



Minutes/Actes:

Meeting No: 46/54
Date: 20th August 2020
Time: 13:15 - 15:55 PM EST
Venue: Virtual (MS Teams)
Quorum: 15/17 Units

46th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate at 13:23 with 12 Units present. The meeting was recorded.

Staff Council Chairperson Ms. Camille McKenzie chaired the meeting and Assistant Secretary Ms. Sarah M'Bodji took notes.

Units present were: 6,13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.

The President and Second Vice President of the Union leadership team were present.

1. Adoption of Agenda

The Chairperson Ms. Camille McKenzie declared the draft agenda adopted.

2. Adoption of previous minutes

The Chairperson asked the Assistant Secretary to recirculate the updated minutes for 52nd Meeting that were requiring adoption. The Chairperson inquired to the council, for any objections to the official adoptions of the minutes for the previous 52nd and 53rd meetings of the 46th Staff Council.

It was stated that no Emergency Meeting Minutes were received.

The Chairperson clarified that pending minutes for Emergency Meeting, 52nd and 53rd would be adopted the following week.

3. Reports by Units

Ms. Karina Loktionova (Unit 29) reported on Documentation Division's townhall with the 4 Duty Stations, with hundreds of staff in participation. She explained that staff has expressed complaints on working conditions and increased productivity demands. Ms. Loktionova stated that a resolution was put to a vote during the meeting and further reported the outcome as 65 percent for, 29 percent against and some abstentions.

Ms. Loktionova explained to the Council that she has briefed and shared the resolution with the Union leadership.

The Deputy Chairperson briefed the Council on a recent meeting with the Department of Global Communication.

Ms. Mita Sen (Unit 26) briefed the Council on the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the phase two return to work. She further explained that DESA management had sent to staff an internal survey on returning to the office.

Ms. Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) briefed the Council on recruitment challenges and irregularities reported in her unit. She raised concern on the issue of hiring.

The Chairperson briefed the Council on challenges with leave at the Department of Safety and Security (DSS), where staff were being charged 1.5 days of sick leave per say of absence, as they were currently working 12-hour shifts due to COVID-19. She elaborated how the results of staff representatives' intervention were favourable.

The Chairperson stated that staff with single parents were facing challenges with childcare and asked for leadership support. The President Ms. Patricia Nemeth replied to Chairperson expressing support and said she was working on it.

A number of unit representatives expressed similar concerns regarding working parents who were required to report to premises or sustain their productivity whilst homeschooling. The Staff Union President responded by clarifying that the COVID-19 guidance from Office of Human Resources (OHR) is for supervisors to be flexible.

The Second Vice President Mr. Francisco Brito requested all Council members to reach out to their units and to attend the next day's townhall meeting tomorrow for official answers from Office of Human Resources (OHR). Mr. Brito also asked for feedback on the effects of the liquidity crisis from units and departments, citing the assurance from the controller on salaries through 2020.

4. President's Report and Summary of Communications

The President's Report PDF file was shared by Virtual Chat.

The Staff Union President Ms. Patricia Nemeth briefed the council on the report. She described the recent Staff Management Committee (SMC) meeting, the townhall from the previous day and the HR Townhall the following day. She also cited the upcoming mobile device Townhall and stated she did not know the outcome for this issue.

Ms. Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) cited her concerns regarding internal investigations without legal representation, asking the Council to adopt a resolution on this.

Ms. Ramona Kohrs (Unit 21) asked for leadership to share more information.

5. Executive Board report

The Executive Board (EB) Report PDF file was not shared.

The Chairperson asked Rapporteur Ms. Coralie Tripier (Unit 30) to share the report as soon as approved by the EB and tabled the EB report to be discussed the following week.

6. UNSU Finances

The Chairperson asked if there was anything to report under UNSU Finances.

The Treasurer Mr. Jaime Garreta and Assistant Treasurer Mr. Yogesh Sakhardande were absent.

Ms. Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) asked for information on fundraising and the distribution of funds for Lebanon staff and asked for clarifications on the go Fund me page. The President clarified the process with the Go Fund me which was started by the First Vice President and subsequently transferred to the Assistant Treasurer.

Ms. Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) asked for further clarifications of the funds and the President explained that the damage was still being surveyed by colleagues in Beirut and no funds would be released without a clear disbursement and distribution plan.

7. Any Other Business (AOB)

Assistant Rapporteur Ms. Shirley Abraham (Unit 17) stated she was appalled by the racist language used in a survey recently circulated by the administration. Assistant Secretary Ms. Sarah M'Bodji cited similar concerns over the recent OHR Survey, which had been

leaked to the press, damaging the organization's reputation, and had since been taken down. Ms. Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) also echoed the concerns citing possible unconscious bias in the contracting company that designed the survey. The President clarified that a draft of this survey had been shared with Unions and she had held a dedicated meeting with OHR where she had expressed these concerns regarding the language used prior to the survey being sent out. She pointed out that the company used was the same from the Staff Engagement survey. She further stated that she insisted the survey be taken down. The Unions had drafted a letter calling for accountability and cited damage to the organization due to well-deserved criticism in the press.

Assistant Rapporteur Ms. Shirley Abraham (Unit 17) suggested the Union must disassociate the Union and Council from the survey and widely share the statement. She further elaborated on how embarrassing this was for the organization.

The Second Vice President Mr. Francisco Brito underscored that this was a grave error on a sensitive topic and that the Leadership had been not listened to by OHR. He discussed accountability and he further suggested that action is required.

Ms. M'Bodji (Unit 31) stated the Union should use this opportunity to lead, and further elaborated that staff's experience with racial issues with patterns which range from institutional, organizational, personal and plain bias. She further suggested a resolution of the Council supporting the topic and suggested the Union support inclusion by engaging more staff from African descent as a special advisory group.

Ms. Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) suggested engaging the UNPAD group.

The virtual meeting adjourned at 15:55 PM EST.
