

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

Meeting No: 45/57
Date: 16 August 2018
Time: 1:30 pm
Venue: Room E
Quorum: 19/27 Units

45th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate with 18 units present at 1:35 pm, with Staff Council Chair Camille McKenzie in the Chair and UNSU Secretary Aitor Arauz Chapman taking notes. The meeting was recorded and a copy deposited with the UNSU Administrator. Units present were: 3, 7, 8, 10, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 33, 37, 38.

1. Adoption of the agenda

François Charlier (Unit 3) requested the addition of “status of staff members with refugee status” to item 13. The agenda was adopted as amended.

In the course of the debate, Item 9 and 12 were combined as “Staff Emergency Fund”.

2. Adoption of minutes

Minutes of meeting 54 and 56 were adopted without changes.

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

The Executive Board and President’s report had been circulated via email.

The Second Vice-President Cristina Silva pointed out two errors in the Executive Board report. Under item 3 it was Ms. Nemeth who had agreed to help with training. Under item 6 - Local Salary Survey, the Administration and UNSU had agreed to assess the pros and cons of pushing for a salary survey before the methodology is revised.

Unit 25 Rep. requested that the amended EB report be circulated in writing. He also requested more information on item number 3 of the President’s report (15 August listening session). In reference to note 2 of the President’s report, he recalled his request for a written report from the Staff Day Committee. The Staff Council had committed USD 40,000 with no guarantees that the correct procedures were being followed.

The Second Vice-President Cristina Silva reported that arrangements were progressing well for Staff Day. The EB had agreed to pay for the raffle tickets that would not be used. The Staff Day Committee was waiting for 3 quotes for the replacement tickets. The Staff Day Treasurer had met with the Staff Day Committee. They were still looking for options for performances etc. 400 staff members had expressed an interest in participating in sport events. 150 had volunteered for the parade of nations. Unit 25 Rep. submitted a:

Motion to receive a written report from the Staff Day Committee at each Council Meeting.

The motion passed unanimously.

UNSU President Bibi Khan reported on the listening session of 15 August. It was the first opportunity for staff to voice their concerns on issues that affect them in the work environment. There were over 70 staff members in attendance. Concerns were expressed about G4 visas, FlexSpace, Umoja, Staff selection, acquired rights, restructuring of OCHA, occupational risks in the Flexible Work environment, YPP, Mobility, and limitations on GS staff availing of functional mobility. Staff members felt their skills were misused or underused, and called for basic common sense to be included amongst our core competencies.

The Second Vice President reported on a meeting with the administration and the UNSRC that had decided that the free trial for the gym would be extended until the end of December, at which point it would be decided how users were to pay for the facilities. Eugenia Beldo (Unit 38) inquired about the funds that had been transferred from OPPBA earmarked for the fitness center. She asked if it had been decided at any meeting that the funds should be used for a different purpose. The President explained that there was broader programme being considered for a Wellness Center, which included the fitness center. She assured those funds would still be reserved for the gym.

4. UNSU Finances

No update in absence of the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.

5. Resolution on electronic voting services

The Secretary introduced a resolution approving payment for online election services for the Arbitration Committee and by-elections. The resolution was adopted unanimously as RES/STC/45/48.

The President flagged that we may face audit problems because the framework contract was signed with CCISUA, but the invoice was issued to UNSU. François Charier asked for further explanations. Eugenia Beldo explained that we had a systems contract in place, so there had been no illegal procurement. María René Luque (Unit 19) and others believed the invoice must be paid, but felt the underlying concern should be clarified. The Secretary pointed out that the framework contract had been cleared by the CCISUA Procurement Committee, the CCISUA Bureau and the UNSU EB and that neither the Treasurer nor Assistant Treasurer had expressed any concern with the arrangement.

6. Audit Committee

The Secretary reported that four names had been submitted as candidates for the Audit Committee. The names had been referred to the Staff Council Finance Committee established under RES/STC/45/37. The Finance Committee would submit a proposal for the appointment of two members of the Audit Committee.

7. More time release for staff reps

Postponed in absence of the proponent.

8. Resolution on GS Salary Scales

María René Luque was working with the proponent Jesús Parado (Unit 11) to consolidate further information on the issue in order to garner support for the resolution, in particular what was required of the expert to be hired and how staff members could contribute to the salary survey effort. Ahmad Ismail (Unit 20) moved for the item to be postponed. Eugenia Beldo felt the resolution should include clear terms of reference and scope of work for the expert to be hired. A number of candidates should undergo an interview process. The item was postponed.

On a related note, Ondré Baronette (Unit 33) inquired about the prospects for closing the gap between the two GS salary scales and what the following steps would be once the scales levelled out. The President replied that the gap closure had not been reached. The salary survey review was not expected to be taken up until 2022. The salary freeze for GS staff was extremely unfair. Management was considering with the Union if the review could be accelerated.

9. Staff Emergency Fund

François Charlier felt that the Emergency Fund was underused because staff were unaware of its existence. He reported at least two cases of staff members who could have availed of the fund had they been aware. It was important to promote the existence of the Fund. Before spending money on a Wellness Center, he would prefer making full use of the Fund to benefit those who really needed it. The President provided some background on why the Fund had not been more useful in the past and pointed out that the Fund Board was being reconstituted for better management. Sarah M'Bodji (Unit 31) requested written statistics on the Fund utilisation. François Charlier tabled a:

Motion to expedite renewal of the Fund's oversight board and subsequently advertise the Fund to ensure full use by staff members.

The motion passed with 16 votes in favour and 1 against.

The meeting adjourned at 14:40. Pending items were deferred to the following week.