

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

45th STAFF COUNCIL/45ème CONSEIL DU PERSONNEL

Minutes/Actes

Meeting No: 45/38
Date: 15 March 2018
Time: 1:15 pm
Venue: CR E
Quorum: 15/16 Units

45th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate with 10 units present at 1:25 pm, with Council Chair Camille McKenzie in the Chair and Council Member Camille Beydon taking notes. The meeting was recorded and a copy deposited with the UNSU Administrator.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

Daniel Burden (Unit 34) asked to move item 7 “Updates on WGs for G4 visas and Statutes and Regulations” up to number 4. Camille Beydon (Unit 26) asked to move item 9 “Reports by Units” up to number 5 and to allow some time for the new intern, Aishwarya Bansal, to introduce herself under item 3.

The agenda was adopted as amended.

2. Adoption of Minutes of previous Council meeting

Item postponed in absence of the Secretary.

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

No Executive Board meeting was held the previous week.

Aishwarya Bansal introduced herself. She is doing a Masters in negotiation and conflict resolution at Columbia University. Guozhong Cao (Unit 25) said he was unaware that the Union could hire interns and wanted to know how many interns it could accept and what compensation they received. Unit 25 Rep. commented that it was interesting that some of us were only learning about our interns now.

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) asked for a status update regarding the Arbitration Committee elections and the company hired to conduct the vote. Polling Officers should use the same email list as in the

previous elections. First Vice-President Patricia Nemeth said OHRM should be able to provide the email list soon and it shouldn't be a problem.

Unit 25 Rep. asked about the status of the gift shop proposal. The Frist Vice-President had no information. Rosemary Lane (Unit 23) asked about ASG/OHRM harassment/medical issues. The Frist Vice-President had no information and would ask for a follow-up email.

4. Updates on WGs for G4 visas and Statutes and Regulations

Daniel Burden said the announcement of the service centers was expected to be made in the next few days. Since GSDM would impact staff on G4 visa, he asked for a progress update on the working group on G4 visas, as well as the working group on Statute and Regulations. Marie Delbecque (Unit 26) recalled that the Council had agreed that all Council members were members of the Statutes working group and that Dan Burden was welcome to attend any of the meetings to follow its progress. Unit 25 Rep. offered to invite the Chair of the G4 visa working group to the next meeting to update the Council on that work. Guozhong Cao (Unit 25) informed the Council that his difficulty obtaining a drivers' license in New Jersey was resolved but asked for follow-up on this issue in the future.

5. Reports by Units

Camille Beydon announced that Geneva had voted for a strike the following day. She called off the silent protests that had initially been planned due to lack of energy and time in the Council; and suggested to focus on the march to which there was no objection. The Council had before it a draft resolution in preparation for the march, sent out by Kathryn Kuchenbrod (Unit 28). The First Vice-President, Michelle Rockcliffe, Mériem Harbi (Unit 28) and Ahmad Ismail (Unit 20) suggested a few changes. Ahmad Ismail suggested that information about the strike in Geneva be added to the broadcast. Camille Beydon would send another draft broadcast in the afternoon with the suggested changes and circulate the final version of the resolution. Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39) asked if the press would be informed. Camille Beydon encouraged everyone to contribute to the organization of the march, including by informing the press. Kenneth Rosario suggested to add in the broadcast that participation in Staff Union activities is official business, which implies official time release.

The resolution as amended was adopted unanimously as RES/45/28.

Camille Beydon made a call for volunteers to distribute flyers. Kenneth Rosario asked if this movement could go further. Marie Delbecque suggested to wait and see what the turnout on Monday would be. Kenneth Rosario said that the Union had to take more action to be taken seriously by the administration.

The Council agreed to discuss further action after Monday and to reach out to the press in view of Monday's march. Kenneth Rosario put forward a motion to ask UNSU President Bibi S. Khan to invite the Secretary-General to the march. Unit 25 and 26 seconded that motion, which was unanimously adopted.

6. UNSU Finances

No update under this item.

7. Security briefing

Kenneth Rosario updated the Council on issue of DSS staff transitioning from one contract to another on April 1st, which would start a wave of challenges to contractual rights of staff. The administration wrongly portrayed the Unions as being in support. He had asked Ian Richards to start a narrative that staff unions are not in favor. Unit 25 Rep. said that UNSU needed to respond whenever management wrongly stated that the unions were consulted and were in agreement.

8. Elections

The First Vice-President said the Chair of the Polling Officers had requested a delay. Unit 25 Rep. suggested that the Council adopt a motion every week urging POs to hold by-elections as soon as possible. Michelle Rockcliffe recalled that OHRM was likely to hold off on the list needed for the election and suggested that the Council find a way to recover the list of emails used in the previous election. Kathryn Kuchenbrod asked for an update on the apportionment list problem. The First Vice President had explained to the Chair of the POs why it wasn't a problem to use the same apportionment list than in the last elections. Now the problem at hand was that of the email list. Kathryn Kuchenbrod estimated that getting the email list was a matter of a few hours if 10 people worked on it. Rosemary Lane thought it unlikely that OHRM would refuse to hand over that list and raised legal issues for doing it ourselves. Unit 25 Rep. suggested that POs be invited to Council meetings regularly to report on their work. If needed the Union could publicly ask the Secretary-General for support from OHRM in providing the list. Council Chair Camille McKenzie asked if the Union still needed to go through DM to issue Broadcasts. The First Vice-President informed the Council that all Leadership members had the possibility to send broadcasts directly now but that didn't mean they had the email list itself. The following motion was put forward and adopted unanimously:

The Council reaffirms the importance of holding by-elections as soon as possible and invites Polling Officers to regularly provide updates to the Council on the progress of their work in that regard

9. Update on work with AFT

Kenneth Rosario asked if AFT could support the Union with the march and publish a story about it in their newsletter. Michelle Rockcliffe mentioned that a meeting with liaison officers had taken place and would ask for a letter of support from AFT. She reiterated that the Council's liaison officers should be included in all meetings with AFT so that the Council could also lend its support.

Michelle Rockcliffe gave updates on Pension Fund matters: the two participants' representatives from Nairobi and Jerusalem would be able to travel to attend the upcoming meeting and UNICEF had been contacted regarding future expenses. There would also be an information session the following Wednesday.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.