

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, 25th January, 2002, at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Mr. G. Brady
Ms. A. Harris
Cllr. M. Miley
Cllr. C. O'Connor
Cllr. J. Reilly
Cllr. J. Wall, T.D.

Cllr. T. Cullen
Ms. M. Hoban
Dr. B. Murphy
Sen. S. Ó Fearghail
Cllr. D. Tipping

Observers

Mr. G. McGuire

Apologies

Dr. S. Barry
Dr. K. Harkin
Sen. T. Ridge

Cllr. C. Byrne
Ms. N. Harvey

In the Chair

Cllr. C. O'Connor

Officers in Attendance

Mr. P. Donnelly, Chief Executive Officer
Mr. S. O'Brien, Assistant Chief Executive
Ms. B. Clarke, Assistant Chief Executive
Mr. R. Mitchell, Director of Communications
Mr. R. Kavanagh, Senior Manager, Operations
Mr. R. Healy, Board Secretary
Ms. A. Farrell, Administrative Support, CEO's Office
Ms. C. Armstrong, Administrative Support, CEO's Office

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HEALTH BOARD SERVICES IN THE WEST WICKLOW AREA

At the outset, the Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and invited Cllr. M. Miley to address the agenda item.

Cllr. Miley indicated his support for Cllr. T. Cullen who had requested the meeting to discuss health board services in the West Wicklow area and requested that Cllr. Cullen's concerns in this regard be addressed.

Cllr. T. Cullen then proceeded to outline difficulties he was experiencing with the current organisational arrangements for the administration of health board services for the West Wicklow area, particularly regarding medical cards and community welfare services. In addition, he indicated that there had been a lack of capital investment by the health board in this area over the past number of years and referred to the fact that he was the only member of the South Western Area Health Board who represents Wicklow County Council. He outlined certain difficulties that this situation presents to him.

In the discussion which followed, Cllr. J. Reilly, Cllr. C. O'Connor, Cllr. J. Wall and Dr. B. Murphy indicated their support for Cllr. Cullen. In addition, Cllr. Reilly raised some issues regarding services in the Kildare area.

Ms. M. Hoban questioned the necessity of holding a Special Board Meeting to discuss the matters raised by Cllr. Cullen and indicated that perhaps they could have been taken up with Health Board staff on a one to one basis.

In response, the C.E.O. acknowledged Cllr. Cullen's concerns and indicated his willingness, and that of his senior staff, to continue their ongoing efforts to resolve them. He expressed regret that work carried out up to now in relation to these issues had not achieved a satisfactory outcome for Cllr. Cullen.

Members were further advised as follows:-

- The particular difficulties presented by having two separate health boards covering one local authority area, as is the case with Co. Wicklow, were acknowledged.
- Arrangements currently in hand to finalise the transfer of the medical card system for the West Wicklow area from the Glenside Road office in Wicklow (part of East Coast Area Health Board) to the Poplar House office in Naas, were outlined. Members were advised of certain issues relating to staffing and difficulties with the computer system in this regard. It is anticipated, however, that the system will be fully transferred in the near future.
- The current situation regarding the organisation of the community welfare service for the three area health boards, through the Northern Area Health Board, was outlined, with particular reference to the fact that in this area health boards are agents of the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs. Members were advised that the devolution of this service to each of the three Area Health Boards in the Eastern Region is currently being addressed. The C.E.O. further indicated that, in discussion with the C.E.O. of the Northern Area Health Board, he had stressed the urgency for our Board and its members in ensuring the speedy completion of this task.

- The requirement to assess factors such as population size and identified need when allocating capital funding was emphasised. However, it was agreed that if particular needs for specific services are identified for West Wicklow, these will be addressed accordingly.
- Members were advised of the requirement to amend legislation if the existing boundaries of the area health boards were to be re-drawn.

Cllr. T. Cullen then proposed the following resolution, which was seconded by Cllr. J. Wall, and agreed by members:-

“That this Board will take complete charge of administration of the medical card system and the community welfare services of West Wicklow within 3 months of this meeting.”

Dr. B. Murphy and Ms. M. Hoban expressed reservations about the three month timeframe of this resolution in the context of possible industrial relations issues which may arise during this period.

The C.E.O. indicated his support for the resolution and agreed to bring a report to members at the April Board Meeting if he perceived any difficulties by that time in meeting this target arising out of any industrial relations issues.

In response to a suggestion from Cllr. J. Reilly regarding the possibility of introducing health board staff to members of the Board to enable better communication and working relationships, it was agreed that arrangements would be put in place to address this issue.

In conclusion, Cllr. Cullen thanked the C.E.O. and the Chairman for facilitating him by holding the special board meeting.

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

CHAIRMAN