



Minutes/Actes:

Meeting No: 46/61
Date: 15 October 2020
Time: 13:15 - 15:30
Venue: Virtual (MS Teams)
Quorum: 13/17 Units

46th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate at 13:20 with 10 Units present. Staff Council Deputy Chair Ramona Kohrs chaired the meeting and Secretary Sherif Mohamed took notes. Units present were: 06, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33. The 1st and 2nd Vice Presidents were in attendance.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Treasurer Jaime Garreta requested to move item 6 (UNSU Finances) up on the agenda to become item 3 and subsequently change the numbering of the rest of the items. The agenda was adopted as amended with 08 items.

2. Adoption of previous minutes

Minutes for the 60th meeting of the 46th Staff Council were still pending.

3. UNSU Finances

The Treasurer Jaime Garreta invited the Council members to go over the financial reports which were previously shared and highlighted some discrepancies related to the finances of the Met-Law legal plan which he promised to correct. He also raised questions regarding an amount of approximately 92,000 USD deposited in the Union accounts in the past. He called for the experienced Council members to shed some lights on the circumstances surrounded this financial record.

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 06) Mentioned that this matter was previously raised by her in regard to creating a "Trust account" for the amount received and reminded the Council that she suggested to better distribute the such funds. The 2nd VP Francisco Brito briefed the Council on the history of this amount which was transferred to the Union and earmarked for the purpose of enhancing the staff's gym. Michelle Rockcliffe thought that an action should be taken through a Council resolution, including the possibility of funding recreational clubs and other forms of staff activities. The Deputy Chair suggested to add this item on the agenda of the Council's next meeting for a decision.

On a different note, Michelle Rockcliffe requested that the Excel version of the pdf files – some of which were not presentable in .pdf. The Treasurer promised to share the requested files.

She also reminded the Treasurer that the Council had requested a detailing how the funds donated to the victims of the Beirut explosion were used. She commented that she had seen a very detailed report from the FSU on their donation and hoped we would follow suit. The Deputy Chair supported this request.

The 1st VP Aitor Arauz Chapman raised a question about one of the expenditures which he thought should be moved from the budget line for Consultancy to the budget line for Legal Assistance, as the funds were used to support staff who were under internal investigation. The Treasurer supported the request and promised to make the adjustment. Michelle Rockcliffe reminded the Council that this should not be done since it was this very mis-categorization of the expenditure that had led to deferring the approval of the resolution. She also requested that the updated appropriation report showing the re-deployment of Funds during the 1st year of the Council, be provided

The Deputy Chair called for the Council members to be careful with moving funds from one budget line to another without proper documentation.

On a different note, the 1st VP informed the Council's Legal Committee that they may expect a few cases for consideration and that he would provide further information on these cases to the Committee at a later time.

4. Reports by Units

Rama Ahmed (Unit 30) briefed the Council on an incident that they had at one of their Unit meetings, when a manager insisted to be present at the meeting or else the meeting would be considered unofficial. She asked for the help of the Council members' help overcome this problem, given that staff won't be able to express themselves in the presence of their superiors.

Michelle Rockcliffe thought it was not common practice that managers attend Unit meetings but that since managers were staff, so they were allowed to attend. She reminded the Council that even when managers are not in attendance, they could easily have another individual in attendance tape the meeting without others' knowledge and relay the discussion. She also highlighted that it was the Chair's responsibility to manage the meeting, an opinion which was supported by the Deputy Chair.

To overcome such issues, Michelle Rockcliffe suggested the use of Slido or similar platforms to ensure inputs from staff are anonymous, regardless of the presence of managers.

The Assistant Secretary Sarah M'Bodji shared part of Rule 8.1 of the Staff Regulations and Rules on "Staff representative bodies and staff representatives". She also provided ideas on how to invite specific groups within a Unit for smaller meetings.

Karina Loktionova (Unit 29) explained that her Unit faced a similar situation which they easily solved by communicating directly to the manager that he was not invited to attend specific Unit meetings to encourage staff to open up without fear of retaliation.

The 1st VP supported Michelle Rockcliffe's idea of using texting platforms to anonymise the inputs of meetings' attendees in the presence of managers yet he warned the Council members to be careful while using online platforms so they don't fall in a false sense of security, given the many insecurities surrounding online activities. He also shared ideas to help organise meetings with specific groups of staff within any given Unit.

On a different note, some Council members inquired about the composition of the polling officers and the possibility (and feasibility) of holding by-elections. The 1st VP confirmed that the Unit Chairs were in the final process of designating the Polling Officers and that our Staff Assistant Emmanuella Rene was currently verifying whether the candidates were dues-paying members. He added that it might be difficult to have by-elections, but the general elections were on track.

The Council discussed different ideas to fill the empty seats of the unrepresented units, including the possibility of sending the information of uncontested candidates to the Polling Officers, who might share this information with all members of any given Unit and ask that others who wish to be considered for such a position to step forward or else announce the uncontested candidates new Council representatives. The suggestion was supported by the Deputy Chair and the 1st VP.

The 2nd VP reminded the Council of the negative experience resulted from the improper designation/election of polling officers, and assured the Council members that he, as well as other members of the Executive Board have been very keen to hold proper elections of the new Council in a timely manner.

5. President's Report and Summary of Communications

Michelle Rockcliffe asked for updates from the President Patricia Nemeth regarding the ongoing 90th meeting of the ICSC. The Deputy Chair also inquired about the Union position as well as the position of our federation, the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA).

The 1st VP informed the Council that the President was busy the past few days with the preparation of the live event on the results of the Survey on Racism, yet he thought this information would be provided the President shortly.

Michelle Rockcliffe raised questions regarding meetings of the 6th Committee. The 1st VP briefed the Council on the work in this regard. The Council discussed the issue of administration of justice, including a point raised by the Deputy Chair regarding the importance of equality of arms in the litigation process, in light of the lack of funding for the Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA), among other issues.

In this regard, the 1st VP provided the Council with further information regarding the vacancy rate in OSLA and informed the Council that OSLA issues would be part of the joint submission from the Unions in this regard. "Equality of arms would also be part of our submission", added the 1st VP.

6. Executive Board Report

Nothing was raised.

7. Amendment to Resolution on Audit Services

Deferred to next week.

8. AOB

The Deputy Chair called to add "amendment to resolution on audit services" to the agenda of next week's meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 15:30.
