



Summary of the Minutes of the 452nd meeting of the Governing Board (hybrid) Tuesday, 16 May 2024, at 2 p.m.

Agenda

1. The President declared the meeting open at 2:04 PM. The Agenda was presented as follows:

1. Adoption of the Agenda
2. Approval of the Minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on 16 April 2024
3. President's Report
4. Preparations for the 2024 Annual Assembly
5. Committee and Working Group reports
6. FAFICS matters
7. AOB

Adoption of the Agenda [1]

2. The Agenda was adopted as presented.

Approval of the Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting held 16 April 2024 [2]

3. The draft Minutes of the 16 April 2024 meeting were adopted as presented.

President's Report [3]

4. Deborah Landey made the following points in her report:

- The Bureau met on 16 May to go over ongoing issues.
- She stated that at the last Governing Board meeting, she had called for anyone interested in replacing Steve Avedon as one of the two retiree representatives on the UNSPC, which reviews disability cases, to let the AFICS/NY Secretary know of their interest in serving. She was delighted to report that Dr. Narula had put forward her interest. She recalled that as many of you might know she, as Medical Director, presented these cases to the UNSPC for a number of years and she was very familiar with the issues and the process and with the agreement of the Governing Board, she will be putting her name forward to the UNSPC.
- She informed that the Working Group on Retrogression had an excellent meeting with ASG Martha Helena Lopez. There had been a subsequent meeting with one of the lawyers, Suneeta Dewan, an immigration lawyer, with whom they have remained in regular contact with during this whole process of trying to get some resolution on this issue or some movement on it. Darshak Shah, the Chair of the WG, would provide more of a brief when reporting on the work of the various Committees and Working Groups.



- On a housekeeping issue, she informed that when setting up the Communications Committee some years back, it was called an ad hoc Committee as it was primarily set up to handle the 50th Anniversary AFICS/NY commemorations. However, as Communications was really one of the pillars of our work and as it was ongoing, she proposed to take away the 'Ad Hoc' and have it called the Communications Committee.

Decisions

5. **The President confirmed that she had made a call for candidates to serve as a retiree representative on the UNSPC for Disability Cases at the last Board meeting. She apologized some members had not heard the call nor seen the correct set of Minutes documenting the call. She suggested that the Board should proceed as had been proposed and that those who were interested should so inform the Secretary by providing a statement of interest and short bio. Then all of the information could be shared so that an informed decision could be taken by the Board. The Board agreed on this way forward.**
- 6 **The Governing Board agreed to the change of the name of the Ad Hoc Committee on Communications to the Committee on Communications.**

Preparations for the 2024 Annual Assembly [4]

7. The President recalled that Ed Omotoso had asked that the item on 'Preparations for the 2024 Annual Assembly' be put on the Board's agenda. She summarized the preparations to date as follows:
 - At the request of the Governing Board, the President had written again to the CEPA and the RSG requesting them to participate in the Assembly and had spoken to both of them. The CEPA responded that she could attend with members of her team. The RSG responded that he could not attend but would send the Chief of the Office of Investment Management, Bill Wilkinson, and members of his team.
 - As regards the possibility for those attending online to ask questions, it seemed that it was not possible, so a form had been designed and sent out to all members asking them to submit questions in advance. Those attending in person would be able to ask questions in the room.
 - A dry run of the Assembly had been held earlier. The technology worked well including the live presentation of FAFICS President Jerry Barton who would be there live from Vienna and would take questions.
 - Two USG's, Catherine Pollard and Athul Khare confirmed their attendance. Catherine Pollard would be representing the Secretary-General as well as her own portfolio. John Lewis, CEO of UNFCU would be participating along with, for



the first time, an ASG from UNFPA, Andrew Saberton, who is in charge of management.

- As regards the President's Report, it would be divided into three segments: the President's summary along with presentations from Jay Karia on health issues and Jay Pozenel on pension issues.
- The results of the voting on the By-Laws would be announced by Jay Pozenel after he makes his statement on pensions, as Co-Chair of the By-Laws Committee. Dr. Sudershan Narula would announce the results of the Governing Board elections. Darshak Shah, in his segment on finances, together with Mac Chiulli, would announce the results of the vote on the increase in membership dues.
- This year, Nancy Hurtz-Soyka would moderate the meeting and then the reception where it was expected to have around 60-80 people. Barbara Linardo had been working extremely hard on the reception.

Committee and Working Group reports [5]

Communications Committee

9. Chair Gail Bindley-Taylor reported that the Committee had worked and completed the draft report, as well as a power-point presentation which gave a sense of what AFICS/NY communications style was like, what has been done in the past and how this has evolved over time. There were two sets of recommendations which provided some of the insights and ideas that were discussed. One of the major things that had come from the survey was that members wanted to be involved with social media. The major areas of the focus of the strategy were Membership, Bulletin, the website and social media.
10. Some other ideas that had come up included the question of developing a network of regional focal points because many people travel to other areas where there are AFICS organizations, and they thought that it would be good if AFICS/NY was more aware of the work of other organizations of the Federation. Another idea was to have the Governing Board meetings accessible for members to join in from time to time.
11. She added that one of the things that have been critical for the success of the communications strategy was the Committee's approach to website management which would require additional resources and updating efforts. This question of resources was a large issue that was needed to be faced in order to carry out the modernization of the website.
12. It was also suggested that the Board consider having a mentor programme which would be something similar to the FAFICS Expertise Pool. If people needed support, they



would be able to obtain that support from an experts' pool or bank which would be made up of retirees.

Decision

- 13. Deborah Landey said that she was very grateful to Gail Bindley-Taylor and her Committee for finalizing the Communications Strategy. She suggested, if it was agreeable to all, that Gail Bindley-Taylor circulate the Communications Strategy and that the Board discuss it at its June meeting. She also asked that when Gail Bindley-Taylor disseminated the Strategy, if she could include a cover note with three or four decisions that the Board would need to take.**

Pension Committee and By-Laws Committee

14. Jay Pozenel, Co-Chair of the Pension Committee, stated that he had shared with the members of the Pension Committee the statement that he would be making at the Annual Assembly the next week. He had also shared with the Board members the inputs for the FAFICS Council's discussion on pension issues. He said that the most important point was AFICS/NY's support for the initiatives that FAFICS was currently engaged in with respect to restoring the half percent of the reduction in the first cost-of-living adjustment after award, as well as the improvements for small and minimum pensions. In addition to these two issues the Pension Committee recommended to bring to the attention of the FAFICS Council consideration for increasing the amount of the child's benefit, including particularly the amount of the disabled child's benefit and tying future increases to the CPI used for the COLA. The other two areas were increasing transparency both in terms of Board action, the Office of Investment Management and Fund Administration and lastly performance reporting on investments and improvements that would be more comparable to other pension funds so there could be a sense of how the Fund was performing in terms of investment decisions with respect to other similar situated funds rather than simply how well it was doing with respect to insourcing versus outsourcing which seems to be the current measure.
15. With respect to the By-Laws Committee, Jay Pozenel stated that they would be meeting again in June. He and John Dietz would be calling back the Committee, so that they could start work on the conflict-of-interest policy. They have pulled some examples together and will come up with a policy that would then go back to the Board for endorsement as soon as possible. This would take a bit of time to be sure that the conflict-of-interest policy would be something that everyone could work with.
16. Deborah Landey stated that the paper which Jay Pozenel mentioned regarding pension matters had gone through the Pension Committee which included many members of the Board therefore there should be limited questions. Deborah Landey thanked Jay Pozenel for all his work in preparing the document. Linda Sapetulli stated that in paragraph 2 of the document there was reference made to 4,000 outstanding cases. She did not know where this number was coming from and stated that she would not even mention it unless its origin was certain.



17. John Dietz elaborated on the work involved on the conflict-of-interest policy, stating that the issue was actually a two-fold problem because it is both a conflict of interest and a code of conduct. That is how they understand the task that has been assigned to the group and they would try to address both of those issues in one document.

Health Insurance Committee

- 18 Jay Karia, Co-Chair of the Committee, reported that all the discussions in the Health and Life Insurance Committee (HLIC) had been finalized and the recommendations had been made to the Controller in terms of the changes that would take place effective 1 July 2024 to the health insurance plans. There had been much discussion regarding the Empire Anthem Plan because of the significant increase that was originally seen as 13 per cent. However, the AFICS/NY representatives on the HLIC managed to bring this cost increase down through deliberate and useful discussions including one meeting that lasted for more than four hours. He then provided information on some of the issues that had been discussed including the situation of co-pays and the situation of network and out-of-network use. Overall, he thought the intense discussions and outcome was overall good in terms of what was finally achieved. More information on the changes would be announced at the Annual Assembly by the Health and Life Insurance staff.

Membership Committee

19. Dr. Sudershan Narula, Co-Chair of the Committee, reported that thus far this year, 41 new members joined AFICS/NY which was 9 more than reported last month and 3 more members were in the process of joining. The final number of new members would be announced at the Annual Assembly. There were two upcoming events for promotion of AFICS/NY-one was the in-person annual Health Insurance Campaign for which AFICS/NY would have a table along with the TPAS and the Health and Life Insurance Section. The other event was the pre-retirement webinar that was being organized by the UNICEF global shared servicing center for which she and other AFICS/NY representatives would be attending.

Nominating Committee

20. Dr. Sudershan Narula, Co-Chair of the Committee, reported that with respect to the AFICS/NY 2024 Governing Board Elections, the deadline was yesterday, and the results would be available on Monday, 20 May. She would then be able to announce the results at the AFICS/NY Annual Assembly on Tuesday, 21 May.

Voting on proposed changes to the By-Laws and Membership dues

21. Dr. Sudershan Narula reported that as to the proposed changes in the By-Laws and on the membership dues, around 300 members had voted electronically with 24 paper



ballots having been received. She would review the results with colleagues and Jay Pozenel would then announce the results at the Assembly.

Visa retrogression update

22. Darshak Shah provided an update on the current status of the Working Group on Visa Retrogression as follows:
- The Working Group met and followed what had been agreed at the Board which was to arrange for a meeting with ASG Martha Helena Lopez and colleagues from DMSPC. At the meeting the message imparted was that there had to be a partnership between AFICS/NY and the UN Secretariat because AFICS/NY was not the connection between the US Government and the UN Secretariat. AFICS/NY could support, help and collect information but it could not be the main interlocutor.
 - Another point discussed at the meeting was the concern over what US entity was the best to influence the change and by and large it was decided that it should be the State Department. It was then a question of how to discuss the issue with the State Department and then it was felt that the timing was not right because of the upcoming election. However, the UN Secretariat would continue to do additional work to start to prepare for whenever a dialogue could be entertained.
 - He also reported on the meeting with the lawyer who had been providing some suggestions to the Secretariat and the Working Group members for the issuance of a Note Verbale

FAFICS matters [6]

23. Deborah Landey brought to the Board's attention the note received from the President of FAFICS calling for nominations of candidates for the soon to be vacant positions in the FAFICS Bureau. The deadline for submitting nominations to the FAFICS Secretary was 10 June. The note also outlined that the any nomination had to come from the nominee's Member Association and include a statement that the nominee was a member of the Association and also to be included was a CV of the candidate including information on prior service in FAFICS and a statement by the candidate indicating why he or she wanted to serve as a FAFICS Officer and that they would be prepared to work actively with fellow colleagues in the FAFICS Bureau. In addition, they would also need to sign and abide by the FAFICS Declaration of Principles which all officers are required to sign. She also provided information on the expected work requirements as an Officer of the Bureau and then asked if anyone might have a possible candidate from the Governing Board who met the above expectations.



24. **Deborah Landey concluded the discussion and stated the Governing Board agreement to put forward Nancy Hurtz-Soyka's candidacy for Vice-Presidency of FAFICS.**

AOB [7]

25. Darshak Shah stated that while the meeting was going on, he was reflecting on the President of the General Assembly's participation in the Annual Assembly. He fully supported the idea of trying to contact his Office and trying to convince the President of the GA or his representative to attend the AFICS/NY Annual Assembly because it signifies and demonstrates the importance of AFICS/NY and also gives recognition to the work that is done. As the meeting was only several days away and as a number of senior people have already blocked their time, it would mean having to redo the schedule of several senior colleagues who have busy calendars. So, his proposal was to set this as a goal for next year and start to build this relationship from now onwards as it could take some time to rebuild this relationship. This proposal would mean that AFICS/NY moves forward without creating chaos for the meeting on Tuesday but with the idea of reengaging the Office of the President of the GA for this point on.
26. Linda Saputelli, on another topic, stated that she was still concerned was the fact that AFICS/NY was in the "red" and was wondering if there would be anyway, and this would be unorthodox, that AFICS/NY could appeal to the Charities Foundation to pay all the debt as it was known that they had resources. She noted that Jay Pozenel was already shaking his head, but she was trying to think of a way that AFICS/NY could get rid of this debt once and for all as the Association must start every new endeavor without the appropriate funds.

Decision

27. **Deborah Landey requested the Board to consider this suggestion at a subsequent meeting.**

Decision

28. **The President concluded indicating the leadership team would be having a call and would look at ways to try and make this work as well as reestablish better contacts with the Office of the PGA going forward. She asked the Governing Board if it could agree to proceed as she outlined to which the Board agreed.**
29. The President closed the meeting at 4:24 pm.
