

NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING

24 MAY 2010

10.30 AM

PRESENT: Mr A Coleman, Chair presiding
Mr L Jones, Acting Chief Fire Officer
Mr P Bradley
Mr J Campbell
Mrs B Gilliland
Mr K Harper
Mrs P Tally

APOLOGIES: Mr R Pollock

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Craig, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Community Development)
Mr T Wright, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Technical Development)
Mr T McGonigal, Director of Finance & Performance Management
Dr D Michail, Director of Planning & Corporate Affairs
Mrs H Ellis, Senior Human Resources Manager
Mrs U McCambridge, Corporate Communications Officer
Mr C Kerr, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Operations)
Mr E Doyle, Area Commander, Western Area Command
Mrs I Hill, Board Administrative Secretary
Mr D Jordan, DHSSPS

1 Apologies

Apologies were noted.

Mr Coleman, interim Chair, introduced himself to the Meeting. He stated that he was looking forward to working with Members and taking forward NIFRS.

2 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 April 2010, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as a true record, on the motion of Mr Bradley, seconded by Mr Harper.

Arising out of the Minutes:

Tender for the Provision of Job Evaluations

Members were informed that the Business Improvement Section of Belfast City Council had been awarded the Contract for the Job Evaluation Service.

Temporary Head of Human Resources

The Acting Chief Fire Officer informed Members that, in response to NIFRS request to DHSSPS, Mrs Heather Ellis from the Southern Health Board Trust had been seconded as Senior Human Resources Manager for a period of 6 months.

Establishment Levels

Members noted that, following the Board Meeting on 27 April 2010, the NIFRS Establishment Levels had been forwarded to DHSSPS for approval. The Acting Chief Fire Officer informed Members that these had subsequently been approved by DHSSPS and staffing levels had now been agreed in accordance with the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum.

New Fire Safety Legislation

The Chair sought an update on the letter to NILGA asking them to agree to devolved functions in relation to Council Licensed Premises to Local Councils.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Craig stated that, as yet, no response had been received from NILGA. He referred to a recent meeting involving Licensing Officers and informed Members that NILGA were engaging with their respective Local Councils on the way forward. He expressed his increasing concern in the delay in implementation of the new Legislation and its impact.

Mrs Gilliland stated that it was unfortunate that Newtownabbey Borough Council was not part of NILGA but pointed out that she had raised the matter with her local Planning Officer.

Management Accounts

In response to a question from the Chair, the Director of Finance & Performance Management explained that NIFRS was still in the process of completing the Annual Accounts.

At this point,
Mrs H Ellis entered the Meeting

2010-2011 Budget Allocation Paper

The Acting Chief Fire Officer referred to Mr Bradley's request for a synopsis of the proposed NIFRS efficiencies and the consequences and explained that work on producing the synopsis was ongoing.

Notice of Retirement of Acting Chief Fire Officer

Referring to the Panel established for the purpose of conducting the mini-competition for the Acting Chief Fire Officer post, Mr Harper stated that, due to his availability it would be best to appoint another Member to the Panel.

The Chair stated the Head of Human Resources would address this matter.

At this point, the Chair introduced Mrs Heather Ellis to the Meeting. He explained that Mrs Ellis had been seconded from the Southern Health Trust as Senior Human Resources Manager for the next 6 months. He welcomed Mrs Ellis to NIFRS.

3 National Joint Council Matters

The Acting Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the Employees' Side had lodged a pay claim. Members noted that the matter would be considered at the NJC Employers' Meeting to be held on 15 June 2010.

4 Chair's Business

The Chair informed the Meeting that he had no business to report and that no matter had been brought to his attention.

Mr Bradley referred to the DID Report and the change recommended within it in relation to this Item of Board Business. The Chair stated that he would be taking the matter forward. He added that DID recommendations would be reflected at future Meetings as the Organisation moves forward.

5 Chief Fire Officer's Report

Operational Activities

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Operations) gave Members a detailed overview of the operational activities and incidents of note for the month of April 2010. He drew Members' attention to new national classifications which related to the rescue of fatalities and the rescue of casualties.

Referring to the 'Incidents of Note', the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Operations) highlighted the involvement of Fire Service personnel in an incident on 20 April and explained that a report was being prepared acknowledging their actions.

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

Contracts Awarded for the Month of April 2010

Members noted a list of Contracts Awarded for the month of April 2010.

Management Accounts

Members noted that, due to the finalising of the Year End Accounts, normal Management Accounts would not be available until the next Meeting of the Board.

6 Fees and Charges

The Director of Finance & Performance Management explained that each year NIFRS reviewed 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 approximately 4.45%.

Following discussion, the Board, on the motion of Mr Bradley, seconded by Mr Harper, unanimously –

Resolved: “to approve the revised charges for Special Services and Hire of Equipment with effect from 1 April 2010”.

7 Key Performance Indicators

Further to the Review of Key Performance Indicators which had been presented to the Service Support Committee at its Meeting on 26 January 2010, Members noted the Draft NIFRS Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2010-2015. The Director of Planning & Corporate Affairs gave Members a brief background of the development of the KPIs.

During discussion, the Officers answered Members’ questions regarding the KPIs.

The Board, on the motion of Mr Bradley, seconded by Mrs Tally, unanimously –

Resolved: “to approve the Draft NIFRS Key Performance Indicators 2010-2015”.

8 Draft Annual Report

Members noted the Draft NIFRS Annual Report 2009/10. The Director of Planning & Corporate Affairs explained to Members that amendments would continue to be made to the Report, including the addition of photographs, highlighting text and achievements. It was noted that the Statement of Accounts would be ready for consideration at the June Audit Committee Meeting for enclosure in the Annual Report.

The Director of Planning & Corporate Affairs stated that Members’ comments on the draft Report were welcome.

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

Resolved: “to approve the Draft Annual Report 2009/10 as work in progress”.

The Chair expressed his appreciation to the Team for all their work.

9 Bailey Tribunal Outcome

Members noted a synopsis of the recent Retained Firefighter lead case Tribunal heard in February 2010 and the decision of the Tribunal issued on 30 April 2010.

The Acting Chief Fire Officer gave Members a brief background to the case which related to Retained Firefighters applying for posts as Variable Crewed Firefighters (Wholetime) at Antrim and Carrickfergus Fire Stations.

It was noted that the Tribunal had ruled in favour of NIFRS. However, the Acting Chief Fire Officer explained that this may still be subject to appeal.

10 Presentation of Paintings of Central Fire Station

Members were informed that Mr Pollock had been approached by retired Assistant Divisional Officer Dickie Sefton who wished to present to NIFRS 2 paintings depicting Central Fire Station in older times. The Acting Chief Fire Officer explained that he and Mr Pollock visited Mr Sefton and received this kind donation.

The paintings were on display at the Meeting.

The Chair, on behalf of Members, asked the Acting Chief Fire Officer to write to Mr Sefton expressing the Board's appreciation for his generous gesture and adding that the paintings would be displayed in NIFRS Headquarters.

11 Relevant Correspondence

The following correspondence was noted:

- (a) Letter from DHSSPS regarding the matter of Recovery of Irregular payments.

The Chair informed Members of a letter from DHSSPS Permanent Secretary dated 13 May 2010 to the then Chair, Mr Gillespie, advised that the Board's recommendation had been accepted and gave approval for the recording of a loss of £50,840 in NIFRS Loss Register and within the Losses Note to the Accounts.

- (b) Letter from member of staff requesting an Appeal under the Harassment Policy.

The Acting Chief Fire Officer explained that a Panel of Board Members was required to hear the Appeal.

It was agreed that a Panel of 3 Members be established subject to Members' availability from the following:

Mrs Gilliland;
Mr Harper;
Mrs Tally;
Mr Campbell.

12 Sealing of Documents

Members approved the undernoted documents for Sealing:

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service with –

Belfast City Council, Business Improvement Section – Job Evaluation Service – a call-off contract with services ordered as and when required;

Renault UK Limited – Vans – 9 Medium and 6 Crew Cab.

Following a query from Mrs Tally regarding the Job Evaluation Service contract, the Director of Planning & Corporate Affairs confirmed that the cost for the past 3 years had been approximately £20,000.00 per year.

13 Meetings of the Board and its Committees

Members noted a list of Meetings of the Board and its Committees for the remainder of May and for the month of June.

Mr Campbell, Chair of the Audit Committee, advised Members that the Meeting scheduled to take place on 14 June 2010 had been postponed. He gave assurance that a Meeting would be held prior to the June Board Meeting.

The Chair informed Members that it had been necessary to reschedule the June Board Meeting which would now be held at 10.30 am on 23 June 2010.

The Acting Chief Fire Officer informed Members of the need for a Meeting of the Remuneration Committee to be convened. Date of Meeting to be agreed.

With respect to Meetings of the Service Support and Service Delivery Committees, following discussion it was agreed that the relevant Officer would liaise with the Chairs of the Committee to ascertain whether or not a Meeting was required.

In response to a question from Mr Bradley, the Chair confirmed that interim Board Members had been appointed by the Department from 1 July 2010 to ensure continuity.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
AND THE MEETING TERMINATED
AT 11.45 AM
