



**Summary of the Minutes of the 449th meeting of the Governing Board (hybrid)
Tuesday, 20 February 2024, at 11:00**

Adoption of the Agenda [1]

1. The President declared the meeting open at 11:00 AM. The Agenda was adopted as presented and as follows:

1. Adoption of the Agenda
2. Approval of the Minutes of the Governing Board meeting held on 25 January 2024
3. President's Report
4. Reports from Committee/Working Group Chairs
5. Budget
6. FAFICS matters
7. AOB

Approval of the Minutes of the 448th Governing Board Meeting held 25 January 2024 [2]

2. The Minutes of the 25 January 2024 meeting were adopted provisionally. The Minutes would be formally adopted at the Governing Board's next meeting in March 2024.

President's Report [3]

3. The President made the following points in her report:

- The full Bureau met on Thursday 15 February to review ongoing operational issues and making sure issues were resolved. She indicated that it was excellent to have a second person, Veronique, providing support to our collective work.
- On the Annual Assembly, she informed that AFICS/NY had requested a room for 21 May from 3-6 pm. She further informed that the letters of invitation have gone out to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, USGs Pollard and Khare, the Pension Fund ASGs, the Health Insurance Unit, the President of UNFCU and that senior officials from UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF had also been invited. The President of FAFICS has also accepted to speak at the opening of the meeting as he did last year. Nancy Hurtz-Soyka has been in touch with Barbara Linardo regarding the reception to be held afterwards. Nancy is also updating the Run of Show of last year which is a second-by-second run through so the technical support individuals can follow and support the meeting. Deborah Landey indicated that she would be asking each of the Committee Chairs to prepare a paragraph on the work in their respective areas for her to report on.



- On the visa retrogression issue, she stated that a letter drafted by the Working Group on visa retrogression was sent from the President to the Secretary-General. She noted that the Secretary-General indicated in the Town Hall meeting with staff of 1 February 2024 that he was seized with the matter and acting on it.
- Later in this meeting, she stated that Jay Pozenel and Darshak Shah would summarize the plan for the presentation of the By-Laws and Rules of Procedure to the Annual Assembly which would include proposals for the increase of membership fees. A small group led by Darshak Shah had reviewed the matter of the fees and would report later in the meeting on the proposals to be included.
- The team of Darshak Shah, Nancy Hurtz-Soyka, Dr. Sudershan Narula and Deborah Landey made a presentation to the Pre-retirement seminar organized by the UN Staff Union. She indicated that the presentation went well and that several staff joined AFICS/NY as a result. She also stated that a AFICS/NY followed up with an email communication to all who attended.
- She also reported that she had written to the CEO of UNFCU, as is done every year, enclosing the 2024 work plan and seeking a meeting with his team to review. She recalled that it was based on the work plan that UNFCU provides its contribution and recalled that last year UNFCU had increased their contribution by over 50%.
- Lastly, she informed that Nancy Hurtz-Soyka has been working with the Pension Fund to continue the help sessions on the Digital Certificate of Entitlement (DCE).

Reports from Committee/Working Group Chairs [4]

Membership Committee

4. The Co-Chair informed that this year twelve new members joined AFICS/NY. She also recalled that in May 2020, the AFICS Membership Committee had collaborated with the Pension Fund's Client Services to send out a letter to encourage people to join AFICS/NY and that she planned to approach the Client Services in the Pension Fund again this year to request their assistance to solicit additional memberships for AFICS/NY.

Nominating Committee

5. The Co-Chair reported that on 2 February 2024, an email had been sent out to the entire AFICS/NY membership concerning the AFICS/NY 2024 Governing Board Election. For 2024, there will be six open positions on the Governing Board. The call for candidates required potential candidates to send a short, one-page resume, together with a note indicating how they could contribute to the Governing Board as well as areas of special interest. This material should be sent by email as soon as possible, but not later than 23 February 2024, to one of the Co-Chairs of the Nominating Committee, i.e., Dr. Sudershan Narula or Jay Karia. Dr. Narula indicated that to date, interest had been expressed by 4 people and there were 3 current Board members who would be eligible to run again. Thus far, 2 out of the 3 had expressed their intention to run. Also, she reported that both Furio DeTomassi and Gulden Turkoz-Cosslett had reached out to possible candidates. Dr. Narula suggested that as per the Credit Union elections, those seeking re-election should have an asterisk next to their name for easier



identification and Jay Karia proposed that, in addition, there should be photos of all the candidates as this might help voters recognize their colleagues. These two suggestions were approved by the Governing Board. It was expected that the vendor used during previous Governing Board elections would also be used for this election.

Health Insurance Committee

6. Co-chair of the Committee reported that the Health Insurance Committee has been meeting regularly and that it has reviewed a number of issues. It recently considered a draft prepared by Michelle Rockcliffe for criteria for membership in the AFICS/NY Health Insurance Committee which would be shared once the Committee had reached a consensus on the criteria. He also informed that the UN's HLIC had issued a timetable to discuss the renewals of the health insurance plans. These reviews would start beginning of March and go through April. The trends based on the performance of the various plans would be reviewed and perhaps some slight changes to benefits might be considered. The Committee was also reviewing the five replies prepared by Robin Della Rocca for the Health Insurance Committee in response to the FAFICS survey questionnaire on health insurance and long-term-care options which was sent to all 64 Associations. The deadline for submission of the questionnaire to FAFICS was set for 28 February 2024.

Communications Committee

7. Chair of the Committee recalled that the Committee wanted to focus on three priorities at its last meeting and informed that the first was to bring an editor on board. Committee members believed that the editor's work would entail 15 to 20 hours a week and the job description would be sent to the entire AFICS/NY membership with the hope that someone from AFICS/NY would apply for the position. Next, it was the Committee's goal to publish the AFICS Bulletin recalling that the last one was published as a commemorative issue for the fiftieth anniversary of AFICS/NY, so it was important to have an editor. Previously, the Bulletin was published twice a year in June and December. It was also important to have an editor for the improvement of the AFICS/NY website. The third priority is the website and the Committee was setting up a Working Group to look at the issues because it is a complicated situation with the website as it is hosted by the United Nations on its platform and limited changes can be made within the design of the website. They will also approach OICT to see if they could provide someone who would be dedicated to working with AFICS/NY on this matter.

Pension Committee

8. Co-Chair of the Pension Committee, reported that Pension Board Working Groups were preparing for the upcoming Pension Board meetings. The results of the actuarial study would be known in May, but she was not confident that the restoration of the still remaining 0.5 percentage point reduction in the first inflation adjustment to the periodic UNJSPF pension benefits would be approved as it was contingent on the actuarial valuation of the Fund as of 31 December 2023. The actuarial study which is very complicated would probably not be available until May 2024. She was also not confident that all the material would be ready for the FAFICS Council meeting this year. A review on an adjustment to the small pensions minimum would be undertaken since it has not been adjusted since 2016.

9. The Co-Chair of the FAFICS Ad hoc Working Group of the Pension Board with respect to admitting new member organizations to the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF), recalled that the matter



became an issue at the last Pension Board meeting as newer members of the Board wanted to better understand the process of membership. He stated that the Working Group had met several times and that their report was being finalized. The Working Group has worked with the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) on how best to confirm whether an international intergovernmental organization applying for UNJSPF membership follows for their staff the Common System as regards salaries, allowances and other terms of employment, something that is a prerequisite for eligibility to join the UNJSPF as a member organization. The recommendation would be that no changes to the Regulations would be needed but that there were some suggestions on how both the Pension Board and the Pension Administration could present information about potential member Organizations and their eligibility to become members which was ultimately a decision for the General Assembly to make based on a recommendation by the Board. In summary, there was no real change to the process but a better understanding of the steps in the process by the Pension Administration.

Review and Decision on revised AFICS/NY By-Laws and Rules of Procedure

10. Co-chair of the Working Group on the AFICS/NY By-Laws provided an up-date on the review of the revised AFICS/NY By-Laws and Rules of Procedure. He was preparing a first draft of a message from Deborah Landey that would be sent out to all AFICS/NY members describing the changes and asking for an on-line vote. If adopted, then the Rules of Procedure could be considered adopted by the Governing Board at its subsequent meeting. In the draft, he would succinctly explain the changes being proposed to be made which were primarily to effectuate the change in the terms of office and voting for the members of the Governing Board. He stated that he would have a draft ready so that the Board could adopt the text at its next meeting and once adopted by the Board it could then be sent out to the membership. The Governing Board agreed that those who can vote online would vote electronically and for those for whom we do not have email contacts, hard copies would be sent to them ahead of the Assembly.

Visa retrogression update

11. Chair of the Visa Retrogression Working Group provided an update on the current status of the Working Group. He recalled that the Secretary-General had brought up the matter at his Virtual Global Town Hall meeting on 1 February 2024. Jay Pozenel stated that he had met with Martha Helena Lopez and that they discussed the draft letter which was thought to be too legalistic. It was agreed that it is a critical issue for the United Nations to request the US Government and the State Department to find ways to find administrative workarounds to assist UN staff. The Working Group on Visa Retrogression would continue to follow very closely any actions taken by the UN Secretariat on this matter.

Budget [5]

12. AFICS/NY Treasurer provided an update on the AFICS/NY budget and financial situation. She stated that the Association could face a \$20,000 a deficit which has been consistently so over the past several years. This needed to be addressed because if left unaddressed, AFICS/NY would be in a difficult situation. Given this background, she also thought it might be time to look at the amount of annual dues as well as the lifetime membership rates which have not been increased in some 15 years.

13. After some discussion, members agreed that AFICS/NY's membership rates needed to be increased. However, bot Linda Saputelli and Ed Omotoso expressed reservations about the timing of the



increase particularly until a newsletter could once again be offered and activities that had been dropped under COVID could be resumed. It was proposed that the Annual membership rate be raised from \$45 to \$65, and that the Lifetime membership rate be raised from \$400 to \$500. This proposal would need to be presented to the membership at the Annual Assembly in May 2024. A discussion ensued as to the best time to bring the new rates into effect, with the suggestion being made for a 1 June 2024 effective date but the group will discuss this further and provide a recommendation. It was also suggested that AFICS/NY should charge for some of the proposed upcoming social events. A suggestion was also made that Lifetime members could be asked to make a financial contribution of \$100 on a voluntary basis.

14. Darshak Shah informed that a draft budget would be presented at the next Governing Board meeting together with the financial statements and that a collection telephone drive would be organized focusing on calling those whose dues payments have not been received.

FAFICS matters [6]

15. The President confirmed that the FAFICS Bureau would have a hybrid meeting in Geneva from 26-28 February 2024.

AOB [7]

16. Gail Bindley-Taylor informed that FAFICS was working on a new brochure and was looking forward to the launch of FAFICS's new website in July 2024.

17. The President closed the meeting at 1:01 pm.
