

**MINUTES OF THE 382nd MEETING OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY BOARD
HELD AT 10.00 am ON THURSDAY, 20 DECEMBER 2012
IN THE AGENCY'S OFFICES, GORDON STREET, BELFAST**

Present: Jim McCusker (Chair)
Albert Mills
Brenda Maitland
Neal Willis
Gordon Parkes
Trevor Morrow
Alison Millar
Gary McMichael

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

Action**1. Apologies**

There were apologies from Sally McKee and Lyn Fawcett.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 29 November 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2012 were proposed by Neal Willis seconded by Gordon Parkes, and agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes not listed on this Agenda**6.1 DEL Quarterly Review of LRA**

It was noted that the CEO had contacted Tom Evans, DEL. The closing of the report will be discussed 4 January 2013.

CEO**6.4 Whistleblowing Policy**

It was noted that the amended policy had been forwarded to the TUS for consultation, as appropriate, at the next JNCC.

CEO**6.5 LRA/Industrial Court MoU and Protocol**

It was noted that the LRA/Industrial Court MoU and Protocol had been adjusted and was ready for signing by both parties.

CEO**6.6 Collective Conciliation Evaluation Report**

It was noted that the Agency will be using the PR services of DEL for the issue, in the New Year, of a press release.

CEO/DCA

4. Chairman's Business

4.1 Declarations of Interests

No interests were declared by members.

4.2 Board Member Training

The Chairman reported on his attendance at the Annual Conference of the Bar Council.

As agreed at the November meeting, the Board Members had been provided with details of the On Board Advanced course.

Following discussion it was agreed that arrangements for a Governance follow-up course would be discussed at the January Board meeting.

Chair

It was noted that the CEO was reviewing Board Member induction. Comments were to be forwarded to the CEO.

**Board
Members**

4.3 Update on Stakeholder Meetings

It was noted that the Minister will meet with the Roundtable on Wednesday 9 January 2013 in Adelaide House. The Roundtable have agreed topics for discussion with the Minister as follows:

- Relationship between the Roundtable the Minister and his Department
- International best practice on employment relations
- Research on the correlation between employment relations, competitiveness and regulation
- SMEs and employment relations

The Roundtable also discussed the development of a research agenda.

The next meeting of the Roundtable 8 February will take the form of a workshop which would discuss three priority topics arising out of the Minister's statement on NI employment law 5 November 2012.

4.4 DEL/LRA Management Statement/Financial Memorandum

The Chairman reported on the response from Colin Jack of DEL to the Board's concerns regarding the draft MS/FM. It was noted that the draft MS/FM is based on a DFP model linked to NI Executive Strategy. After discussion, it was suggested that an addendum to the MS/FM may be helpful. It was noted that Colin Jack is to meet with the Chairman and CEO in the New Year.

Chair/CEO

4.5 Visit to the European Foundation and meeting with LRC, Dublin

It was noted that the agreed date for the visit to the European Foundation Dublin is Thursday, 21 February. Travel arrangements will be confirmed at the next Board meeting.

Secretariat

4.6 LRA/International Agencies Conference

It was noted that a venue has been provisionally booked for the conference on 2 August.

It was agreed that the Conference sub-group will meet on the morning of 11 January 2013 to discuss the theme, speakers and arrangements for the conference.

**Chair/
CEO**

5. Chief Executive's Business

5.1 Bi-Monthly Management Report April 2012-November 2012 (Paper 47/12)

Following discussion the bi-monthly management report was ratified by the Board.

5.2 Mediation Evaluation Report (Paper 48/12)

The Board discussed the final report and agreed that it was very encouraging. It was agreed to forward a copy of the report to the DEL Minister and Chair of the Employment Committee. It was also agreed that PR regarding the findings of the survey would be followed up.

CEO

5.3 Revised LRA Board Practice and Standing Orders (Paper 49/12)

Following discussion, the Board agreed to adopt the Board Practice and Standing Orders, subject to agreed amendments.

5.4 DEL Review of Employment Law 2012

(i) Delivery model for routing all Tribunal claims through the LRA

After extensive discussion the Board agreed to support the routing claims through the Agency subject to (1) the establishment of a suitable model and (2) adequate resources being made available.

CEO

(ii) Enhanced promotion of PCC and arbitration

It was agreed that consideration should be given to the enhanced promotion of PCC and arbitration subject to adequate resources being made available.

CEO

(iii) Early neutral evaluation

It was noted that a discussion paper would be submitted to the January 2013 Board meeting.

CEO

It was agreed that a response should be made by mid January to each of the three project items listed in the Minister's letter of 4 December.

Chair/CEO

(iv) Employment Law Agenda 2012-15 (table)

Contents noted.

(v) DEL Advisory Group

It was noted that the Advisory Group met 3 December. The McClure Watters SME research report is due to be published early in the New Year. It was noted that DEL will be reviewing the Working Time Regulations and Conduct of Employment

Agencies Regulations commencing January 2013.

CEO

(vi) Seminar on developments in employment law

It was noted that topics for discussion at the seminar will be proposed at the January Board meeting.

5.5 LRA and Social Media

It was noted that the Advisory section holds seminars on the employment implications of social media. The Agency will be developing a policy on the use of social media during 2013.

CEO/DAS

5.6 Cover for DCA

It was agreed that expressions of interest be sought among Agency staff in respect of deputising for the DCA during the period February – June 2013.

CEO

6. Corporate Correspondence Received Relevant to Board

- 6.1** Letter dated 4 December 2012 from Dr Stephen Farry, Minister for Employment & Learning to Chairman regarding review of current employment relations system & Chairman's reply dated 7 December.

Contents noted.

7. Any Other Business

Corporate Correspondence Issued:

- 7.1 Letter dated 11 December 2012 from Chairman to Michael Wardlow, ECNI re exemption of teachers from the fair employment legislation
- 7.2 Letter dated 11 December 2012 from Chairman to Basil McCrea, Chairperson, Employment & Learning Cttee enclosing copy Ecorys evaluation of Collective Conciliation service
- 7.3 Letter dated 11 December 2012 from Chairman to Dr Stephen Farry, Minister for Employment & Learning enclosing copy Ecorys evaluation of Collective Conciliation service

Contents noted.

There was no other business reported.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, 31 January 2013 at 2.00 pm in Gordon Street. The Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee meeting will be held prior to the Board Meeting, at 11.00 am on 31 January.

Following the Board Meeting the Chairman made a presentation to Brenda Maitland who retires from the Board after six years. The Chairman was very appreciative of Brenda's considerable contribution to the Board as a member and Vice Chair. The Chairman and members appreciated her considerable contribution to the business of the Agency.