

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

45th STAFF COUNCIL/45ème CONSEIL DU PERSONNEL

Minutes/Actes

Meeting No: 45/43
Date: 19 April 2018
Time: 1:20 pm
Venue: CR F
Quorum: 13/16 Units

45th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate with 10 units present at 1:30 pm, with Council Deputy Chair Andraž Melansek in the Chair and Assistant Secretary Daniel Burden taking notes. The meeting was recorded and a copy deposited with the UNSU Administrator.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

Item 13 “Working Group on Conditions of Service for Language Staff” was moved to item 5. Items 9 and 10 of the Draft Agenda, both related to Staff Day, were combined and moved to item 6. The agenda was adopted as amended.

2. Adoption of Minutes of previous Council meeting

Adoption of minutes for meetings 37, 38, 39, 40, 41 and 42 was postponed in absence of the Secretary.

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

UNSU President Bibi Kahn had distributed a summary of communications via email. The Second Vice-President Cristina Silva reported that Leadership had received an urgent email from CCISUA requesting comments for a review of the Salary Survey Methodology. The EB had agreed to request an opinion from FICSA’s methodology expert Osvaldo Bastida. His report was shared with the EB and Katy Joseph and Meriam Gueziel and pending comments. Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) asked for the report to be shared with Council members.

4. UNSU Finances

Chandana Mutucumarana (Unit 30) reported that he had been contacted by a staff member involved with the Relief Committee for the Tsunami in Asia. The Relief Committee had dissolved and the staff member was inquiring what to do with the USD 50,000 remaining in their account. The President would meet with the staff member and report at the following meeting.

The Treasurer had distributed final accounts for 2017 via email. Unit 25 Rep. inquired about a line in the accounts that reported zero liabilities for the period, when he was aware at least of liabilities for payments pending to the legal advisor. He also pointed out that the amounts under travel expenditures did not match the amounts approved by the Council. Michelle Rockcliffe stated that in fact since the Council had only approved the amounts for the legal advisor in April - that there was in fact no liability under that line at the end of March. In absence of the Treasurer, the Chair suggested the other questions remain pending for the following meeting.

5. Working Group on conditions of service of language staff

Camille Beydon (Unit 26) introduced a resolution inspired by concern at the increasing workload of language staff. The resolution was adopted unanimously as RES/STC/45/34.

The President asked if the WG would report to the Council and through whom. Camille Beydon replied that the WG would elect a Chair at its first meeting, who would be a Council member and be charged with reporting.

6. Draft Resolution on Staff Day

The Second Vice-President Cristina Silva introduced a draft resolution to begin arrangements for this year's Staff Day. The total sum requested had been reduced to USD 40,000, due to the fact that the same budget line had also been used for the Long Service Awards and for the Inter-Agency Games.

Unit 25 Rep. asked who the members of the Staff Day Committee were and how they had been chosen. The Second Vice-President replied that it was the same group as the previous year and invited further Council Members to join the group. A debate ensued around whether or not the Council should be charged with appointing the Staff Day Committee.

The Chair put the following motion to the vote:

“The Staff Council decides to form a Committee for the preparation of Staff Day”

The motion passed with 5 votes in favour, 3 against, and 5 abstentions.

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) moved for the Council to confirm the committee composed of the previous year's members: Cristina Silva (Chair), Karen Duncan, Mark Anthony, Brian Seales, Michelle Rockcliffe, Jessica Cairo, plus a call for additional volunteers. The list was adopted with 6 votes in favour, 1 against and 6 abstentions.

Unit 25 Rep and the Secretary expressed their concern regarding Karen Duncan's availability to perform the duties she had volunteered for, seconded by units 26 and 28. Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39) endorsed her personal and professional integrity. Eugenia Beldo pointed out that arguing over Staff Day was a waste of time when staff members were losing their jobs.

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) moved for the Draft Resolution to be amended to add that monies would not be transferred from the Union reserves, but managed within the Union account, without the establishment of a new account.

The resolution was adopted with 10 votes in favour and 3 against.

The Council agreed to continue its meeting the following Monday in order to examine pending issues.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm and resumed at 1:20 pm on Monday 23, chaired by Michelle Rockcliffe.

7. Draft Resolution on SMC in Vienna

The Staff Council resumed consideration of item 7. The First Vice President provided details on the coming meeting in Vienna, from June 18 – 24. The agenda was still being finalised. She introduced a draft resolution covering costs for herself, Kenneth Rosario, Michelle Rockcliffe and one additional staff member. The President's costs would be covered by Management. Kenneth Rosario announced that he could not travel but would participate no Security issues via VTC.

Michelle Rockcliffe announced that the Health and Life Insurance Committee and Pension Fund would both be on the agenda.

The resolution was adopted unanimously as RES/STC/45/35.

8. Elections

The First Vice President provided an update on elections. CCISUA had entered into an agreement with an electronic polling company. OHRM had provided a list of voters the previous week. Polling Officers should now transmit the list to the company. Unit 25 Rep. felt that ongoing delays were a risk to the Union's reputation and pressure should be put on the Polling Officers to hold elections as soon as possible. Units 6, 28 and 39 agreed. Unit 25 Rep. suggested that the Staff Council Chair write to the Polling Officers recalling that elections were pending and requesting they be held within three weeks. The Council agreed on this line of action.

9. Resolution on Audit Committee

Michelle Rockcliffe suggested postponing the issue until the next Council meeting. She felt there should be two separate resolutions submitted: one for an Audit Committee and another for a Finance Committee, as the text in the resolution in its current drafting seemed to confuse the roles of the two.

10. Review of the EB work after one year elected

Unit 25 Rep as proponent of the item suggested postponing the issue in absence of any elected EB members.

11. Elimination of G to P obstacles

The Staff Council considered a draft resolution on the matter. Kenneth Rosario suggested adding references to an OHRM document circulated in March 2014 by former ASG Catherine Pollard establishing a bridge between G and P with no exam, based of job description and job family specifics. The resolution should also quote the Secretary General's statement in support of eliminating obstacles. The proponents agreed to strengthen the draft resolution with these references.

The First Vice President felt that resistance was not coming from Management, but from Member States, who would ultimately have to adopt the decision. She would hold an info session for staff on the matter on Friday 27 April.

12. Reports by Units

Kenneth Rosario reminded Leadership of his formal request, endorsed by the Council, for a Security JNC. He had written to USG OHRM. Leadership had the obligation to follow up when they were copied on communications between Staff Representatives and Management. The Second Vice-President said she would transmit the request to the President for a formal submission to Management. Michelle Rockcliffe clarified that Staff Reps should make a clear indication to Leadership if their communications required a follow-up.

13. AOB

In reply to a question from Kathryn Kuchenbrod (Unit 28), the First Vice President reported on preparations for the May Day action. Staff Representatives were encouraged to mobilise their staff.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.