

SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD

Notes of the One Hundred and Thirty-first Meeting of the Committee on Administration

Date: 26 October 2016
Time: 9:25 p.m.
Venue: Conference Room, 26/F Eastern Commercial Centre, 83 Nam On Street,
Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong

Present: Dr. LEUNG Chuen-suen (Convenor)
Mr. CHUNG Wai-lung, Rivalino
Mr. HUI Chung-shing, Herman
Mr. KWAN Wing-shing, Vincent
Mr. LO Wa-kei, Roy
Mr. SHIU Ka-chun
Mr. WONG Ka-ming

Absent with apology: Mr. TAN Tick-yee

In-attendance: Mr. LEUNG Sui-keung, Registrar
Ms. FAN Lai-yee, Veronica, Assistant Registrar (Secretary)

Notes

1. Confirmation of the notice of meeting and the notes of last meeting

The notes of last meeting were endorsed without amendment.

2. Matters Arising

- 2.1 Consideration of the outline of issue 38 of the Newsletter (Paragraph 4)

The Board office received four articles contributed by RSWs and the (anonymised). The articles were circulated to the Committee for its advice and directive. Owing to split views from members, the matter would be put forward to the 140th Board meeting for discussion and the preparation of the Newsletter would be withheld until clear directive was sought.

(Post meeting note: at the 140th Board meeting, Board Members decided to discuss the matter at the 141st meeting. Members agreed to publish the

Newsletter issue 38 and the articles would be withheld from this issue.)

2.2 Review of the SWRB's website (Paragraph 5)

- (a) The revamp of website was still in progress and the completion date would be delayed to year end of 2016. The Board office would urge the service provider to complete the new website.
- (b) Members agreed to upload the Board's videos to Youtube. The reproduction cost of VCD could therefore be saved.

2.3 Discussion on the details of Annual Meeting with RSWs 2016 (Paragraph 6.5)

- (a) The theme of the Annual Meeting with RSWs was confirmed as "Challenges faced by registered social workers under the new social environment" and the three speakers, namely Mr. Shiu Ka-chun, Professor Ho Sik-ying and Mr. Kwok Wai-keung, had accepted the invitation to speak at the Annual Meeting.
- (b) The Annual Meeting would start at 6:30pm and end at around 9:00pm. The Chairperson, the Honorary Treasurer and the respective Convenors of various Committees would first report the work of the Board in the past one year, and from 7:00pm to 9:00pm, the speakers would give the talk to the RSWs.
- (c) The Deputy Chairperson agreed to be the moderator of the panel discussion session in the Annual Meeting.

2.4 Exploration on enhancing the communications between SWRB and RSWs via electronic channel (Paragraph 8)

- (a) The Registrar reported that having written to the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) in early September 2016, the Board received verbal advice from the government official of seeking own legal advice on whether it was necessary to obtain LWB's consent to launch the scheme of rebate of registration fee.
- (b) The Registrar pointed out that according to Section 38(2) of the Social Workers Registration Ordinance, consent from LWB should be obtained for any reduction, waiver or refund of registration fee.
- (c) It appeared that the government would not make a decision on the

matter before the Board has obtained legal advice on the issue.

- (d) Members agreed that as the issue is with no urgency, we would wait for the written reply from LWB before further action would be taken.

3 Perusal of progress report on promotion of the Board

3.1 Members did not have any comment on the progress report.

4 Review of the annual budget for 2016/17 and consideration of the draft annual budget for 2017/18

4.1 The Registrar briefed that it was a usual practice to prepare at this juncture the revised budget for the current financial year and the budget for the next, hence the revised budget for 2016/17 and the budget for 2017/18 had been prepared. The revised budget for 2016/17 was prepared after taking into account the actual expenses from April to July 2016 and the estimated expenses for the rest of the year. The estimated surplus for the year would be increased to \$952,000.

4.2 For the revised budget in 2016/17, the Honorary Treasurer highlighted the following:

- (a) Staff cost shared 50% of the total operation cost.
- (b) Expenditure in legal and professional fees was expected to increase in 2016/17 arising from a judicial review case.
- (c) Software development and maintenance expenses were increased because of the replacement of Database Management System and the revamp of website.
- (d) The provisions in depreciation in fixed assets and leasehold improvement were expected to decrease in 2016/17. The reductions were the main contributing factors to the increase in projected surplus from \$289,000 to \$952,000.

4.3 For the budget in 2017/18, the Registrar briefed the following:

- (a) Expenditure on legal and professional fees would be increased for 2017/18 after taking into account the increasing trend for the Board to face legal challenges. It was difficult to have an accurate estimation on the expenses of legal and professional fees.
- (b) The operation cost was projected to increase if the proposed one-off rebate in registration fee was approved by the Board and LWB.
- (c) Staff cost was projected to decrease because the two new staff

members would receive salary lower than the present incumbents of the posts.

- (d) The income was projected to have a slight increase due to increase in number of RSWs yearly.
- (e) The overall estimated surplus for 2017/18 was about \$600,000.

(Mr. Chung Wai-lung, Rivalino and Mr. Wong Ka-ming joined the meeting at this juncture)

5 Review of fee schedule

5.1 Members exchanged views on whether the registration fee should be adjusted.

5.2 There was a suggestion to maintain the registration fee at current level in view of the following reasons:

- (a) The estimated surpluses in 2016/17 and 2017/18 were not substantial.
- (b) Expenditure on legal and professional fees would be larger than expected if the Board would be involved in any appeal cases or judicial review cases. The Board should therefore reserve sufficient fund for covering the legal costs arising from any court cases.
- (c) The workload of the Board office was expected to increase if the Board decided to implement new initiatives for example changing documents to bilingual, rebate of registration fee. Extra manpower might also be required.

5.3 There was another view of reducing the registration fee as the Board had a healthy financial condition with an estimated surplus of \$600,000 in 2017/18. RSWs would welcome a small amount reduction in registration fee.

5.4 After discussion, the Committee decided to maintain the registration fee at current level in 2017/18. The proposal would be put forward to the Board for approval.

6 Any other business

There was being no other business.

7 Date of next meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m. The next meeting date was yet to be confirmed.

8 November 2016