



Summary of the Minutes of the 450th meeting of the Governing Board (hybrid) Tuesday, 19 March 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 meetings held on 25 January and 20 February 2024
3. President's Report
4. Committee and Working Group reports
5. Board review of changes to AFICS/NY By-Laws announcement to the Annual Assembly
6. Finance issues
7. AFICS/NY – Newsletter/Bulletin
8. FAFICS matters
9. AOB

Approval of the Minutes of the Governing Board Meetings held 25 January 2024 and 20 February 2024 [2]

2. The draft Minutes of the 25 January and 20 February 2024 meetings were adopted as amended.

President's Report [3]

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

- The full Bureau met on Tuesday 12 March to go through the ongoing work to make sure that all items were attended to. She also noted that now with the new office team, there are two people to help in sorting our issues and communications that need attention.
- As regards the Annual Assembly, AFICS/NY had been provisionally provided Conference Room 1 for the Annual Assembly on 21 May from 3-6 pm. It was further reported that the Secretary-General had responded indicating that he would not be able to attend, and that USG Catherine Pollard would represent him. The President of FAFICS had also accepted to speak at the opening of the Assembly as he did last year, and he would be attending live this year not through a video recording. Both USG Khare and the CEO of UNFCU have accepted. The three ASGs of the Funds and Programmes were invited and the



ASG from UNFPA had accepted. Confirmation was still pending from the CEPA, the RSG, as well as Vera Rajic from the Health and Life Insurance Section.

- The President also reported that the leadership team has had ongoing meetings with UNFCU, and one was just held recently. UNFCU representatives from Geneva and Nairobi were also in attendance at the meeting and UNFCU confirmed its ongoing financial support to AFICS/NY. The 2024 Work Plan had been submitted to UNFCU for their information. Possible topics for the next round of jointly organized seminars were also discussed. Some ideas were floated, and she stated that she would keep the Board posted. She also asked Governing Board members if they had any ideas for discussion for future seminars.
- Finally, the traditional Spring Luncheon was back, and it was hoped that as many as possible members would attend. She specifically thanked Barbara Linardo for organizing this luncheon which would take place on 11 April.

Committee and Working Group reports [4]

Membership Committee

4. The Co-Chair of the Committee reported that thus far this year 28 new members had joined AFICS/NY out of which 23 had joined since the pre-retirement programme took place on 1 February. She also informed that emails had been sent out to all who had attended the pre-retirement programme providing them with an application form to join AFICS/NY. She hoped this trend of increased membership would continue for the rest of the year. She also planned, in due course, to update the Membership Directory.

Nominating Committee

5. The Co-Chair of the Committee reported that with respect to the AFICS/NY 2024 Governing Board Elections, there would be ten candidates out of which three were eligible incumbents, seven were new and out of the ten, four were men with six women. Two candidates were from UNDP, one from UNFPA, one from UNICEF and six from different departments of the UN Secretariat. She also informed that her Committee had spoken with the vendor and a timeline for the election had been set. Voting would go live on Friday; 12 April and the plan was to keep the online voting live until two or three days before the scheduled AFICS/NY Annual Assembly. She further specified that AFICS/NY was getting more candidates from UNDP and that Committee members had been very helpful in identifying candidates covering fields such as audit, communications, IT specialists, as well as two candidates who retired from the General Service category which is something that the Committee had been wanting for a long time.

Health Insurance Committee

6. The Co-Chair of the Committee reported that the UN's Health and Life Insurance Committee (HLIC) had been meeting regularly to review the plan renewals of the health



insurance plans. So far, they had reviewed Empire Blue Cross, Aetna and Cigna Dental with Cigna WorldWide still to be reviewed. He further indicated that the trends based on the performance of the various plans might have some slight changes to benefits. The trends thus far indicated that medical expenses were increasing for Empire Blue Cross and Aetna and consequently, increases in premiums were to be expected. As regards meeting with the Health and Life Insurance Section (HLIS), he informed that a meeting had been set up with Vera Rajic and her staff for Thursday, 21 March to discuss various issues.

Discussion

8. A discussion ensued on the upcoming Governing Board election.

Decision

9. **The President suggested that as it was difficult to work out the details during this meeting, the Nominating Committee would need to look at the suggestions made. She further suggested that if a sub-group with more technical people was required that could be a way to move forward. Since this was an experienced team, going back years, knowing how these things were run, she thought that the Nominating Committee should manage this election overview for AFICS/NY.**

Pension Committee

10. The Chair of the Pension Committee reported that the Committee recently had a special briefing about the recent Pension Board session and went through all the issues. The good news was that the CEPA, Ms. Rosemarie McClean, had received approval for her contract renewal. She noted one change that she described as historical and this was that in 2012, the Pension Fund implemented IPSAS Accounting which was an advance over the older UN rules. Under the initiative of the UN Pension Fund, the IPSAS organization agreed to some rules that were appropriate for pension fund investments and it was under the leadership of Karl-Ludwig Soll that this issue moved forward. Accordingly, the Pension Board approved updating the Fund's accounting rules which have now been globally adopted.
11. The Co-Chair of the Pension Committee reported on the meeting with RSG, Pedro Guazo, held last January where the members of the AFICS/NY Pension Committee were able to ask him questions. While being satisfied with the answers he gave, the Committee still had questions about performance measures and management as well as the focus on ESG and what that meant for the Fund. The Committee was also concerned about some of the decisions regarding investment goals, especially the real rate of returns as reflected in policy. He reported that some of these points would be advanced to FAFICS for their consideration at the Pension Board meeting and these recommendations would be provided to them late in April. He noted that the actuarial report on the situation as of 31 December 2023 had not yet been issued and that it would most probably be advanced to the Committee on Actuaries in May as they meet in early June to be ready for the Pension Board's meeting in July. One Board member



reminded the Co-Chairs that at that meeting concerns were brought forward in light of the fact that some senior staff of the investments section were being terminated due to whistleblowing activities and she said that it was very concerning when a work group loses between 5 to 7 P-5's and D-1's and what that meant for risks to the Pension Fund.

Communications Committee

12. The Chair of the Communications Committee informed that the Committee was meeting this week. She noted that the Editor position, which was a volunteer position, had been posted on the AFICS/NY website. In the meantime, the Committee would put in place a group that would evaluate, and interview interested candidates. They were also looking at the next priority, which was the website, but they did need to receive support from OICT since they hold the server. In this regard, the Committee wanted to have someone who was a dedicated staff who would be working with AFICS/NY during this transition period. In addition, the Committee was beginning to draft the Communications Strategy which they hoped would take about a month. Hopefully by the next GB meeting there would be something to share.

Visa retrogression update

13. The Co-Chair of the Visa Retrogression Working Group provided an update on the current status of the Working Group. He reported that he had spoken to ASG Martha Helena Lopez and was informed that the Secretary-General had received Deborah Landey's letter, and that the UN was planning for a letter to be sent to the US Permanent Representative. He also informed that involved lawyers had drafted a letter with suggestions, but the UN thought that it was too technical for the Secretary-General to send. As a result, the UN was working on a more suitable Secretary-General letter to the Permanent Representative of the United States.

Aging Smart Committee and IT Committee

14. The Chair of the Aging Smart Committee and of the IT Committee, reported that she had no updates on the Aging Smart Committee. With the luncheon in April and the Annual Assembly meeting in May, she was trying to find a logical time to schedule the next event. She thought that the summer months might be difficult for many, so she was thinking of having an online event. As regards the IT Committee, there was nothing to report. except that there was an ongoing issue with the PCs that were issued to AFICS/NY as a result of the move, and they would have to approach the UN for new equipment.

Review of changes to AFICS/NY By-Laws announcement to the Annual Assembly [5]

15. The Co-Chair of the Working Group on the AFICS/NY By-Laws provided an up-date on the changes proposed to the AFICS/NY By-Laws and Rules of Procedure. He informed that as a matter of New York law, and as AFICS/NY is a New York not for profit



corporation, an announcement must be made as to the proposed changes to members at least 30 days in advance of an annual meeting. As a result, a notice needed to be sent out by 21 April 2024. In the past, voting was done by acclamation at the Annual Assembly but now that AFICS/NY meetings were hybrid, that cannot be done. This notice would incorporate both the changes to the By-Laws and to the dues which were reviewed again in light of the revisions to the By-Laws. In addition, he added that as a matter of law, the Board needed to develop a conflict-of-interest policy. He reminded all members that as Directors of a corporation they had a duty of loyalty to the corporation itself - what it does and what it stands for. That did not mean that dissent could not be raised among Board members, but once a Board's position was agreed on, Board members had a duty to be loyal to that position, as well as a duty of care to the corporation which was adhered to in terms of how funds were spent, how the corporation's issues were addressed along with a duty to avoid conflicts of interest. He further stated that there were many examples of conflict-of-interest statements and added that the Pension Board had developed a policy that he thought could be used as a model and that this should be done quickly and probably even before the Annual Assembly where it could be presented.

Discussion

16. A discussion ensued on the revisions to the AFICS/NY By-Laws and Rules of Procedure

Decisions

17. The President summarized the discussion and raised the following three issues:
 - **Everyone was comfortable with the language concerning the rate of Associate membership proposed by John Dietz. This proposal was approved.**
 - **On the conflict-of-interest statement, she stated that it was important that such a document be introduced, and she recalled that an attempt had been made some ten years ago and there was no consensus at that time. It should now be done as it was long overdue, and it is required by law. She therefore asked Jay Pozenel and John Dietz to take the lead on drafting a conflict-of-interest policy. This decision was approved.**
 - **On reaching out to AFICS/NY members – volunteers and the Membership Committee would try to reach out to everyone on voting electronically by phone or mail. This decision was approved.**

Finance issues [6]

19. The Treasurer presented the finance documents commenting with the following points noting that the financial reports would be presented to the Annual Assembly in May.



- The summary of 2023 versus 2024. 2023 had revenues of \$76,000, versus expenses of \$70,000. There should have been a small surplus, but in reality, cash balances decreased by \$22,000 due to various reasons as the numbers for 2023 were not completely filed yet but were 90% complete.
- Mainly, it was a problem in the accounts receivable which have been completed updated. Veronique Whalen and Velimir Kovacevic are going through the inbox for any death notices or members no longer part of AFICS/NY.
- There is now a concerted effort to review the rest of the accounts receivable and some of this exercise will dovetail with the exercise concerning members who have no email addresses or who we are not aware have fallen off.
- AFICS/NY had an unexpected bequest from the estate of Jane Weidlund of \$10,000 which was gratefully received.
- Expense-wise again, 2023 was bit of outlier because of the move. There was a tremendous amount of work done, extra work clearing up the old offices, moving into the new offices, setting up all the tactics, etc., and now there are higher expenses, especially in the administrative block.
- In addition, the conversion project to scan all the six file cabinets in the back room will not be repeated. This was a one-time expense.
- For 2024, as a result of an increase in membership, additional funds will be collected.
- For the first time ever, indicative costs were included in the workplans by the committees.
- It was also noted that administrative costs would go up due to the presence of a second assistant in the AFICS/NY office and there was the possibility that the UN would be tightening provisions of certain services.
- The cost of the election would become biannual with the adoption of the revisions in the By-Laws.

AFICS/NY – Newsletter/Bulletin [7]

20. Ed Omotoso began this item by stating that he had asked to put the issue of the AFICS/NY Bulletin on the agenda as he has had many requests from members asking about the Bulletin. He noted that the AFICS/NY Bureau was recognized for very good work, and all were appreciative of the work being done, but the Bulletin was a mechanism for members to know what was happening and what colleagues were doing. Bulletin used to be a standard item on the agenda of the Governing Board for every meeting because of the importance attached to it. It has not been produced for some five to six years now with the last one being the special edition for the 50th anniversary which was much appreciated. So, he hoped that the Bulletin could be relaunched as members have expressed support for its reissuance including George Saddler, one of AFICS/NY's founding fathers. He was hoping that the Governing Board would come out with a clear decision that the Bulletin would be published, and he had ideas on how to proceed.



Decision

21. **The President concluded the discussion by reporting that Ed Omotoso had asked her to approach a colleague, Ms. Soknan Jung, who could take the next President's quarterly letter and add some photographs along with the information about colleagues that have been lost and new members. She explained that this enhanced President's letter would allow the Communications Committee to work on the Bulletin. Ed had agreed to oversee the production of the product. She asked if everybody was agreeable to proceed accordingly as an interim modality. The Governing Board agreed, and it was noted that information would be gathered during the next two weeks and the President's letter issued after the Spring Luncheon to be held on 11 April.**

FAFICS matters [8]

22. The President informed that the FAFICS Bureau had met in a hybrid meeting in Geneva at the end of February. There would also be a FAFICS Council meeting in July in Bangkok. The FAFICS Bureau reviewed the agenda for the upcoming Council meeting and received updates on communications, membership issues and the outreach for the revitalization of dormant Associations and creation of new ones. There is much preparation for the meeting in July as there were many issues and logistics to sort out. The Board was also informed that the Bureau had agreed to two changes to the Committees of the Pension Board. One was to approve Clemens Adams (AFI-AFICS) and Werner Blank (ARICSA) for the Pension Board's Budget Committee. And for the newly established Governance Committee, the Bureau approved Gerhard Schramek (ARICSA) and Jay Pozenel (AFICS/NY) to serve on that Committee.

AOB [9]

23. A question was asked in respect to the UNSPC meetings on disabilities. The President would revert on this issue at the next Governing Board meeting.
24. The President closed the meeting at 1:08 pm.
