

UNITED NATIONS STAFF UNION
SYNDICAT DU PERSONNEL DE L'ORGANISATION DES NATIONS
UNIES

45th STAFF COUNCIL/45ème CONSEIL DU PERSONNEL

Minutes/Actes

Meeting No: 45/19
Date: 14 September 2017
Time: 1:15 pm
Venue: CR D
Quorum: 10/16 Units

45th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate at 1:30 pm with 10 units present. The Deputy Chairman held the Chair and the Secretary took notes. The meeting was recorded and a copy deposited with the UNSU Administrator.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted. In the course of the debate, agenda item 8 was moved up to 5.

2. Adoption of Minutes of previous Council meeting

Previous minutes were adopted unanimously.

3. Executive Board report and President's report and summary of communications

The Council received the Executive Board Report. VP1 reported that the President and VP2 had been at the Field JNC for the past two days, with no news to report since last week. The Deputy Chair recalled that the summary of communications was encouraged in advance.

4. UNSU finances

Vice Chair thanked the Treasurer for the thorough and detailed financial documents provided. The Treasurer presented his first report covering the period April 1st to August 31st. His intent was to provide as much detail as possible. Data was accurate, and a minor discrepancy was being cleared with UNFCU.

The Assistant Treasurer was waiting for all receipts to come in for a final statement on Staff Day. She did not expect the full USD 50,000 to be recovered, but the figure was close. The raffle had covered the price of the car.

The Secretary asked about staff relief committees. The corresponding item line was zero on the financial statements. The Treasurer detailed the activities of each committee. Syria had been the most active, raising nearly USD 11,000. Peru had been active but raised only USD 1,300. Haiti was at zero. Sierra Leone had been approved and Houston were under way. He would bring the issue to Council in October to decide how the USD 30,000 assigned to relief committees could be distributed.

The Assistant Treasurer asked about the procedure for establishment of the Houston Committee. Usually the Permanent Representative is designated Chair. A staff member had asked to create the committee, but the Mission had to designate a Chair. Unit 39 Rep. suggested that the scope be extended to all areas affected by Harvey and Irma. The Treasurer explained that it would be up to initiating staff members to determine the scope.

Unit 25 Rep. asked if expenses were all according to the regulation and counted with Council approval, in particular airline tickets for the second trip to Entebbe. The Treasurer was open to a retroactive resolution authorizing the expense, but from a financial perspective he did not feel he needed it. He would provide further clarification by email if required.

Unit 6 Alt. asked if there was any activity under the USD 150,000 budget line for legal representation. The Legal Counsel was active, but there were no expenses. The Treasurer had received a request from VP2 asking him to establish a contract. His reply was that it was up to the lawyer to propose a contract, which would be approved by the Council and the Treasurer's task would be to pay the bill.

The Council voted to consider item 8 after 4, since it was related to the last point.

5. UNSU communication with the Legal Counsel

Secretary suggested that the Staff Council should be able to liaise with the legal counsel. An arrangement where the advisor could only talk to the President was not satisfactory for Council. A direct channel should be established, and this requirement should be included in the Terms of Reference and contract.

Unit 6 Alt. recalled that under the previous Council, members could contact the advisor, prior notification to Leadership. She pressed for a solution. She was facing abuse of authority issues and required legal assistance.

Unit 20 Rep. was also facing issues he needed to assistance with, part of which were confidential. The Legal Counsel should not be a personal advisor to the President, but should be available to Council members. VP1 offered Unit 20 Rep. Leadership's support to set up an appointment with the advisor. Unit 20 Rep remained concerned that Leadership could exercise a "gatekeeper" role.

The Assistant Treasurer explained the past council's system. She cautioned against dispersing the lawyer's work, since she billed on a per-hour basis.

Unit 39 Rep. explained his experience and supported the idea of establishing a procedure. He suggested as a solution that cases for the lawyer should be brought before the Council.

Unit 6 Alt. recalled the proposal for legal insurance. The need was agreed in principle. She would work on proposals for the Council. She underlined that the Union would also need a litigator.

The Council requested the Leadership to provide an overview of what the Legal Counsel had been working on to date. The Council also asked Leadership to submit a draft Terms of Reference for a permanent arrangement with the Legal Counsel.

6. Security

The Resolution in support of Kenneth Rosario was transmitted to the Chef de Cabinet, who had a follow-up discussion with the President. Responses to retaliation with the Ethics Office and OIOS was working. Unit 39 Rep. asked VP1 to ensure the resolution was shared with sister unions.

The Secretary General was ordering an independent investigation into the murder of the two experts in DRC. The US and Sweden had expressed their dissatisfaction with the previous Board of Inquiry. The outcome appeared to be a cover up. There was a conflict of interest in DSS investigating itself. He would prepare a resolution for the following meeting expressing the Union's disappointment at the lack of accountability. CCISUA had adopted a resolution in Addis questioning the independence of the BoI.

The meeting adjourned at 2:37 pm.

Items remaining on the agenda for the following meeting were:

7. Long term absence of the Chair of Staff Council
8. Update on Field JNC
9. Update from Steering Committee on Statutes Review WG
10. Gender Parity Strategy of the UN
11. Special post allowance and UNDT judgements on equal pay for equal work
12. Suspension of Mobility exercise
13. Suspension of 2014 continuous appointments exercise