

# **EASTERN HEALTH BOARD**

**Report of Meeting of Committee of the Whole House held in the  
Boardroom, St. Brendan's Hospital on Thursday 18 March 1982 at  
7.15 pm**

## **PRESENT**

**Ald B Ahem TD  
Dr J D Behan  
Mrs B Bonar  
Cllr D Browne  
CUr M Carroll  
Cllr M Freehill  
Cllr A Groome  
Cllr T Hand  
Mr K Harrington**

**Cllr F Hynes  
Dr P McCarthy  
Sr Columba McNamara  
Mr M Matthews  
Cllr H Reilly  
Dr B Sheehan  
Cllr E Stagg  
Cllr J Sweeney**

## **APOLOGIES**

**Prof J S Doyle  
Cllr B J Durkan**

**Ms N Kearney  
Dr A Meade**

## **IN THE CHAIR**

**Cllr Dan Browne**

## **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

**Mr P B Segrave  
Mr F J Donohue  
Mr T Keyes  
Mr L Kavanagh  
Prof I Browne  
Mr K Hickey  
Prof B O'Donnell  
Mr P J Swords  
Mr J Doyle**

**Mr M Hayden  
Miss A Flanagan  
Mr C Mansfield  
Mr M O'Connor  
Miss M McGahern  
Mr M Cummins  
Miss E Larkin  
Miss E Mattimoe  
Mr T Brady**

The chief Executive Officer referred to report no. 3/1982 which was submitted to the February-meeting of the Board in which he advised that the minimum requirement for me Board to maintain existing services at their current level was £120.4m and that, even to Stay within that level, savings would have to be found. He also referred to report no. 7/1982 which was submitted to the March meeting of the Board and in which he outlined the position in some detail with a view to advising the members of:

- (a) extent of the cuts
- (b) the implications for the Board
- (c) the unique position obtaining in the Eastern Health Board area in mat, with the exception of the small hospitals at Loughlinstown and Naas, the Board did not have a pool of acute general hospitals within which it was expected that health boards might be able to achieve savings.

In that Report he had advised the members of the Department's estimate that approximately £4m could be found by measures which might be undertaken by the Department and outlined some of the options which would face the Board if attempts were made to effect a reduction over the three programmes, i.e. £1.2m off each.

At the March meeting of the Board it had been agreed that the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer should seek a meeting with the Minister for Health to discuss the revenue allocation. In this connection the Chief Executive Officer read a letter dated 16 March 1982 from the Secretary, Department of Health, stating that the Minister would be prepared to meet with the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer and that he would be in touch with him soon to arrange a date. The Chief Executive Officer also referred to his letter addressed to each member of the Board on 15 March, 1982 with which he enclosed statement showing:

- (a) expected cost of providing services for 1981
- (b) the estimated cost of maintaining those services at their current levels in 1982.

In the discussion which followed, to which the Chairman, Cllrs Hand, Sweeney, Reilly, Hynes, Stagg, Freehill, Dr Sheehan, Dr Behan and Mrs Bonar contributed, the following points were made:

- (i) Members were opposed to any cut-back in service levels.
- (ii) Dissatisfaction was expressed with the manner in which the scheme for Supplementary Welfare Allowances is financed.
- (iii) The members felt they should have an input into the budget for the voluntary hospitals (£134.58m).
- (iv) The members should ask to see an account rendered of

**£146m provided for payments in respect of services for eligible patients in voluntary hospitals and for services provided for eligible patients, in homes for mentally handicapped persons.**

- (v) Concern was expressed at the estimated cost of running St. Brendan's Hospital (£12.79m) and St. Ita's Hospital (£9.263m).**
- (vi) The implementation of recommendation contained in the Trident Report on the supply of drugs and medicines regarding the prescription of generic type drugs should be pursued.**
- (vii) The health board should charge economic rents to those who availed of facilities in its health centres.**
- (viii) Some of the newer and larger health centres do not appear to be fully utilised - consideration should be given to the running of additional clinics in these centres to cater for an expanding population and to save patients the trouble and expense of travelling into centre city hospitals.**
- (ix) The requirement on G. M. S. patients to attend their doctor on a monthly basis for renewal of prescriptions is expensive; private patients can obtain prescriptions to cover six months supply of drugs without renewal by their doctor.**

**The Chief Executive Officer stated that, in any situation where cuts must be made, the concern of the Board would be for those who are least well off and for those who are in the Board's care because they have no alternative. With regard to the cost of running large psychiatric institutions, he pointed out that the Board found itself in a vicious circle where the available money is being spent on repairs and renovations in an effort to maintain old buildings in a habitable condition. This resulted in little or no resources being available to develop the much needed and alternative community based services. He agreed that staffing costs in the traditional hospital setting were not decreasing. In this connection two project teams had been established, one for St. Brendan's Hospital and one for St. Ita's Hospital.**

**Dr. Behan had a proposal which he was unable to put before the meeting because of the absence of a quorum. He indicated that he would put his proposal down as a motion for consideration by the Board at its April meeting.**

**The meeting concluded at 9 pm.**

**CORRECT: P B Segrave  
Chief Executive Officer  
Chairman**