

SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD
Notes of the 133rd Meeting of the Committee on Administration

Date: 30 March 2017
Time: 7:15 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. TAN Tick-yee
Mr. WONG Ka-ming
Secretary: Mr. LEE Wing-po, Eric, Registrar and
Ms. FAN Lai-yee, Veronica, Assistant Registrar

Dr. LEUNG, Convenor of the Committee, presided the meeting.

Confirmation of the notes of the 132nd meeting

1. The notes of the last meeting were confirmed without amendment.

Matters arising from the 132nd meeting

2. The Secretary reported that the Board Office had received an interim reply on the refund proposal from LWB on 29 March 2017.

Finance

Revised authority hierarchy for purchases

3. To enhance the work efficiency, the Committee agreed to the proposal to simplify the authority hierarchy for purchase. Apart from this, the Committee further proposed to replace oral quotations by written quotations and to restructure the first two levels to provide more flexibility by granting greater authority to the Board Office, that up to HK\$30,000, the Board Office can approve the purchase. The revised table would be put forward to the Board for endorsement.

Drafting of an investment policy

4. During the discussion on the Guidelines for Cash Flow Management at the previous Committee meeting, members suggested to develop an investment policy other than just keeping monies in time deposits.

5. The Secretary briefed members of the movement of the Board's total assets from years 1999 to 2016 which included cash & deposit, securities and land & building. (business information deleted). The Committee was invited to consider various parameters of the investment policy as outlined in the proposal.
6. Members came to consensus of the following:
 - (a) Land & building should be excluded as the office premises were for own use and not for investment purpose.
 - (b) (business information deleted).
 - (c) The reservation of 12-15 months cash was prudent.
 - (d) It was suggested to obtain investment proposals from banks.
 - (e) Less speculative tools were preferred.
7. The Committee directed the Board office to seek further information and advice from our existing banks i.e. HSBC, DBS, Standard Chartered Bank or BOC.

Cost review on the honorarium to DC Panel Members

8. The Convener reported that the Committee on Professional Conduct had agreed that honorarium to DC Panel Members should be reviewed as the rate had been used for a decade without revision. The Committee also considered the following:
 - (a) The structures of the honorarium to DC or to AT should be similar as the expected commitment of time and intellect was believed to be on par.
 - (b) The workload of presiding member was higher than the other four members in the DC, it was justified that a higher rate should be applied.
9. Two proposals were put forward to the Committee on Administration for consideration. The Committee agreed to revise the rate to \$3,000 per session for presiding member and \$1,500 per session for other members. It was noted that the additional expenses could be funded by the estimated surplus in the 2017/18 budget.

Cost review on the proposal to make new rules concerning the disciplinary function

10. The matter had been discussed by the Committee of Professional Conduct. The Committee noted the latent risks if the Registrar prepared the written summary of the hearing proceedings and drafted the findings and recommendations. It was agreed that the legal advisor who sat through the hearing sessions would be capable and more efficient to prepare the draft of findings and recommendations. The main concern was the financial implication.
11. The Secretary reported that the additional cost was estimated to be HK\$28,000 per case i.e. (business information deleted). The estimated surplus in 2017/18 budget should be sufficient to cover these additional expenses as well.

12. The Committee agreed to the proposal and the same would be put forward to the Board for endorsement. The Secretary would inform legal advisors their additional duties during disciplinary hearings. The Board Office would update the Committee if there would be substantial change in the cost.

Administrative

Layout design of letterhead

13. The Committee supported the proposed revision in layout design of the letterhead. The slogan, as a watermark or at the bottom, would be removed and the correspondence details at the bottom would be spread to full width. The same would be put forward to the Board for endorsement.

Exploration of online payment system

14. The Convener briefed that a consultant firm had sent in a proposal of online payment system. The Committee noted and directed the Board Office to explore the costs of development and the charges for each transaction.

(Mr. Roy Lo left the meeting at this juncture.)

Review on the Confidentiality Undertaking

15. The Secretary updated that the Confidentiality Undertaking titled “Rules in respect of conduct of meetings of the SWRB, its Committees or staffs” was approved at the Board meeting on 13 January 2016 but it has not been duly implemented. The Board Office therefore resumed the follow up task with the concerned parties to sign off the Confidentiality Undertaking. Some Board members expressed their views as follows:
 - (a) Some clauses or phrases in the document should be revised, e.g. under sections 2(2)(ii)(a) and 2(2)(ii)(c), the wordings should be revised in accordance to the decisions made at the previous Board meeting, part of the document was not applicable to co-opted members.
 - (b) Under section 2(4), the liabilities of Board members who were RSWs might extend to committing a disciplinary offence of misconduct under the SWRO in the event of breach of this document.
 - (c) No matter the Confidentiality Undertaking was signed or not, under the Common Law, Board Members would be held liable in the event of breach of their fiduciary duty of confidentiality.
16. The Committee directed the Board Office to find out any deliberations at the previous Committee or Board meetings. The issue would be further discussed at the subsequent Committee meeting.

Promotions

Perusal of progress report on promotion of the Board

17. Members noted the progress report on promotion of the Board.

Update on the audio-visual training materials on Code of Practice for RSWs

18. The Board office had recently received feedbacks that the video contents were not in alignment with the latest version of Code of Practice. The Secretary reported that the video was produced more than a decade ago whilst the latest version of Code of Practice and its Guidelines were of year 2013. As the Code of Practice was currently under review, the Committee agreed to remove the video from the website until a new video would be produced in future.

Review on communication channels between SWRB and RSWs in terms of Annual Meeting with RSWs and Newsletter

19. The Committee reviewed the overall communication policy of the Board. At present, the Board adopted different channels to communicate with RSWs for example, newsletter, website, annual meeting etc.

20. Members had the following considerations:

- (a) Cost efficiency was the main driving force, that a print copy of Newsletter was considered no longer a good way to communicate.
- (b) There would still be RSWs alleging their mode of reading be in hardcopy.
- (c) Contents of Newsletter were more important than the form.
- (d) The organization of annual meeting was unnecessary as the participation rate was low, and RSWs were never Members of the Board, that any issues could be communicated by other means and at a lower cost.

21. After discussion, the Committee concurred that the following proposal would be put forward to the Board :

- (a) From April 2018, the Board would not issue print version of Newsletter, with the last one scheduled in March 2018 (i.e. in addition to the April 2017 and October 2017).
- (b) Afterwards, the Board would be issuing e-Newsletter circulated by email. Contents of which would include a concise highlights of board resolution.
- (c) RSWs were invited to register if they would still like to collect a print copy from the Board Office, which would be arranged for printing internally.
- (d) No annual meeting would be organized in future.

Deliberation of the four articles for publication at the Newsletter

22. The Committee noted that it was delegated by the Board to work out the guiding principles including its right of edit, scope of content, number of articles to be released in each issue etc.
23. Members had diverse views which were summarized as follows:
 - (a) If four articles of the same topics and same stance were published, it might carry a connotation that the Board was in the support of the viewpoints of the authors.
 - (b) RSWs might have an expectation that there was no screening system and all articles would be published.
 - (c) Some contents of the articles might be inappropriate or became obsolete at the time when the articles were to be published.
 - (d) The Committee should have the right of edit on the factual information and it was proposed to add a footnote to clarify the hard fact.
 - (e) Any revision or clarification by the Committee might change the original meaning of the article and the Board was legally liable for revising the contents and publishing the revised articles in our Newsletter.
24. After reviewing the four articles again one by one, the Committee agreed to publish at most two out of the four articles in the next issue of Newsletter which would be released in October 2017. Two articles, carrying the titles of “從社工盃看社福界生態” and “有一種陰謀，叫讓人遺忘”，were selected with another one titled “從社工權益個案窺見” as the reserve.
25. The Committee came to the consensus that the author of “有一種陰謀，叫讓人遺忘” would be asked if he could agree to the addition by the Committee a footnote to clarify the term “實報實銷” so that the article would be published, if not this one would be withdrawn from publication, and the Committee agreed that the article in reserve would be published in that case, but provided that organization sending in that article would be in agreement that the author had to be a RSW.
26. During the discussion, the general principles were concluded and summarized as follows:
 - (a) The Committee is with the right of editorship but limited to the factual information and prior consent should be sought from the author, and in any case, the Committee should be careful when exercising the right.
 - (b) The Committee reserves the right to screen out articles particularly if there are concerns in legal risks.
 - (c) Articles should be contributed by RSW in personal capacity as they are legally liable when the articles are published.

Celebration of 20th Anniversary of SWRB in 2018

27. The Committee agreed not to pursue the matter further.

Date of next meeting

28. Members agreed that the next meeting would be scheduled on 5 June 2017 at 7:15 pm.

29. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 pm.

26 April 2017