

## EASTERN HEALTH BOARD

*Minutes of Proceedings of Monthly Meeting of the Eastern Health Board held in the Boardroom, St. Brendan's Hospital, Grangegorman, on Thursday 6th July, 1978 at 6.35 p.m.*

*Present:*

Cllr. Mrs. J. Barlow	Dr. D. G. Kelly
Dr. J. D. Behan	Cllr. D. Kinsella
Cllr. D. Browne	Deputy Mrs. E. Lemass
Cllr. M. Carroll	Deputy T. Leonard
Cllr. J. Connolly	Dr. P. McCarthy
Cllr. O. Cooney	Sr. Columba
Cllr. H. P. Dockrell	Mr. M. Matthews
Cllr. E. Doyle	Dr. A. Meade
Prof. J. S. Doyle	Deputy C. Murphy
Ald. A. FitzGerald	Deputy Dr. J. O'Connell
Cllr. Mrs. A. Glenn	Mr. F. O'Mahony
Cllr. A. Groome	Dr. B. Powell
Cllr. T. Hand	Dr. B. Sheehan
Cllr. P. Hickey P.C.	Cllr. J. Sweeney
	Dr. J. Walker.

*Apologies for Absence:*

Mr. H. Corrigan, Mr. K. Harrington  
Miss Kearney, Dr. M. Walsh.

*In the Chair*

Alderman Alexis FitzGerald, Chairman.

*Officers in Attendance*

Mr. J. J. Nolan	Mr. F. McCullough,
D/Chief Executive Officer	Acting Programme Manager
Mr. F. Donohue,	Mr. P. J. Swords,
Programme Manager	General Administrator
Prof. B. O'Donnell,	Mr. H. Dunne
Dublin Medical Officer	Mr. J. Doyle
Mr. J. Sadlier,	Mr. T. Barry
Technical Services Officer	Miss K. Dolan
Mr. F. Elliott,	Mr. P. A. Sheehan
Planning & Eval. Officer	Mr. E. Dunphy
Mr. J. Reynolds,	Miss E. Larkin
Finance Officer	
Mr. R. N. Lamb,	
Personnel Officer	

67/78

**CONDOLENCES**

The Chairman informed the members of the recent death of Cllr. Michael Brady, board member, and of the mother of Sr. Rosalie, Matron of St. Patrick's Home. The Board stood in silence as a mark of respect and the Chairman directed that the Board's vote of sympathy be conveyed to the relatives of the deceased.

68/78

**GOOD WISHES**

The Chairman informed the members of the illness of Mr. H. Corrigan, and directed that a letter be sent on behalf of the Board expressing their good wishes for his speedy recovery and return to the Board.

69/78

**CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Eastern Health Board held on 1st June, 1978, having been circulated, were confirmed on a proposal by Cllr. Hickey seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Barlow.

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**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Mr. Kelly questioned the advisability of nominating five possible candidates for An Comhairle. Mr. Nolan explained the position to Mr. Kelly, in relation to the Board's previous decision in that regard.

71/78

**PROCEEDINGS OF VISITING COMMITTEES**

The reports of the following visiting committees having been circulated were dealt with as follows —

- (a) No. 1 Visiting Committee held at District Hospital, Baltinglass on 8th June, 1978.

Cllr. Doyle queried the present position concerning meals on wheels services, the hospital grounds and main kitchen. Mr. Swords informed him that the staff of the hospital were now co-operating in providing a limited meals on wheels service, which was much appreciated by the local community. Mr. Sadlier stated that he hoped to have a new contractor appointed to deal with the hospital grounds and expected that this work would commence after the builders' holidays. Deputy C. Murphy was informed by Mr. Swords that the Board had not been successful in recruiting a sessional chiropodist and would be glad to contact the person mentioned by Dr. McCarthy. The report was noted.

- (b) No. 2 Visiting Committee held at St. Patrick's Home, Navan Road, on 14th June, 1978.

The report was noted. Mr. Nolan replied to Dr. Powell's query regarding the staffing situation at the Home.

- (c) No. 3 Visiting Committee held at St. Vincent's Hospital, Athy on 21st June. 1978 - noted.
- (d) No. 4 Visiting Committee meeting held at St. Clare's Home, Ballymun on 14th June, 1978. — noted.

Mr. Nolan stated that in Report No. 9/1978 reference was made to disposal of 2% acres to St. Michael's House and this should have been 3% acres. Mr. Sadlier replying to Cllr. Mrs. Glenn stated that he hoped that the matter of grounds maintenance would be resolved in the near future.

- (e) No. 4 Visiting Committee at Clarehaven Welfare Home on 14th June, 1978 — noted.
- (f) Community Care Visiting Committee held in Community Care Office, Kilmantin Hill, Wicklow on 23/5/1978, and
- (g) Community Care Visiting Committee held in Arklow Health Centre, on 13th June, 1978.

A lengthy critical discussion ensued concerning the very unsatisfactory condition of certain premises in County Wicklow to which the following contributed — Cllrs. Browne, Mrs. Glenn, Mrs. Barlow, Groome, Dr. McCarthy, Cllr. Mrs. Lemass, Cllr. Sweeney and Deputy Murphy.

Mr. Donohue replied stating that while he welcomed the concern of the members, it was difficult to obtain priority for the needs of small premises like those mentioned against the major issues such as conditions at Portrane or the provision of fire escapes in big hospitals. He informed the members that he had a survey carried out, the result of which was that it would cost half a million pounds to bring deficient centres into even an adequate state of repair. His present budget was £149,000 which was not enough even to maintain those centres which were already in good repair. It was unanimously decided that Mr. Donohue would prepare a report for the August meeting of the Board.

#### 72/78 PROCEEDINGS OF LOCAL HEALTH COMMITTEES

The minutes of meetings of the following local health committees having been circulated were dealt with as follows:—

- (a) Dun -Laoghaire Local Health Committee held on 25/4/1978 - noted.

Mr. Donohue replying to Cllr. Doyle's query on the number of elderly persons living alone in the Dun Laoghaire Borough stated that he would refer this matter to the Director of Community Care for the area to have the survey carried out.

Mr. Nolan clarified the position for Cllr. Doyle concerning St. Michael's Hospital. It was agreed that the notice of motion concerning the payment of welfare benefits to persons who are ill would be forwarded to the Minister for Health and Social Welfare for his attention.

- (b) Dublin City Local Health Committee held on 12/4/1978 - noted.
- (c) Dublin County Local Health Committee held on 1st May, 1978 - noted.
- (d) Kildare Local Health Committee held on 18th May, 1978 - noted.

**73/78 CARE OF THE AGED - ACCOMMODATION REQUIREMENTS (Report No. 12/1978)**

A discussion on this item was by agreement deferred to a future meeting.

**74/78 VOCATIONAL AND POST-GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION**

The following report No. 13/1978 from the Chief Executive was submitted:—

"In Report 44/1976 I informed the Board of the commencement of an approved system of training of young doctors wishing to go into general practice in the community and of my acceptance of membership of the Regional Committee of the Irish Institute of General Practice as representative of the Chief Executive Officers of the Eastern, South Eastern, North Eastern and Midland Health Boards. In approving of a grant to the Committee, the Board took note of its earlier decision arising from consideration of the McCormick Report (the report of the consultative council on general medical practice) that aspiring General Practitioners should receive appropriate training in primary health care in approved training practices.

The training scheme comprises two years of varied hospital experience followed by a year of practical experience working in an approved General practice. A full programme of lectures, seminars etc. is provided by selected personnel.

In 1976, two trainees had advanced to the stage of attachment to a training practice. The number increased to three in 1977 and, from July this year, will be four. It appears

probable that the Department of Health will be prepared to approve expansion of the scheme by two more third year placements at an early date. There are, at present, eight young doctors in the first and the second years of the training scheme viz. in junior hospital posts.

The training scheme has been run by the Regional Committee of the Irish Institute of General Practitioners on an honorary basis and this will continue. It has been an onerous and time-consuming task undertaken willingly by a number of busy doctors to whom thanks are due. The stage has been reached, however, at which the engagement of a Course Organiser has become necessary on a part-time basis and I have, on behalf of the Health Boards, requested the approval of the Minister for Health to an appointment on terms and conditions outlined by the Council for Post-graduate Medical and Dental Education and agreed by the Irish Institute for General Practice.

It is estimated that the contribution from Health Board sources towards the running of the training scheme in 1978 will amount to £25,500 by way of grant for the maintenance of trainees in the third year of the course (attachment to a general practice), lecture fees, meetings of principals of training practices and trainees with members of the committee, advertising and other sundry expenses, I am in consultation with my fellow Chief Executive Officers in regard to the apportionment of this expenditure. The Post-graduate Council presently makes accommodation available and provides a secretarial service.

When considering the McCormick report, the Board also concluded that continuing education for General Practitioners should be available on an organised basis as early as possible so that the Health Board should be prepared to make a financial contribution. The Council for Post-graduate Medical *and* Dental Education appointed four co-ordinators in Dublin whose general duties are to co-ordinate and encourage the development of post-graduate education. It is understood that all four are concerning themselves with General Practice as well as other branches of Medicine and further information in that connection is awaited. One of the co-ordinators is based on the St. James's Hospital campus and has recently convened a meeting of General Practitioners to whom he has been able to offer the use, as required, of a temporary but suitable building which I engaged on the Board's behalf, to purchase for the sum of £16,000. The cost of erection and decoration is included."

This report was noted and Dr. Behan requested that progress reports should be submitted, on a regular basis. Mr. Kelly asked that consideration should be given to support grants for the other three centres.

75/78

## OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

The following report No. 14/1978 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted:—

'The matter of office accommodation for headquarters staff has presented serious problems for many years and, indeed, since the establishment of the former Dublin Health Authority in 1960. On the setting up of that unifying Authority, improvised arrangements had to be made in buildings at 1, James's Street which were originally built for other purposes and varied only in their degree of unsuitability. As the Board are aware, it was necessary to vacate and demolish one of them several years ago: the staff who worked in it have been accommodated in a building in Thomas Street rented in 1974 while the Board now meets at St. Brendan's Hospital.

The problem has been kept regularly before the Department of Health. The Secretary, Dr. Brendan Hensey, wrote to me in March, VC-76 confirming that it was fully agreed that the office accommodation held by the Board on St. James's Hospital site should be vacated when circumstances would permit it. He advised in that connection to the then difficult financial situation. I have since had the matter under constant review and have written again to Dr. Hensey in the following terms:

16th June, 1978.

Dr. B. Hensey,  
Secretary  
Department of Health,  
Custom House,

## OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

Dear Dr. Hensey.

In your letter of the 18th March, 1976 you expressed appreciation of the Board's problems in regard to office accommodation. The Board accepted the point you made about the need to have regard for the overall financial situation in timing the necessary move from 1, James's Street and has, in the interval, continued to make do under difficulty. It is considered that firm arrangements should now be made for two main reasons:

1. the increasingly unsatisfactory working conditions of the staffs concerned
2. the repeated requests from the St. James's Hospital Board for an assurance that the entire area between James's Street and the boundary of the property leased to the Hospital can be made available at an early date for the development of the Hospital as a major teaching General Hospital.

I need not dwell on the first point. As you are aware, none of the several buildings in use as offices was designed for that purpose nor are they capable of accommodating the staffs located there, of necessity, in even reasonable working conditions.

In regard to the second point, the Board accepts that the area involved is of vital importance to the full development of the Hospital and is prepared fully to facilitate that development. The Board's ability to do so is, of course, dependent on the securing of alternative accommodation for headquarters staff.

I have considered with the management team how best that alternative accommodation could be provided. The conclusion reached, for a variety of reasons, is that it would be much preferable to build rather than rent: these reasons can be summarised as follows:

1. In the long-term, ownership is a better proposition.
2. The location and the standard of accommodation should be related to the overall development of the health services and, as far as possible, to the planning objectives of the local authority.
3. It is very desirable to maintain flexibility in the matter of numbers of staff and the services administered at headquarters.

Rental charges for office premises already constructed and of a size which would be adequate for the Board's purposes are of the order of £4 per sq. ft. at present. They are subject to review at short intervals under current leasing arrangements. Assuming a requirement of 40,000 sq. ft. the annual rent payment would be very substantial. Unless the Board were the single tenant substantial services charges would also be payable over which the Board would have very limited control. A figure of £1.10 per sq. ft. has been quoted in respect of a particular premises.

To a great extent commercial development of office blocks has taken place in one area of the City and there is no indication of any significant change. Accommodation on prime sites is naturally the most expensive and is, in general, of a standard somewhat above that required by the Board. On the other hand, some developments on the South City side on less favourable sites — and presented problems of vandalism — especially, perhaps in relation to cars. Substantial secure car parking space is needed and, in the case of a rented building, would involve additional annual outgoings.

The rental of premises ties in the client for an extended period to accommodation of a given size and, under the terms of the Lease, for use for particular purposes capable of

alteration only with the approval of the landlord. Extension, or contraction, if needed, is not usually practicable in a tenancy situation. Maximum freedom of adaptation is important for the Board.

In the circumstances outlined above, the construction of a headquarters building is clearly the most favourable means of providing the Board's requirements. This is particularly so if the Board already has a suitable site whose use will complement a service development of significance. These conditions are met at St. Brendan's Hospital where there is a substantial, un-used plot to which access can be provided from the North Circular Road, its use for this purpose would not interfere in any way with the amenities of the Hospital: rather would it enhance them as the area in question is difficult to supervise and is subject to trespass particularly at night and at week-ends.

A decision to locate the Board's headquarters here would, the management team feels, be a positive indication of

commitment to the major changes at St. Brendan's Hospital incorporated in the proposals for improvement and further development of the Mental Health services adopted recently by the Board and submitted for the Minister's consideration.

In regard to the staffs concerned who are presently based at St. James's Street and for whom canteen facilities are available at St. James's Hospital, the ability to maintain similar facilities by reason of the association with St. Brendan's would be of considerable advantage. A change to a location not so favoured could be expected to give rise to staff problems including claims for substantial and, perhaps, continuing compensation for loss of an amenity enjoyed for a number of years and greatly valued by junior staff in particular.

I am anxious to put the proposal for the solution of the long-standing problem of office accommodation before the Board as soon as possible. The members are concerned to solve it and, in doing so, also to remove a major difficulty in the way of the full development of St. James's Hospital. The proposal to have headquarters built, and on a site in the Board's ownership, will be especially attractive to the Board in view of the job creation involved.

Yours sincerely

E. O Caoimh,  
Chief Executive Officer.

Dr. Hensey's reply is as follows:

22nd June, 1978.

'E. O Caoimh Uas, Chief Executive Officer,  
Eastern Health Board.

Dear Mr. O Caoimh,

Thank you for your letter of 16 June, 1978 in which you set out the proposal that the administrative headquarters of the board should be transferred to a new building at St. Brendan's Hospital site. I note what you say in favour of the development and any proposal which your board might adopt in relation to this will, of course, be fully examined and considered in the Department. However, I should, perhaps, sound a warning note in that capital money for a new headquarters would have to be met out of the capital funds available to us in the ordinary way. I do not think that we would have any prospect of getting additional capital for this. Therefore, the priority which could be given to the construction of the new headquarters building would have to be determined in the light of the general needs of the health services and, specifically, the needs within the Eastern Health Board area.

Yours sincerely,

B.Hensey,  
Secretary.'

While taking note of Dr. Hensey's observations about capital funds I am equally conscious of the value of the existing site at 1, James's Street and of its significance for the projected development of St. James's Hospital. I am anxious, as I am sure the Board are, to make positive progress with the provision of a proper headquarters building which will greatly assist the efficient discharge of the Board's business. I request, accordingly, approval in principle to the construction of offices on the site in the Board's ownership at St. Brendan's Hospital indicated on the site map displayed."

A discussion followed to which Cllr. Sweeney, Dr. Behan contributed and Mr. Nolan replying to queries raised stated that he would be submitting a progress report to the Board on the development of St. James's Hospital. He stated that in the meantime he was, as previously agreed, arranging a meeting on 24th July between the Board's Sub-Committee and the nominees of the Federation on St. James's Hospital Board; The meeting was to enable the Federation's nominees to re-submit their representations for a change in the composition of the St. James's Board. These representations have already been on a number of previous occasions considered by the Eastern Health Board but have not been accepted. The Health Board have unanimously and consistently decided that in present circumstances, the Board's representation on the St. James's Hospital Board must be maintained at 50% thereof as laid down in the Establishment Order.

The report and proposals were unanimously approved on a proposal by Cllr. Sweeney which was seconded by Dr. Behan.

#### **76/78                    CARDIAC AMBULANCE SERVICE**

The following report No. 15/1978 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted:—

"I submit herewith report from Dr. B. O'Donnell, Dublin Medical Officer of Health in connection with the Cardiac Ambulance Service.

' I wish to report on the following developments resulting from the termination of the Stillorgan Cardiac Ambulance Service.

**26/5/78:**

Representatives from the Eastern Health Board, (Mr. Swords, Mr. Brady, Chief Ambulance Officer and myself, met representatives of the Department of Health (Dr. Powell and Mr. Stanley) and representatives of the Dublin Cardiologists (Dr. Gearty and Dr. Horgan). It was agreed:—

- (1) That there was a need for the continuation of the Cardiac Ambulance Service in the Dublin area.
- (2) That it should be provided by the Eastern Health Board Ambulance Service.
- (3) That all ambulance personnel attached to the Ambulance Centre at St. James's Hospital should be trained and that all ambulances should be fitted with the requisite equipment.

**13/6/78:**

Mr. Sadlier, Mr. Brady and myself had a discussion on the best approach to make to the ambulance staff on the above proposals.

**15/6/78:**

I met the Director of the Irish Heart Foundation who welcomed the proposals. The Foundation would gladly undertake to provide training for the ambulance personnel.

**23 6/78:**

I again met the Director of the Heart Foundation together with Dr. Gearty, Cardiologist. We made a tentative arrangement that the first batch of 6 could commence their two week period of training on July 17th. Further courses will follow after that.



The area involved comprises approximately 15.3 acres west of the Hospital and adjoins the 42 acres which was disposed of to the Corporation in 1975.

Professor B. O'Donnell, Dublin Medical Officer of Health and Dr. F.C. O'Herlihy, Medical Superintendent are satisfied that the disposal of an additional 15.3 acres will not interfere with the amenities or future development of the hospital.

The Dublin Fever Hospital Board became owners of 136 acres of these lands in October, 1938 and the property was subsequently transferred to the Dublin Health Authority/ Eastern Health Board.

Professor O'Donnell and Dr. O'Herlihy have advised that it would not be in the best interest of the Board to consider applications for the disposal of any further land in that particular area, as it would be too close to the special Isolation Unit where a serious health hazard could arise, should the Unit be brought into use.

I propose, subject to the consent of the Board and the sanction of the Minister for Health, to dispose of the 15.3 acres, which is surplus land, to the Corporation of Dublin. The disposal will form part of the on-going exchange arrangements with the Corporation for sites required by the Board for Health Centres, Welfare Homes and other developments of the Board."

On a proposal by Cllr. Hickey seconded by Cllr. Hand the proposals contained in Report No. 17/1978 were unanimously adopted.

**79/78                      REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NON-ACCIDENTAL INJURY TO CHILDREN  
(Report deferred from June meeting)**

Discussion of this report was deferred by agreement.

**80/78                      NOTICES OF MOTION**

(a) The following motion was proposed by Dr. Meade and seconded by Dr. B. Sheehan:-

"That this Board give early consideration to employing nurses on a part-time basis as practice nurses where

- (a) the services of Community Care Nurses are not available;
- (b) the need of the practice would not occupy a nurse wholtime;
- (c) the nurse employed had undergone appropriate training."

Dr. Meade in proposing the motion stated that his main intention in framing this motion was to cover gaps in the existing services. The motion was unanimously approved and it was agreed that a report would be prepared for a future meeting by Mr. Donohue.

- (b) The following motion was proposed by Dr. Meade and seconded by Dr. Walker:

**'That the Minister for Health be requested by this Health Board to amend the regulations governing the scheme for assistance towards the cost of drugs so as to protect against financial hardship**

- (i) those persons who do not hold a medical card; (ii) those persons who do not qualify for drugs free of charge under the long term illness scheme;**

The amendments in the present arrangements should be such as to avoid delays in

- (a) supplying the prescribed drugs to the patient;  
(b) effecting the appropriate refund;  
(c) paying the pharmacist concerned."**

The motion was unanimously adopted.

- (c) The following motion was proposed by Dr. J. O'Connell T.D., and seconded by Cllr. Hand:

**'That the Hostel at the Eastern Health Board Centre in Usher's Island be made available for ex-patients of the Central Mental Hospital, Dundrum, for supervised after**

Following a discussion it was agreed that a report would be prepared by Mr. Keyes and Professor Browne for the next meeting of the Board.

- (d) The following motion was proposed by Cllr. T. Hand and seconded by Cllr. Carroll:—

**'That an early warning system be installed in Dundrum Mental Hospital to let people know that an escape has been effected."**

A discussion ensued and the members were informed that the Programme Manager had certain proposals submitted to the Department of Health concerning this matter. He would be reporting to the Board at a later date.

81/78

**CORRESPONDENCE**

The following correspondence was read and noted: —

- (a) Letter from Mr. Charles J. Haughey T.D., Minister for Health, to the Chairman, Eastern Health Board, asking for co-operation to be given to the Review Body on Salaries of Chief Executive Officers of Semi-State Bodies and Higher Civil Servants.
- (b) Press Release from Department of Health dated 29/6/78 regarding the all Party Dail Committee on the Health Services.
- (c) Letter dated 16/6/78 from the Western Health Board concerning the resolution passed by that board re bronchial asthma. It was agreed that this resolution be noted and that Dr. Meade's motion concerning the cost of drugs be forwarded to the Western Health Board for its information.

The Meeting terminated at 8.30 p.m.

**CORRECT. J.J.Nolan**  
**Deputy Chief Executive**

**CHAIRMAN**