

EASTERN HEALTH BOARD

Minutes of proceedings of monthly meeting

held on

Thursday 14th December, 1989 at 6 p.m.

In

The Boardroom, St. Mary's Hospital, Chapelizod, Dublin 20

Present

Mrs. B. Bonar	Cllr. B. Briscoe. T.D.
Cllr. I. Callely. T.D.	Cllr. M. Carroll
Dr. R Corcoran	Mrs. D. Clune
Dr. P. Devitt	Cllr. J. Dillon Byrne
Prof. J. S. Doyle	Cllr. P. Dunne
Cllr. B. J. Durkan. T.D.	Cllr. M. Gannon
Cllr. A. Glenn	Cllr. A. Groome
Cllr. W J.Harvey	Dr. R Hawkins
Cllr. P. Hickey	Cllr. F. Hynes
Dr. D.I. Keane	Cllr. T. Keenan
Dr. P. McCarthy	Prof. J. McCormick
Mr. G. McGuire	Dr. J. Masterson
Cllr. C. Murphy	Ms. M. Nealon
Dr. J. O'Boyle	Dr. B.O'Herlihy
Cllr. J. Reilly	Cllr. R Roche. T.D.

Apologies

Sen. O. Bennett

In the Chair

Cllr. A. Groome

Officers in Attendance

Mr. K.J. Hickey. Chief Executive Officer
 Mr. J. Doyle. A/Programme Manager. Community Care
 Mr. S. O'Brien. A/Programme Manager. General Hospital Care
 Mr. M. Walsh. A/Programme Manager. Special Hospital Care
 Prof. B. O'Donnell. Dublin Medical Officer of Health
 Mr. M. Gallagher. Finance Officer
 Mr. N. McNee. Management Services Officer
 Mr. G. Brennan, Technical Services Officer
 Ms. M. Kelly. A/Personnel Officer
 Mr. M. O'Connor. Secretary

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CONDOLENCES

On the proposal of the Chairman, votes of sympathy were passed with the following:

1. Mr. Larry Doran, Ambulance Supervisor, on the death of his mother.
2. Mr. Tom Howard, Ambulance Driver, on the death of his father.
3. The wife and family of John Dwyer, Attendant, X-Ray Department, James Connolly Memorial Hospital.
4. Claire Kerr. Pharmacist, Emmet House, on the death of his father.
5. Pat Galvin, Asst. Hospital Administrator, Naas General Hospital, on the death of his father.
6. Ms. Sandra Hanan, Community Welfare Officer, Wicklow, on the death of her father.
7. P.J. Hogan. Porter, Emmet House, on the death of his father.
8. Kevin Meenaghan, Asst. Section Officer, Salaries Section, on the death of his father.

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CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chairman read the following report which was noted by the Board:

1 *January Meeting of the Board*

With the members' agreement, it is proposed to hold the January meeting of our Board on Thursday, 11th January, 1990.

2. *Meeting of the Community Care Programme Committee*

I wish to advise members that arrangements have been made to hold a special meeting of the Community Care Programme Committee on Thursday 4th January, 1990 in the Boardroom, St. Mary's Hospital to consider a review report on the Dental services.

3. *Deputation to Minister for Health regarding development of Naas General Hospital*

The Minister for Health, Dr. Rory O'Hanlon, T.D., received a deputation from our Board on Wednesday, 13th December, 1989, regarding the future development of Naas General Hospital.

I was accompanied on the deputation by Deputy Bernard Durkan, Councillor Jim Reilly, Dr. Rosaleen Corcoran and by Mr. Kieran Hickey, Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Seamus O'Brien, Programme Manager General Hospital Care and Mr. Matt O'Connor, Secretary.

The Minister re-iterated his goodwill towards the project and agreed that arrangements should be made for meetings between officials from our Board, also involving the Architect for the project, with officials from the Department of Health to review the brief for the project with a view to its progression in accordance with the availability of capital funding.

4. *Meeting with Minister for Health regarding allocation for non-capital health expenditure for 1990*

The Chairmen and Chief Executive Officers of the eight Health Boards met with the Minister for Health on 7th December, 1989. The letter of allocation for our non-capital health expenditure for 1990 was made available at the meeting and copies of this letter have been circulated with the papers for this evening's meeting.

It is intended to have this matter considered in detail by the Budget Working Group at a meeting to be held on 10th January, 1990 and that the report of the Budget Working Group will be considered at a special meeting of our Board to be held on 18th January, 1990.

5. *St. James's Hospital Board*

I have circulated, for the information of members, copies of a letter which I received from the Minister for Health regarding his decision to re-appoint, for a further year, the existing members of St. James's Hospital Board and seeking the support of our Board in these arrangements.

6. *Report of Commission on Health Funding*

Meetings of the Budget Working Group will be held on 17th and 24th January, 1990 to continue consideration of the Report of the Commission on Health Funding, following which it is intended to arrange a special meeting of our Board to consider their Report.

7. *Closing of Lower House, St. Brendan's Hospital*

I wish to draw the members' attention to the very significant event which will take place tomorrow, 15th December at St. Brendan's Hospital when the closure of the Lower House will be marked by a ceremonial locking of the door following the transfer of the last of the residents to accommodation more in keeping with their needs.

The ceremony will take place at 9.45 a.m. and will be followed by a meeting of the Special Hospital Care Programme Committee at 11 a.m."

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CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON 2ND NOVEMBER, 1989 AN OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 16TH NOVEMBER, 1989

The minutes of the monthly meeting held on 2nd November, 1989 and of the special meeting held on 16th November, 1989, having been circulated, were confirmed on a proposal by Cllr. Hickey, seconded by Deputy Callely.

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QUESTIONS TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

On a proposal by Deputy Callely, seconded by Cllr. Carroll, it was agreed to answer the questions which had been lodged.

1 Cllr. I. Callely, T.D.

"Can the C.E.O. advise in relation to patients admitted to Eastern Health Board Hospitals/Institutions who are in receipt of a welfare payment or D.P.M.A., which they may not avail of while in hospital, what provisions are made for these patients who may have financial requirements and what was the expenditure in the first six months of 1989 for this purpose?"

Reply

The position in relation to persons in receipt of various allowances admitted to Hospitals/Institutions is as follows:-

(i) Disabled Persons (Maintenance) Allowance

Payment may be continued up to a maximum of 8 weeks where a recipient is admitted to a hospital/institution other than a long stay institution.

(ii) Infectious Diseases (Maintenance) Allowance

Allowance may be paid at a reduced rate while the recipient is hospitalised.

(iii) Supplementary Welfare Allowance

An allowance may not generally be paid to a person maintained in an institution. However, where a person is in receipt of S.W.A. immediately prior to admission to a hospital/institution payment of such part of the allowance may be continued as is considered proper to meet the person's rent, hire-purchase or credit sales agreements, and reasonable personal expenses. Such cases arise infrequently and each case is dealt with on its individual merits.

No separate costs are kept of cases coming under the above headings.

2. *Cllr. I. Callely T.D.*

"Can the Chief Executive Officer advise what difficulties the Eastern Health Board are experiencing in the Special Hospital Programme for day and residential care for child and adolescent services. What are the numbers of children waiting for placement in mentally handicapped services at present and what proposals do we have to address this situation?"

Reply

Services to people with mental handicap are provided within the Eastern Health Board region directly by our Board and by various Voluntary Agencies, which are either funded directly by the Department of Health or by our Board.

Following detailed investigation of all waiting lists our Board has recently established a clear picture of current unmet needs for services.

The numbers of children and adolescents waiting for placements in the Mental Handicap Services are as follows:

Day Services

- Children 101
- Adolescents 7

Residential Services

- Children 33
- Adolescents 54

The future provision of services for these groups, together with the adult needs, has been costed in detail. These costs have been submitted to the Department of Health and a response is awaited. In this regard I would also refer to paragraph 6 (b) of the letter dated 7th December, 1989 received from the Department of Health in relation to our Board's financial allocation for 1990.

3. *Cllr. I Callely T. D.*

"Can the Chief Executive Officer advise what is the total allocation for subvention payments in the Eastern Health Board area for 1989 and what was the expenditure on subventions up to 30th June, 1989 and if possible the monthly expenditure for July, August, September, October, November 1989. Can the Chief Executive Officer advise has any eligible person been refused subvention due to Eastern Health Board budget shortfall and if the Chief Executive Officer could comment on the statements by a Social Worker in our Board area, (details provided) on national radio in connection with subvention."

Reply

The total allocation for 1989 for subventions to persons maintained in private nursing homes is £2.4m. The expenditure on subventions up to 30th June, 1989 was £1.161m.

The monthly expenditure on these subventions from July to October 1989 was as follows:-

July	-	£180.537
August	-	£183.753
September	-	£186.763
October	-	£173.496

I reported in detail on this matter in the Chief Executive Officers report to the November meeting of our Board (Please see minutes, Page 136). Payment of subventions towards the maintenance cost of elderly persons in private nursing homes is entirely discretionary and there are no statutory eligibility criteria which make it obligatory on our Board to make such payments.

As already reported, the amount spent in 1988 on such subventions was £2.1m and the amount originally budgetted for 1989 was £2.2m. During the first half of 1989 we experienced a very heavy demand for subventions which resulted in a net increase of 180 subventions up to 30th June.

A sum of £200,000 had to be redeployed from elsewhere within our fixed budget. This will cost an extra £0.5 million pounds in 1990. The Increased budget for 1989 is £2.4m as against £2.1m in 1988.

There have been no cutbacks in this area, and we are spending more on this element of our services for the elderly this year than in 1988.

It was necessary for us to slow down the rate of approval of new subventions since July 1989. However where special circumstances exist, e.g. physical risk or hardship, a number of new subventions have been approved since then. The number approved since July is 40 approx.

There have been a number of comments in the media about this matter and the situation was fully responded to by the Programme Manager on radio on 14th November 1989 and by a statement carried on Radio on the 15th November, 1989.

4. *Cllr. Dr. D. Fitzpatrick, T.D.*

"What is the up to date position regarding the setting up of and funding a chair in psychiatry in the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland, Beaumont Hospital and the Eastern Health Board?"

Reply

The post of Professor and Consultant in Psychiatry is a joint appointment between the Royal College of Surgeons and the Eastern Health Board. The present holder of the post has reach retirement age and is doing his own locum. The post has heretofore been structured between the RC.S.I., and the E.H.B. services located mainly at James Connolly Memorial Hospital.

Discussions are ongoing with the College of Surgeons and Beaumont Hospital in the context of the future structuring of the post to take account of both its academic requirements and the future structure of psychiatric services in Areas 6 and 8 and which will incorporate services at both James Connolly Memorial and Beaumont Hospitals together with a range of community based services. The general staffing and commissioning of the acute psychiatric unit at Beaumont Hospital has also yet to be completed.

5. *Mr. G. McGuire*

- (a) Can the Chief Executive Officer outline what arrangements, if any, are in train to enable this Board to comply with the recent Safety, Health and Welfare at Work legislation?
- (b) Also could the Chief Executive Officer indicate whether when priorities are being decided the the question of staff health and safety will be set against the provisions of a service to the community?"

Reply

- (a) The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989 became law on 19th April, 1989 and came into force on 1st November, 1989. The Act sets out broad general duties of care for all employers, employees and the self-employed. The duty of care which falls upon the employer is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of all his employees.

In particular, the employer is obliged to provide and maintain a safe place of work, safe plant and machinery and safe systems of work.

The manner in which the employer is to meet his obligations is to be set out in a safety statement Guidelines for the safety statement are currently being finalised centrally.

In the past couple of months a number of management/ supervisory staff have attended seminars on the implications of the Act.

We are continuing to review further arrangements necessary to meet the requirements of the legislation.

In the meantime a Risk Management Programme has been developed in our Board. The Programme is extensive and was initiated in anticipation of the new legislation.

- (b) The question of staff health and safety being set against the provision of a service to the community does not arise.

6. *Mr. G. McGuire*

"Will the Chief Executive Officer advise the number of nursing posts that are required for the delivery of a comprehensive forensic service and how he proposes to fill these positions, also the categories and number of non-nursing posts."

Reply

In accordance with the report on the proposed national forensic service adopted at our Board meeting in June 1989, the categories and numbers of nursing posts are

1 Chief Nursing Officer

1 Asst Chief Nursing Officer

50 Nurses

The posts will be filled by a combination of training existing staff at Dundrum and by recruitment of qualified psychiatric nurses to future vacancies. There are 10 staff from the forensic service currently training as psychiatric nurses.

The categories and numbers of non nursing posts is as follows

25 Attendants

8 Domestics

7. *Mr. G. McGuire*

"Are there any plans afoot to train Prison Officers as Psychiatric Nurses?"

Reply

There are no plans afoot to train Prison Officers as psychiatric nurses.

8. *Cllr. L. O'Neill*

"To ask the Chief Executive Officer to state what the Eastern Health Board intentions are in relation to the funding of the Aoibhneas Womens Refuge in Balrymun, which is the only Refuge on the Northside of Dublin."

Reply

Having opened Haven House in February 1989 and taken over direct responsibility for the running of the Rathmines Refuge very recently, our Board is currently reviewing the requirements for refuge type accommodation. Our Board has received a request for funding from the Aoibhneas Womens Refuge because of the proposed ending of funding from the Department of Labour. The Department of Labour has agreed to continue with this funding until such time as the review is completed.

9. *Cllr. L. O'Neill*

"To ask the Chief Executive Officer what progress has been made regarding the provision of a Health Centre at West Tallaght, which is urgently needed."

Reply

A site at Fortunestown for a health centre and day nursery was acquired from Dublin Corporation. A detailed planning brief for the proposed facility has been submitted to the Department of Health for approval. The next stage in the planning process is the appointment of a design team for which Departmental approval is awaited."

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The Chief Executive Officer read the following report which was noted by the Board:

1. Extra Payment of Allowances for one week in December

I have circulated, with the correspondence for the meeting, copies of letter dated 6th November, 1989 from the Department of Health regarding the making of an additional payment to recipients of long term welfare allowances for one week during December. The extra payments to eligible persons in our Board's area were made during week ended 8th December, 1989.

2. (a) *Germanium - Containing Dietary Supplements*

(b) *L - Tryptopnan*

I have also circulated, with the correspondence for the meeting, copies of a letter from the Department of Health, regarding the Minister's request that products containing Germanium should be withdrawn from sale because of his concern over a potential health hazard.

I have also circulated, for the Information of the members, copies of letter dated 4th December, 1989 from the Department of Health regarding the withdrawal from sale of "dietary supplements" in which L-Tryptophan is the sole or major component.

Prof. Brendan O'Donnell, Dublin Medical Officer of Health, is having checks carried out in relation to both these products. To date no evidence of their availability for sale to members of the public has been found.

3. *Medical Card Guidelines*

I have circulated, for the information of members, copies of the guidelines used in assessing applications for medical cards. The guidelines have been revised to take effect from 1st January, 1990 on the basis of the increase in the Consumer Price Index for the year to mid-August 1989.

4. *Cheeverstown House*

I have circulated, for the information of members, a copy of the following written reply given by the Minister for Health in Dail Eireann on 5th December, 1989 in response to a question from Deputy Chris Flood.

"To ask the Minister for Health if he will make a report on the progress made towards the full utilisation of all the facilities in Cheeverstown House, Templeogue, Dublin 16 over the past year since the special interim board was established by him to oversee the Management of Cheeverstown House during 1989."

Reply

"I regret that my experience with Cheeverstown in the past year has been a personal disappointment. The Cheeverstown complex was built at a cost of eight million pounds to play a central role in meeting an acute need for up-to-date provision for handicapped children and adults in the Dublin region, an area which is generally accepted to have special problems at the present time. The revenue funding of this centre is the responsibility of the Eastern Health Board, which has the statutory obligation of ensuring that there is an adequate and properly managed service for the people of its area and for seeing to it that these services are dispensed in the most effective and efficient manner.

The Health Board has an obligation to be satisfied about the manner of operation of the agencies it funds and their contribution towards meeting the priority needs of the people on their waiting lists for residential and day places. The Health Board expressed itself as dissatisfied in this regard with Cheeverstown.

I intervened in this disagreement between the Board of Cheeverstown and the Health Board in an attempt to reach an accommodation between the two parties which would allow for due progress with the development of the badly needed facilities. I emphasised from the outset that I was not coming down in favour of the case made by either side.

My sole concern was to ensure that the resources allocated to Cheeverstown should be made available to those handicapped people, and their hard-pressed families, who needed them.

After a series of meetings and negotiations with all of the parties involved, I eventually devised a formula aimed at the establishment of an Interim Board for Cheeverstown representative of the existing Cheeverstown Board, the Eastern Health Board, the Voluntary Sector and parents representatives under the Chairmanship of former Garda Commissioner, Eamonn Doherty. The Constitution of this Interim Committee was such as to ensure that no one party had a predominating voice. The prospect in view was that by working together in pursuance of a common aim of service to the handicapped and the full utilisation of Cheeverstown, a spirit of understanding and trust would develop which would enable the old Cheeverstown Board to resume control after a year or two in an atmosphere which ensured good relations with the Health Board

Unfortunately, my formula was not implemented. The old Cheeverstown Board retained the running of the affairs of the Centre and has refused to accept my further suggestion for an impartial Board which would have been representative of the main Voluntary Organisations in Dublin, together with representatives from Cheeverstown itself and the Health Board

I am not alone in my dissatisfaction with this state of affairs. Three members of the Cheeverstown Board have already resigned in protest at the recalcitrance of its Chairman and other members, and the representatives of the parents who are so anxious to see placed opened for their children have also voiced their discontent with the attitude of the Cheeverstown Board.

In short, given the identified need for places in residential accommodation I cannot any longer tolerate a situation in which there are sixty such places unused in Cheeverstown. I have taken steps to deal with the situation."

It is a matter of considerable regret that this last extremely reasonable proposal put to all parties by the Minister, which is acceptable to our Board, has not been accepted by those who remain in membership of the present Cheeverstown Board. This is all the more surprising since the Minister's proposal would involve one representative only from the Eastern Health Board on the impartial Board proposed by him with all of the remaining members being drawn from the voluntary sector.

5.. Central Planning Committee - Mental Handicap Services

Members will be aware that the Programme Manager, Special Hospital Care, and his staff, in collaboration with the major Voluntary Agencies, have been reviewing the priority unmet needs for Day and Residential Services to people with a mental handicap in our Board's area.

I have circulated, this evening, copies of a report prepared by this Central Planning Committee relating to requirements for day and residential places for 1990. Their draft findings have already been discussed by the Special Hospitals Committee.

The Report which has been structured on the basis that implementation will have to be on a phased basis, has been costed accordingly and will now be submitted formally to the Department of Health. The plan pays particular attention to the priority needs for Day Care and Respite Care needs as well as needs for Residential Care places.

It was agreed by all concerned that, very regrettably, the possibility of expanding services at Cheeverstown could not be included in the plan at the present time pending a resolution of the current difficulties in relation to arrangements for the overall management of services there.

6. The following reports will be circulated for discussion at committee level, as indicated, in January 1990

Special Hospital Committee

Report of a Working Group on Child and Adult Psychiatric Services in the Eastern Health Board area. This Working Group was comprised of representatives from the Department of Health, Comhairle na n-Ósdeal and the Eastern Health Board.

Community Care Committee

A report entitled "Forgotten Children" which is a report on young people who are homeless in Dublin was carried out by Focus Point and our Board's social work teams.

7. Rape Crisis Centre

I have circulated, for the information of members, a detailed report (copy filed with official minute) on the current situation regarding our review of the services provided by the Rape Crisis Centre.

Unfortunately, we shall be unable to consider payment of any future grant in aid to the Centre unless fully detailed, up-to-date, financial information is disclosed to us.

In any event, I would propose that the review report on their services and activities would be made available for consideration by the Community Care Programme Committee in January."

In response to an enquiry from Deputy Callely. Prof. O'Donnell, Dublin Medical Officer of Health, informed the members regarding the arrangements for supply of Flu Vaccine to General Practitioners for administration to those considered most at risk.

In response to Dr. Hawkins, the Chief Executive Officer stated that medical card holders are legally entitled to have all their medical requirements provided free of charge and that doctors are not, therefore, entitled to make any charges to medical card holders for administration of the flu vaccine. The question of whether this procedure is covered by the fee under the new contract is a separate which can be resolved through the normal procedures.

Members referred to the scare publicity in newspapers in regard to the spread of the flu and the supply of vaccine and requested that a statement be issued clarifying the position for the benefit of the general public.

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SELECTION OF DEPUTATION TO MEET DUBLIN HOUSING AUTHORITIES

The following report no. 29/1989 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted:-

"At the meeting of our Board held on 12th July 1989 it was agreed, in relation to the long-term housing accommodation needs of the homeless and other disadvantaged groups, including the elderly, that a deputation from our Board should seek a meeting with the Dublin housing authorities in connection with the review of housing needs being undertaken by them in the context of the Housing Act, 1988.

Our requirements, as identified in each of our Programmes, have been forwarded to the housing authorities and arrangements are being made for a meeting on a mutually convenient date early in 1990.

The nomination of the members to form the deputation is a matter for the Board."

It was agreed unanimously that the following members should form the deputation.

Cllr. A. Groome, (Chairman), Cllr. M. Gannon, Cllr. F. Hynes, Mr. G. McGuire, Mrs. D. Clune, Cllr. W. Harvey, Cllr. P. Hickey, Cllr. M. Carroll, Cllr. J. Dillon Byrne, Cllr. P. Dunne.

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TEMPORARY BORROWING

The following report no. 30/1989 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted:

"The approval of the Board to borrowing by way of overdraft during the period ending on 31st March, 1990, to a maximum of £5m is requested."

On a proposal by Cllr. Hickey, seconded by Dr. Hawkins, it was agreed to adopt the proposal contained in the report.

143/1989
ALLOCATION FOR NON-CAPITAL HEALTH EXPENDITURE 1990

It was noted that the letter dated 7th December, 1969 from the Department of Health, copies of which had been circulated, would be considered initially by the Budget Working Group at their meeting to be held on 10th January, 1990 and that the report of the Budget Working Group would be considered at a special meeting of the Board to be held on 18th January, 1990.

144/1989
PROGRESS REPORTS FROM PROGRAMME COMMITTEES

1. *Special Hospital Care Programme Committee*

On a proposal by Mrs. Clune, seconded by Deputy Callely, it was agreed to adopt the report.

The following matters were dealt with in the report:-

- (a) Central Mental Hospital - Progress Report
- (b) Clondalkin Project
- (c) Hostel Programme
- (d) Report on Psychiatric Services for Area 8.

Deputy Callely, in expressing his regret that he was unable to attend the Committee meeting, stated that he did not wish to be associated with the sentiments expressed in summary point no. 1 as he felt there was a need for an improvement in the services for the mentally handicapped in the area.

2. **General Hospital Care Programme Committee**

On a proposal by Dr. O'Herlihy seconded by Dr. Hawkins, it was agreed to adopt the report.

The following matters were dealt with in the report:-

- (a) Farmer's Health Contributions
- (b) Progress Report on the Psychiatric Unit/Boiler House and Ancillary Accommodation at Naas General Hospital.
- (c) Request to Minister for Health to receive a deputation regarding the development of Naas General Hospital.
- (d) Consultant Orthopaedic Posts in St. Columcille's Hospital.
- (e) 24 Hour Accident & Emergency Services
- (f) Cuan Aoibheann, St. Mary's Hospital
- (g) Consultant Anaesthetist appointment Eastern Health Board and St. James's Hospital
- (h) Schedule of Committee meetings for 1990
- (i) Report on services in Naas General Hospital

Following a discussion on the availability of paramedical staff, which was raised by Dr. Masterson, and to which Cllr. Glenn and Deputy Roche contributed, the Chief Executive Officer stated that a national manpower plan for these grades would be most desirable. A number of existing unconcles were not due to financial constraints but to non-availability of qualified personnel. The necessity to recruit two Radiographers from a London agency for James Connolly Memorial Hospital had been a short-term one and these posts had since been filled.

He said that he would bring forward a report on para-medical staffing generally as soon as possible.

It was agreed to defer the remainder of the agenda to the January meeting of our Board

The meeting concluded at 7.45 p.m.

Correct: K.J. Hickey,
Chief Executive Officer.

Dexter F. Lygoose

CHAIRMAN

RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

In the latter part of 1988 the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre was experiencing financial difficulties which became the subject of wide press coverage. At the request of the Minister for Health the Eastern Health Board agreed to carry out a review of services provided by the Rape Crisis Centre in the context of services required by the Eastern Health Board and the financial situation in relation to same. The Minister had earlier in 1988 given a direct grant of £20,000 from the National Lottery to the Centre and a further grant of £20,000 was provisionally allocated at the end of 1988 and channelled through our Board. It was to be payable to the Centre when an agreement was reached on the co-ordination of their services with the statutory services already in place.

In his budget speech of January 1989 the Minister for Finance announced a grant of £100,000 for the Rape Crisis Centre, again to be channelled through the Eastern Health Board to help deal with an immediate financial crisis which was reported to be due to a large accumulated debt owing to the Revenue Commissioners for outstanding P.A.Y.E. and P.S.R.I. contributions deducted from staff.

A review of the financial circumstances of the Centre at that time was speedily completed in January 1989 by our Board's Finance Officer. The review of activities and services provided by the Centre however ran into considerable delay because of the absence of any information base and the necessity to put in place an agreed arrangement for collection of detailed data on the level and type of services being carried out at the centre.

Notwithstanding this the Eastern Health Board arranged to pay over an amount of £90,452 to the Revenue Commissioners to discharge the debt for outstanding PAYE and PRSI which was to be the subject of a court hearing on the 1st March, 1989. This concession was made in order that the urgent financial pressures facing the

Centre would be removed thereby enabling the Rape Crisis Centre to fully co-operate with the review been undertaken by the Eastern Health Board. It was also agreed that any further payments would be subject to the completion of the review report on the activities and finances.

Subsequently the service review team continued to encounter difficulties in obtaining co-operation from the Rape Crisis Centre which resulted in the service review report only becoming available last month. The financial review information which had been obtained in January 1989 was at that juncture out of date and required to be updated. It was apparent from the Review Report that the Centre was charging clients for its services and also that funds had been raised through public subscription.

Surprisingly, when our Board's Finance Officer contacted senior Representatives of the Rape Crisis Centre on 30th November to arrange a meeting to update the financial position, his request for such a meeting was declined on the grounds that sufficient information had already been provided. This was followed by a Report which appeared in the Irish Times of the 11th December (copy attached). Our Board was not contacted prior to publication of this Report.

The current position in regard to the Rape Crisis Centre is quite clear - we are unable to complete the full review we were asked to undertake and consequently are unable to consider any further payments by way of grant-in-aid. Any further progress on the matter lies solely within the control of the Rape Crisis Centre.

Rape crisis centre says EHB owes it £40,000

By Christine Newman

THE Dublin Rape Crisis Centre is owed a total of £40,000 by the Eastern Health Board in grants, a National Lottery Payment and a budget allocation, a spokesman for the centre said yesterday.

She said that the centre had received only £10,000 so far from the £21,000 Eastern Health Board grant allocated for 1989 and they had expected to receive the second half by September or October.

An allocation of £20,000 from the National Lottery was made nearly a year ago and they had heard no word about it since. It was her understanding that such allocations were usually headed over immediately.

The allocation was made at the time to save the centre, which was threatened with closure because of lack of funds. However, the spokeswoman said, in the end it was the public who bailed them out with their geacrous donations.

Staff considered that another £9,000 was also due to the centre from a budget allocation of £100,000 which was given to clear a PRSI bill of over £90,000 from 1986. She said that they had not received the balance which they considered was due to them.

Altogether, we consider we are owed £40,000 if you add up the grant of £11,000 still owed, the lottery money and the £9,000 which we didn't get out of the change for the PRSI bill." She said.

This week staff will seek to clarify the position with the Eastern Health Board, which is the body responsible for distribution the funds. They want to clear it up before the end of the year.

We want to have a clear understanding of what is happening and we hope that we can either set up a meeting with officials from the Eastern Health Board or at least discuss it with somebody by phone," the spokeswoman said.

"So far this year, we have been given only the £10,000. It costs £250,000 a year to run the centre and we have to raise this money ourselves from fund-raising and donations," she added.

The demand for the services of the centre is still growing and she made an appeal for more volunteer telephone counselors. Applicants, who should be female and over 26 years of age, should send a stamp addressed envelope to the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre for an application form. Training will be given, so no special qualifications are necessary.