

SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD
Notes of the 137th Meeting of the Committee on Administration

Date: 3 May 2018
Time: 7:30 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. WONG Ka-ming
Apology: Mr. SHIU Ka-chun
Mr. TAN Tick-yee
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 last meeting

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

Matters arising from last meeting

2. There were no matters arising from the last meeting.

Administration

Issues concerning the protocol for decision-making by circulation

3. The Secretary outlined the current protocol for decision-making in relation to matters of registration, disciplinary cases and other operational issues, by circulation or at physical meeting. The general principle was that if the quorum was met, the decision would be determined by simple majority.
4. The Committee had different views on the issues and the discussions were summarized as follows:

Validity of decision

- (a) The threshold was to be raised from eight (8) to ten (10) for a valid decision by circulation, to align with that required under the Rules for disciplinary cases when both

registration and disciplinary matters were important and might affect the livelihood of the RSWs.

- (b) The other views were that it was not a must to align the threshold of matters of different natures and that there were no sufficient reasons for making changes.
- (c) There was an alternative view that the current practice was convenient for operation but not for quality of decision, where only a definite vote of eight would assure quality of decision. Once eight definite votes for or against a motion were received, the Board office could proceed with the matters, but it would pre-empt any Members attempting to bring the matters for further discussion at Board meeting when anyone had concerns on the matters and proposed to do so.
- (d) After discussion, the Committee did not reach conclusion and the Convenor put to vote on whether the alternative of definite vote of eight should be recommended. Four members namely (anonymized) voted for the proposal not to whilst two members namely (anonymized) voted for. The meeting resolved not to recommend the alternative.
- (e) The meeting then resolved with no objection to recommend raising the threshold to 10.

Determination of reply timeline

- (f) The Committee adopted the proposed methodology in setting the reply timeline for deliberation by circulation, i.e. 4 days for the regular twice-a-week registration cases and one week's time for ordinary cases, whilst for urgent matters, the Board office should seek prior direction by the Chairperson for any shorter timeline to be observed.

Transparency – the governing rules and the attendance of Board Members to determination by circulation

- (g) Members were of different views on deciding whether to disclose the governing rules to the public, and as the current term of office would be going to expire in early 2019, any further deliberation would better be left to the Board of the next term.
- (h) On the same token, the Committee decided not to do so for the attendance as well.

5. The above recommendations would be put forward to the Board.

Review of the document pack for registration renewal

- 6. The Secretary proposed to remove the two notification forms of changes in personal particulars and charges and convictions from the document pack for registration renewal because such information should be reported to the Board within 3-month's time or as soon as reasonably practicable but not at the time of applying for renewal. Members held different views on the proposal as the removal of the two forms might bring more problems than

expected. Other members had the following comments:

- (a) RSWs should be reminded to update the changes as soon as practicable in the newsletter.
- (b) It was proposed to ask RSWs to declare in the renewal form in particular of any charges or convictions.
- (c) The changes should not be made in bits and pieces but an overall review of the registration procedures and documents should be conducted in one go.

7. The Committee agreed not to make any changes to the document pack for the time being.

A complaint against the Board office in handling the renewal application

- 8. (Business information deleted)
- 9. (Business information deleted)
- 10. (Business information deleted)

Finance

Proposal of appointment of auditors for the financial accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018

- 11. The financial year of the Board ended at 31 March of each year. The Board was required to keep proper records of its accounts according to Section 7(1)(h) of the SWRO, and it appointed auditors annually to audit its accounts. Two quotations with same price were submitted to the Committee for consideration. (Business information deleted) had been appointed as the auditor in the past 6 years from 2012 to 2017. The Honorary Treasurer advised that according to the international standard, it remained prudent to appoint the same auditor for a consecutive period of not longer than 7 years. The Committee noted that we had introduced the refund scheme this financial year and for the sake of operational efficiency, the Committee recommended to the Board to re-appoint (business information deleted) as the auditor. It was noted that we were required to appoint a new auditor for financial year to follow.

Consideration of the proposed investment products

- 12. (Business information deleted)
- 13. (Business information deleted)

Promotions

Progress report on promotion of the Board

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

Report on the Social Work Day 2018

15. Dr. Leung reported that all activities such as “Long Distance Run”, flash dance, and promotion in social media were completed. A review meeting was held recently.

Invitation from Health and Social Care Professionals Council (“HSCPC”)

16. A conference namely the Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development would be held in Dublin from 4 to 7 July 2018. HSCPC of Ireland would be organizing on 2 July 2018 a meeting of regulators of social workers for those attending the conference, and hence an invitation was received by the Board for the meeting. The organizer would offer a free lunch for the attendee.

17. The Convenor excused himself from the Conference due to prior engagement. The Committee considered that it was worthwhile to attend and recommended the Registrar to attend, so as to build connection with regulators in other countries and to promote the work of the Board. The recommendation together with cost estimation would be put forth to the Board for consideration.

Any other business

Enhancement of staff benefits

18. The Convenor reported that the Chairperson invited the Committee to consider the feasibility of adjusting the opening hours of Board office on days of key festivals. The Committee came to the view that enquiries or visitors were rare in those days and being a family-friendly employer, it was proposed to close the office at 3:30pm on the four days including Mid-Autumn Festival, Winter Solstice (22 December), New Year’s Eve (31 December) and Lunar New Year’s Eve when they fall on a work day with a public notice posted on the website. This would be brought up to the Board for consideration.

Date of next meeting

19. Members agreed that the next meeting would be scheduled when necessary.

20. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20 pm.

10 May 2018