

SOUTH WESTERN AREA HEALTH BOARD**Minutes of the proceedings of the Special Meeting of the South Western Area Health Board held in the Board Room, Oak House, Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare on Friday, 1st August, 2003, at 11.00 a.m.*****Present***

Cllr. T. Cullen
Ms. A. Harris
Cllr. C. McGrath
Ald. M. Mooney
Cllr. D. Tipping

Cllr. J. Daly
Ms. M. Hoban
Cllr. M. Miley
Dr. B. Murphy

Non-Voting Members

Cllr. G. McGuire

Apologies

Dr. S. Barry
Ms. N. Harvey

Dr. K. Harkin

In the Chair

Ald. M. Mooney

Officers in Attendance

Mr. P. Donnelly, Chief Executive Officer
Ms. R. Buckley, Assistant Chief Executive
Mr. R. Mitchell, Assistant Chief Executive
Mr. B. Burke, A/Assistant Chief Executive
Mr. F. Mills, A/Assistant Chief Executive
Mr. T. McMahon, Director of Human Resources
Mr. J. Leech, A/Director of Finance
Mr. D. Delaney, Director of Communications
Mr. M. Knowles, General Manager, Naas General Hospital
Ms. B. Fitzgerald, Director of Nursing, Naas General Hospital
Mr. P. Flood, Development Officer
Ms. M. Queally, Director of Health Promotion
Ms. C. Cuffe, Senior Manager, Operations
Mr. R. Kavanagh, Senior Manager, Operations
Mr. R. Healy, Board Secretary
Ms. P. Dempsey, Administrative Support, C.E.O.'s Office
Ms. A. Farrell, Administrative Support, C.E.O.'s Office

86/2003**NAAS GENERAL HOSPITAL**

At the outset, the Chairman thanked members for their attendance and extended a welcome to Mr. M. Knowles, General Manager, and Ms. B. Fitzgerald, Director of Nursing, Naas General Hospital.

The C.E.O. then addressed members, in conjunction with briefing material circulated at the meeting, regarding the recent allegations against a nurse in Naas General Hospital [copy filed with official minute]. He outlined the steps being taken to investigate the situation and acknowledged the distress caused to the families of the patients involved, the other patients and their families, the hospital staff and the local community as result of these allegations. He paid tribute to all concerned, including the Gardaí, for their support and co-operation with the procedures in hand.

The C.E.O. indicated that various messages of support had been received at the hospital, including a letter of support from Naas U.D.C.

The Chairman complimented the board's staff on the management of the situation to date.

Discussion followed to which Cllr. C. McGrath, Cllr. D. Tipping, Dr. B. Murphy, Cllr. M. Miley, Ms. A. Harris, Cllr. T. Cullen, Ald. M. Mooney, Ms. M. Hoban, Cllr. J. Daly and Cllr. G. McGuire contributed and to which the C.E.O., Mr. M. Knowles, and Ms. B. Fitzgerald responded.

In making his contribution to the above discussion, Cllr. T. Cullen asked that it be noted that he proposed that consultant(s) be appointed to carry out a review of existing systems in the hospital, apart from the inquiries currently taking place. Other members present were of the opinion that it would be preferable to await the outcome of the various investigations/inquiries currently underway, as these would already comprise an element of review similar to that suggested by Cllr. Cullen. There was general agreement that if these investigations conclude that an additional or overall review of current systems in the hospital is required, this can then be addressed. The C.E.O. indicated that if matters came up in relation to systems and processes in the hospital that he could act on, he would do so in the interim.

It was agreed, at a member's suggestion, that a letter of support on behalf of the Board Members be forwarded to the staff at Naas General Hospital.

In conclusion, the C.E.O. advised members that they will be kept updated regarding any further developments on this situation.

87/2003**MEATH HOSPITAL**

The C.E.O. advised members that he wished to update them further on the current situation regarding the Meath Hospital. He referred to recent issues highlighted in the media concerning the Meath Hospital and, in this regard, he drew members' attention to the Press Statement, circulated at the meeting, which had been prepared by the Board in response [copy filed with official minute].

The ongoing efforts by the Board to secure funding from the Eastern Regional Health Authority for the development of the Meath Hospital site, particularly the unit for older persons and the Nurses' Home, were highlighted. The concerns of the Board regarding various health and safety issues were emphasised and proposals to address the overall situation were outlined. These included a proposal to transfer the residents out of the unit to another location if the required funding to refurbish the building was not obtained soon. Negotiations are currently underway to secure alternative accommodation in this regard. The wishes of the residents to remain together was acknowledged, however, it was re-iterated that the overriding need to ensure their safety is a principal objective of any future decisions on this matter. Such decisions will be taken following consultation with the residents and their families.

Discussion followed to which Cllr. M. Miley, Cllr. D. Tipping, Dr. B. Murphy, Cllr. T. Cullen, Ms. M. Hoban, Cllr. G. McGuire and Ald. M. Mooney contributed, during which members enquired regarding various alternative options, including the possibility of selling the whole, or a portion of, the site. It was noted, however, that the hospital is a "listed" building. Cllr. D. Tipping asked that it be noted that he would not be in favour of moving the residents off the hospital site.

The C.E.O., Ms. R. Buckley and Mr. B. Burke responded to members' contributions and it was agreed that the Board continue with the current negotiations regarding alternative external accommodation for the residents in the absence of funding being made available by the Eastern Regional Health Authority for the Board's existing proposals for the development of the site.

It was agreed to keep members updated regarding any further developments on this issue.

CORRECT: **P. DONNELLY**
 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

CHAIRMAN