

UNITED NATIONS STAFF UNION
SYNDICAT DU PERSONNEL DE L'ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES**45th STAFF COUNCIL/45ème CONSEIL DU PERSONNEL****Minutes/Actes**

Meeting No: 45/47
Date: 24 May 2018
Time: 1:30 pm
Venue: CR D
Quorum: 13/16 Units

45th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate with 13 units present at 1:30 pm, with Deputy Chair Andraž Melanšek in the Chair and UNSU Secretary Aitor Arauz-Chapman taking notes. The meeting was recorded and a copy deposited with the UNSU Administrator.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Chair suggested moving "Update on Elections" to item number 3. The agenda was adopted as amended.

2. Adoption of Minutes of previous Council meetings

Minutes for meetings 46 were adopted.

3. Update on By-Elections and Arbitration Committee Elections

Karen Duncan, accompanied by Daniel Casanova Vázquez, addressed the Council on behalf of the Polling Officers. Arbitration Committee elections would be held on 6-7 June and results would be announced on 8 June. All preparations had been done through Simply Voting, a company under a framework contract with CCISUA. The only pending preparation was for OICT to whitelist the company's email to avoid messages sent to staff members going to their junk folder. Ms. Duncan was confident that they were on track to do so. As for elections to unrepresented units, a notification broadcast for nominations would go out on 24 May. Elections would be held on 18 and 19 June, with results announced on 20 June. Holding Arbitration Committee elections first would allow to the Polling Officers to iron out any kinks in the process.

Eugenia Beldo (OPPBA) asked for clarification about the contract with CCISUA. A debate ensued regarding the attribution of responsibilities for holding elections between CCISUA and UNSU. The Treasurer recalled the occasion on which CCISUA had decided to sign a framework agreement. He supported using the tool, as long as CCISUA had no influence on the election. Karen Duncan made it clear that the contract merely allowed UNSU to use the voting company's system. CCISUA was not involved in managing the elections. The Polling Officers were working directly with the polling company and finalising the details.

The Chair proposed a motion to thank the Polling Officers for their briefing and to encourage them to proceed with holding free, fair and transparent elections. The motion was adopted unanimously.

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

The Chair thanked the EB Rapporteur for the change in procedures that provided the Council a timelier report on the EB's work.

Based on the EB report, Unit 25 Rep. asked the Treasurer to explain his suggestion regarding the Staff Day Account. The Treasurer reported that some members of the Staff Day Committee disagreed with the Council's decision to bring the Staff Day Account under the UNSU account. The Assistant Treasurer, as Treasurer of the Staff Day Committee, had expressed concerns about the way funds had been managed the previous year, with up to USD 10,000 being withdrawn in cash and justified after the fact and only on the Assistant Treasurer's insistence. He was alarmed by these reports, but he would hear the other side and suggest a way to proceed. He did not mind supervising the account himself but feared it may cause delays if he had to authorise each expenditure.

Rapporteur Chandana Mutucumarana (Unit 30) suggested that the Treasurer lay down some basic ground rules. Sherif Mohamed (Unit 27) did not feel it was correct to change the decision already adopted to bring Staff Day back under the Union account. Francisco Brito explained that it wasn't a matter of rules - the rules were already in place. It was a question of how the funds were managed. Unit 25 Rep. quoted from the 2007 independent audit report, which found "significant deficiencies" and "insufficient control over the separate staff day bank account"; and suggested corrective measures to remedy those deficiencies, including ensuring that "there will no longer be a separate bank account for Staff Day events". He asked the Treasurer not to accept the establishment of a separate account and asked him to remind the Staff Day Committee that they could be recalled by the Council at any moment.

The President did not feel that the Staff Day account had been managed irregularly, considering that the Staff Day had been held for the first time in many years. All the receipts had been provided to the Assistant Treasurer, though it was true she had to insist in order to obtain them. For the coming event, the Committee could submit proforma requests for expenses to the Treasurer, thus simplifying the process considerably.

Deputy Chair Andraž Melanšek (Unit 17) asked about Leadership's delay in submitting the full list of opinions provided the legal advisor, as requested by the Council. He recalled that the Council's authorisation of Ms. Artigas' contract had expired at the end of April and pointed out that it was irregular for the President to ask her to continue working when there was no legal basis for her to be paid. He recalled that the Council had already approved a retroactive payment once and would not be willing to let it happen again. Unit 25 Rep. recalled the Council's decision to extend her contract month by month. Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39) supported asking the Leadership for a list of opinions, but he felt it was impractical and unfair to renew the authorisation month by month. The President replied that the services Ms. Artigas provided were not for Leadership, but for staff. Marie Delbecque (Unit 26) recalled that the Council represents staff, hence its interest in knowing what the legal advisor

was working on, as repeatedly requested. The Council had no elements to make a decision on the usefulness of Ms. Artigas' advice if her contribution was not known. The Treasurer pointed out that the advisor had not issued her invoice for April. If she met her commitment during that month, he saw no issue in paying her for her work.

The President had distributed a summary of communications via email. Kenneth Rosario asked, with regards to point 10 of the summary, but also in general – where did the Leadership's input come from when Leadership interacted with Management? To avoid subjectivity, those inputs should come from the Council. The President replied that she has not aware of what happened at the meeting he made reference to. The Deputy Chair pointed out that this was an important issue that had been raised many times before.

Francisco Brito clarified, under point 2, that he had taken part in a VTC on Downsizing, not on GSDM. He reported that OPPBA reps had submitted more than 20 comments that he hoped the Second Vice President would submit in due form. His takeaway from the meeting was that the content of the Downsizing Policy would not change, as neither staff nor management wanted to reopen the Working Group. The administration was willing to consider a set of practical recommendations for implementation of the policy. Staff members were already receiving separation notices and the Policy had not been adopted. It was urgently needed. He stressed his availability to contribute to work the Union's on GSDM and downsizing.

Marie Delbecque pointed out that the Administration had posted an article on the Long Service Awards with no reference to the UNSU. The Secretary would write to the administration requesting an edit. Andraž Melanšek transmitted the disappointment of DPKO staff at the absence of their USG, who had not been invited to hand out certificates. He was working to organise a private event to honour DPKO staff who had been disappointed by the ceremony.

5. OPPBA

Eugenia Beldo recalled that GSDM will affect all departments and should not be considered by department silos. OPPBA reps had met with their ASG, the Director of Accounts and colleagues whose posts would be affected by GSDM if the initiative was approved by the GA in June. They had discussed possible way to mitigate effects. The ASG had committed to applying the draft Downsizing policy to the largest extent possible to her, regardless of whether or not it was adopted. She was also reaching out to ASG OHRM for help in placing staff members impacted. They had agreed to apply training measures, including on PHP writing and interview skills, The Pension Fund and visa committee would brief staff members on their rights upon separation. She made clear that a majority of staff had not yet been placed, contrary to what was stated in the President's summary.

Francisco Brito added that they had suggested that DM staff be given preference for Pension Fund positions that were due to be announced. They had received the green light from ASG OCSS. Kenneth Rosario suggested that the Council consider litigating when the administration attempted to change the rules in the run up to major changes. He would prepare a resolution for the Council to that effect. Eugenia Beldo said that the Council and Leadership must demand that the Downsizing policy be approved, as it included the only mitigation measures that were binding.

Items that were not reached were deferred to the following week. The President pointed out in particular that AFT needed a list of the 11 names of UNSU members planning to take part in their General Meeting in Pittsburgh in July. The Chair suggested that any pressing issues that remained unaddressed by raised via email.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 pm.