

SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD
Notes of the 143rd Meeting of the Committee on Administration

Date: 27 Nov 2019
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Venue: Conference Room, 26/F Eastern Commercial Centre, 83 Nam On Street, Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong.
Present: Dr. TING Wai-fong (Convenor)
Ms. CHEUNG Lai-yi
Mr. LO Wa-kei, Roy
Ms. LUI Siu-ying
Apology: Mr. LUN Chi-wai
Secretary: Mr. LEE Wing-po, Eric, Registrar
Ms. Chan May-shan, Emily, Assistant Registrar

Confirmation of the notes of last meeting

1. There was no amendment to the notes which were confirmed as the true record of the last meeting.

Matters arising

Revised procedures of handling complaints against the Board's policy or staff

2. The Committee took note of the revised draft (COA143-2a) of the document with the amendments resolved at the last meeting. The Secretary raised two points for discussion that verbal reply instead of written reply was adopted to respond verbal complaints, with reference to some NGOs; and an informal handling procedure might be more efficient and effective in handling some cases of simple nature, with reference to Education Bureau. The meeting agreed to give an option to the complainant that he/she could choose to receive verbal or written reply. If the complainant opts for written reply, he/she should provide a mailing or email address.
3. Regarding the time limit to receive complaints in point 8, members agreed to set it as one year after the incident had taken place.
4. Apart from lodging complaints in writing or by phone, one more option: in person, was added in point 9.
5. Members also accepted the replacement of word "as soon as possible" by "as soon as reasonably practicable" in point 7.
6. The Board Office will prepare the revised draft for the Committee's approval at the next meeting.

Development of the integrated database and information system

7. The Secretary reported that more time was needed to prepare the tender document. The Committee took note of it and will follow up at the next meeting.

Renewal refund scheme review

8. Upon the Board's approval to terminate this scheme effective from Jan 2021 at its meeting on

10 Sept 2019, the Board office had informed Labour and Welfare Bureau for the change of registration fees and was looking forward to receiving the reply from Bureau.

SMS service for renewal reminder

9. The Secretary reported that there were significant drops of 47% and 38% for the submission of outstanding fees and outstanding forms respectively after the launch in mid-October. The preliminary result was positive.

Outsourcing book-keeping work

10. For the follow up of hiring an outsource service, the Secretary reported that 30 invitations were sent out but only 2 quotations were received. Since the price of the 2 quotations (business information deleted) were much higher than the estimated cost (business information deleted), the Committee supported the withdrawal of the initiative by the Secretary, substituting it with buying a new accounting system to handle book-keeping internally.

Administration

A complaint about the handling of the renewal application

11. The Board received a written complaint from (Anonymized) on 9 Oct 2019 and details were explained in the document (COA143-3a). Considering the transmission problem of our fax machine found in the test done in mid Oct, members recommended giving her the benefit of doubt and granting reinstatement of her registration by accepting the alleged completion of renewal application. However, this should be perceived as an isolated case and would not be taken as a precedent to accept all complaints or appeals of similar situations or allegations.
12. The above recommendation would be put forth to the Board for endorsement. If it was accepted by the Board, the removal of her name would be null and void; and the difference of the fee paid for the re-application at HK\$100 would be refunded.

Complaints/opinions about the registration system of RSWs

13. The Board received 3 written complaints and opinions regarding the registration system of RSWs in Sept and Oct 2019 and details were explained in the document (COA143-3b). Members considered that there is in place a clear mechanism of handling convicted cases or complaint cases of professional misconduct as provided under the ordinance. Hence, there was no specific follow up action in response to their complaints and opinions. Written replies would be prepared by the Board office after the meeting.

Finance

Draft budget for FY2010-21

14. The first draft of budget and its explanatory notes were presented in the document (COA143-4a(1) & (2)). To summarize, given the projected surplus of the current financial year, it was expected that a sufficient buffer (current net asset being equivalent to 18-months' operating expenditure) would be available by next financial year end, and a review would be conducted to examine if there would be any room for a fee revision in financial year thereafter.

15. The final draft would be put forth to the Board at its meeting in Jan 2020 when the third quarter financial data by Dec 2019 would be available.

Termination of Corporate Wealth Management Service & Investment Fund at (Business information deleted)

16. The Committee took note of the document (COA143-4b) and agreed to keep the Investment Fund at (Business information deleted) as the nominal value of the Fund was still below the purchase price and since it was not a good timing for the Board as a statutory body to engage itself in any critical investment decisions at this juncture, no other service providers would be looked for as replacement.

Promotions

17. The Committee received the report (COA143-5a) on the talks conducted for social work students and other organizations.

Any other business

18. There being no other business.

Date of next meeting

19. The date of next meeting would be proposed via email after the meeting. (*Post meeting notes: it was confirmed to be held on 25 Feb 2020.*)
20. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

END