – for the supply of Air Conditioning Equipment at FRSHQ and Maintenance and Servicing of all Air Conditioning Equipment throughout NIFRS;

Vanguard Fire & Rescue Limited – Single Core Hydraulic Hose;

Tuffa UK Limited – Adblue Tanks; and

Mac Clean (NI) Limited – Provision of Cleaning Services for the period 01.11.08 to 31.10.11.

10 **Meetings of the Board and its Committees**

Members noted that the following dates of Meetings of the Board and its Committees:

3 March 2009 at 10.00 am – NIFRS Board Workshop;
24 March 2009 (am) – Service Support Committee; and
24 March 2009 at 1.30 pm – NIFRS Board.

Members were informed that a Meeting of the Audit Committee would also be held in March, date to be confirmed.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
AND THE MEETING TERMINATED
AT 3.30 PM
