

**MINUTES OF THE 401st MEETING OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY
BOARD HELD AT 2.00 pm ON THURSDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2014
IN THE AGENCY'S OFFICES, GORDON STREET, BELFAST**

Present: Marie Mallon (Chair)
Lyn Fawcett
Sally McKee
Alison Millar
Albert Mills
Trevor Morrow
Gordon Parkes

In Attendance: Bill Patterson (Chief Executive)
Gerry O'Neill (Director, Corporate Services)
David McGrath (Director, Advisory Services)
Penny Holloway (Director, Conciliation & Arbitration)
Alison Wolfe (Minutes Secretary)

		<i>Action</i>
1. Apologies		
Apologies were received from Neal Willis, Gary McMichael and Pauline Shepherd.		
4. Chair's Business		
4.1 Declarations of Interests		
It was agreed to discuss item 4.5 at this juncture before inviting those members of staff with an interest in the CEO recruitment process to join the meeting.		Chair
4.5 Recruitment of LRA CEO		
The Chair expressed her gratitude to those Board members who sat on the CEO recruitment panel and to Agency staff who were involved in the process. The process had been a considerably lengthy one but the Chair reported that the panel were now able to make an appointment subject to completion of aspects of the process including the agreement of DEL in relation to the Accounting Officer status. The Agency had written to the Department but no response had been received to date. The successful candidate was Mr Tom Evans DEL. The selection panel had identified 2 reserve candidates.		
The Board thanked the Chair and panel members and acknowledged the tremendous amount of time and effort put in.		Chair/DCS

<p>The Board then discussed the practicalities of informing unsuccessful candidates and agreed to adhere to the rules which indicated that all candidates should receive written notification of the outcome of the process. The Board agreed that if a candidate requested feedback that this should be provided by the HR section. The Board also agreed that should candidates request an update on the situation they would be advised that the process was not complete.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Board for their guidance on the matter.</p>	Chair/DCS
<p>2. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 30 October 2014</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2014 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting subject to the following amendment:</p> <p>Page 5, Item 6.1 Budget Position, para 4, 6th line – change ‘remain’ to ‘maintain’.</p>	Secretariat
<p>3. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes not listed on this Agenda</p> <p>There were no matters arising which were not listed on the agenda.</p>	
<p>4. Chair’s Business</p> <p>4.1 Declarations of Interests</p> <p>There were no further declarations of interest expressed.</p>	
<p>4.2 Board Member Training</p> <p>The Chair reported that she had attended the CIPFA Corporate Governance Conference on 19 November. The Conference had been very interesting and informative. Malcolm McKibben, Head of the Civil Service, had spoken about the severity of the budget situation.</p> <p>There was also input from The Intelligent Board on the sort of information Boards should examine and concentrate on. The Chair felt that the Agency Board had the correct balance and was not inappropriately fixated on governance issues.</p> <p>The Conference had also provided an opportunity to network. The Chair had been asked, and accepted, an invitation to sit on the Committee of the Chairs’ Forum which would be useful in maintaining the Agency profile.</p>	Chair
<p>4.3 Public Board Meeting & Lecture – 2014</p> <p>It was noted that the Public Lecture by Jim Mather had been very well</p>	

<p>received by those who attended. It was agreed that it had been an interesting and stimulating lecture. 37 people had attended the meeting representing various sectors. Board members felt that the Chair had provided an excellent opening speech and that the keynote speaker provided a critical message.</p> <p>The CEO is to write to Jim Mather with a view to building contacts and developing relationships with Scotland. The Scottish profile had been raised with the recent referendum and through the Working Together Report.</p> <p>It was suggested that the Roundtable may provide a forum for engaging with Scotland and that the Agency might examine the possibility of holding workshops on Scottish and NI case studies. The Board agreed that the Chair and CEO explore this further. It was also agreed that the Agency raise innovation and mutual benefit with the DEL Committee.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CEO</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chair/CEO</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">4.4 Update on Stakeholder meetings</p> <p>The next meeting of the Roundtable was scheduled to take place at 3.00 pm on Tuesday, 16 December 2014.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chair/CEO</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">4.5 Appointments to the Board of the Labour Relations Agency</p> <p>It was noted that interviews had taken place. The Agency awaits notification from DEL of new appointees.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chair</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">4.6 Recruitment of LRA CEO</p> <p>See above</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">4.7 Board Register of Interest Forms</p> <p>It was noted that Register of Interest forms at 20 November 2014 had been issued electronically. Board members were reminded to return their signed forms to the Secretariat.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Secretariat</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">4.8 Board Cycle of meetings 2015 (Paper 26/14 [updated])</p> <p>It was agreed to schedule the Audit Committee meeting on 18 June 2015 in the afternoon.</p> <p>Board members agreed the proposed cycle of meeting dates 2015.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Secretariat</p>
<p>5. Research Committee Meeting</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">5.1 Research Committee meeting held on 29 August 2013 (Paper 29/14)</p>	

<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 29 August 2014 were noted by the Board.</p> <p>5.2 <i>Research Committee Meeting held on 20 November 2014</i></p> <p>The Chair reported on the Research Committee meeting held prior to the Board meeting. The Committee agreed that it was appropriate for an organisation as significant as the Agency to undertake research however this would not be feasible without the necessary resources. The Committee felt that the Agency should engage with its stakeholders about the issues which were important to them and which would contribute to the improvement of employment relations in NI. Following this the Agency should develop a list of proposals and submit a business case to DEL for additional funding to implement a research programme during the next 3-5 years.</p> <p>It was noted that there were research issues around the DEL Review of Employment Law.</p>	<p>Chair/CEO/DAS</p>
<p>6. Chief Executive's Business</p> <p>6.1 <i>Budget Position</i></p> <p>The CEO reminded Board members that the Agency remained structurally underfunded as set out in the October minute. Following the decision taken at the October meeting the Chair and CEO will be meeting DEL officials on 3 December to discuss the funding position.</p> <p>It was noted that the Agency remained prudent in terms of spend. Indications were that there would be a 1% increase in the salary bill.</p> <p>It was the intention of the CEO to submit a response to the consultation on the Assembly budget, closing date 29 December.</p> <p>The CEO reiterated that, without additional funding, the Agency would be unable to take on additional work deriving from the DEL Review of Employment Law.</p> <p>Due to the seriousness of the budget position and the implications of any cuts it was agreed that it may be necessary to hold an extraordinary meeting of the Board to report back on the outcome of the meeting with DEL officials. It was agreed to contact Board members following the meeting on 3 December with a view to holding an extraordinary meeting at 1.00 pm on Thursday, 4 December (prior to the Audit Cttee meeting).</p>	<p>Chair/CEO</p>
<p>6.2 <i>Bi-Monthly Management Report – 1 April – 31 October 2014 (Paper 30/14)</i></p> <p>Board members noted the content of the report.</p>	<p>CEO/Dirs</p>

<p>6.3 Business Plan 2015-2016</p> <p>The Chair indicated the need for the Board, following the appointment of a new CEO and Board members, to discuss business planning for 2015-16. This would also provide an opportunity for new members to familiarise themselves with the work of the Agency. A professional facilitator would be required to assist Board members. Members agreed that the Chair and DCS look at arrangements for business planning, including an appropriate facilitator for the event.</p>	<p>Chair/DCS</p>
<p>6.4 Employment Law Update</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the table.</p> <p>It was noted that Agency officers had been involved in settlements relating to holiday pay with a large employer following a recent decision of the Employment Appeals Tribunal. Board members expressed the view that the Department should be made aware that Agency officers, working long hours, were involved in this case.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p>7. Corporate Correspondence Received Relevant to Board</p> <p>None.</p>	
<p>8. Any Other Business</p> <p>7.1 Presentations to Trevor Morrow & Lyn Fawcett</p> <p>Following the Board Meeting the Chair made presentations to Trevor Morrow and Lyn Fawcett both of whom were retiring from the Board after six years' service. The Chair formally thanked Trevor and Lyn for their contributions to the Agency. The Chair expressed the view that it was important not only to have good staff but to have a good Board and in the short time she had been with the Agency she felt that the Board was well balanced in terms of expertise and commitment. In response Lyn and Trevor wished the Board, and new members, well for the future. The Agency faced a lot of challenges which it was well able to deal with. Trevor, in response, said he had enjoyed his time as a Board member. He had been involved with the Agency for over 20 years and would remain interested in the on-going work. Trevor also referred to the challenges facing the Agency but said that the Board and SMT were more than capable of facing those challenges.</p>	
<p>9. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Agency Board will take place on Thursday, 18 December 2014 at 10.00 am in Room 5, Gordon Street and will be followed by the annual Board/staff lunch.</p>	<p>Secretariat</p>