

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of the Irish Blood Transfusion Service held on Monday 16th September 2013 at 12.00 noon in the Barry room, Cork Centre, St Finbarr's Hospital, Cork.

Present: Professor Anthony Staines, Chairperson
Ms. Jane O'Brien
Dr. Paolo Rebutta
Dr Lelia Thornton
Mr John Cregan
Dr Cleona Duggan
Mr Gerard Kelly
Dr Paul Browne
Ms Olwyn Bennett

Audio conference: Ms Linda Hickey
Mr Brian O'Mahony

Also in attendance: Mr. Andrew Kelly, Chief Executive
Dr. Ian Franklin, Medical & Scientific Director
Ms. Mirinda O'Donovan, Secretary to the Board

1. Members time

The Board met in private session.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 17th June 2013

The minutes of the Board meeting on 17th June 2013 were agreed and signed by the Chairperson.

3. Matters arising

It was agreed that there were no matters arising, not already on the agenda.

4. Chief Executive's Report

Blood supply

Reduced red cells usage is having a negative impact on income. This is well below budget in Q1 and Q2.

NQAM post

This was discussed at the Audit and Compliance Committee. A letter from DPER was received which allowed the post to be filled at the second last point of the scale. The Audit & Compliance Committee passed a resolution asking the Board to fill this post. The Board agreed that the CE could progress the appointment to the post as outlined.

Transport

There have been significant improvements in the operation of the contract for daily deliveries, however, the HSE have still not appointed someone to over see the operation of the contract. The HSE has still not signed the SLA with the IBTS either. The IBTS will continue to closely monitor the performance of the contract. It was agreed that the IBTS would do a review of the operation of the contract and discuss with HSE and the supplier.

The Chair of the Audit & Compliance Committee congratulated all of the staff involved in the transition to an outsourced transport service.

BECS

The first module is going live next month. Regular Steering Group meetings are held with the supplier.

Strategic Plan/Business Plan

A review of the Strategic Plan and Business Plan will be presented to the Finance Committee in October and then to the Board in November.

Haemochromatosis Programme

The uptake on this programme has been slow, however it has only been in place for one month. The majority of those who have attended D'Olier Street are eligible to become donors. A leaflet on the HH programme is being prepared for hospitals.

Hb

A number of marketing measures are in place to increase donations in advance of the new Hb deferral coming into effect on 30th September. A special Nationwide programme on the IBTS and its partnership with the GAA will be broadcast tonight and a 'wrap' on giving blood will be on the Metro Herald on Wednesday.

Contract approval

The contract for the NAT testing platform was before the Board for approval. The new testing platform will enable WNV testing to be carried out concurrently and there is a saving per test on the technology. Approval for the contract was proposed by Jane O'Brien and seconded by John Cregan. The contract was signed by the Chairperson and the Board Seal was applied.

10. Pension Fund

The CE briefed the Board on discussions with the DOH last week on this issue. The CE also had correspondence from the DOH, confirming the Department's position that the High Court ruling meant that there was no more ambiguity and that the monies should be remitted to the DOH. The Actuary to the Scheme is currently working on a number of examples from the IBTS scheme to compare with the Civil/Public Service scheme to demonstrate that the IBTS scheme is not 'gold plated' as the DOH believe. The examples will be ready for the Finance Committee meeting on 9th October. It is believed that integration from a future date is a possibility, but that retrospective integration would not be accepted by the staff.

The Chair of the Finance Committee pointed out that accrued benefits have been cut in the recent past in a number of private schemes, including Independent News and Media. The Board considered the DOH's proposal that an independent actuary be asked to review the scheme, but agreed that the scheme has already been reviewed by 2 actuaries and that was sufficient. Once reviewed by the Finance Committee, the examples will be circulated to the November Board meeting.

7. Minutes of Finance Committee meeting on 16th May

The minutes were taken as read. The Chairperson of the Finance Committee reported on July meeting. The BECS project is on schedule. The half year numbers show that revenue is below budget. This has continued for July/August which is a cause for concern. The CE added that a legal case is active again which has a cost implication. It was noted that applying the High Court judgement has a cost implication of about €600,000. The cost of the action to the Trustees so far is about €60,000, this is not the final fee note. The applicant's costs have not yet been received. The ABC data for 2012 was reviewed. The Chair requested that the ABC data be available to the Finance Committee earlier in the year and that the management accounts be aligned with this data. It was noted that there was a new DOH team recently appointed to blood policy. The Finance Committee meetings on the Budget for 2014 will be on 9th October and 6th November.

A proposal regarding the Purchasing Manager post was discussed. The Finance Committee were recommending to the Board that this would proceed. Jane O'Brien proposed and John Cregan seconded that the restructuring proceed as outlined.

Savings on staff costs of approximately €300,000 under the HRA will be examined in the budget process. The contract for plasma has not been resolved, it is the IBTS view that an extension of two years, continuing to supply product would be preferable to enforcing the volume commitments in the current agreement. The company has not taken any plasma since June.

9. Cork Centre

The response from CUH received that morning was noted. The CE met Ops Manager, CUH in July and again last week with Clinical Director, CUH and the CE briefed the Board on those discussions. The letter from CUH was discussed in the context of the original letter sent by the Board in June. It was agreed that a Working Group be established, Chaired by the CE of the IBTS, or his nominee. This working group will have terms of reference, a defined timeline to consider the issues and specific membership with scheduled and minuted meetings. The CE will report back to the Board in November. The aim of this Working Group is to agree a memorandum of understanding on how the development will proceed. The CE agreed to write to the RDO of HSE South, seeking confirmation that a site is still available on St Finbarr's Hospital grounds, in the event that agreement cannot be reached with CUH.

11. Terms of Reference Review for Sub-Committees

This item has been deferred to the November meeting.

5. Presentation on Health & Safety

The Environmental Health and Safety Manager joined the meeting to present an overview of health and safety issues in the IBTS. It was noted that donor vigilance incidents are managed through the donor vigilance reporting system.

The Board suggested that these figures be made available, separating out the health and safety incidents from the donor vigilance incidents. The CE and the EH&SM will be carrying out a health and safety audit at the Cork Centre tomorrow.

The EH&SM confirmed that the EH&S Steering Committee meets every quarter and that there are EH&S Committees at each regional Centre. Dr Rebullia suggested that the EH&SM publish the comprehensive data on health and safety in the IBTS as he noted this kind of detailed data does not get published very often.

The CE and the Chairperson thanked the EH&SM for her detailed and informative presentation.

12. Minutes of the MAC Meeting

The issue of MSM, donor selection and blood safety was discussed. The prevalence study on Hepatitis E has been completed. The MAC agreed that Ethics Committee approval was necessary for an anonymised study and it was agreed to approach the College of Physicians. The MAC also discussed the inclusion of proposals for studies in the amended TOR for the Committee. The MAC will hold a meeting in October and the TOR will be reviewed at that meeting.

6. Minutes of the Audit & Compliance Committee

The A&C Committee met the Comptroller and Auditor General regarding the Financial Statements, however, no Management Letter has been issued. IMB Inspection Reports were reviewed and there were no criticals or majors, but some 'others'. The IT Auditors carried out an audit of the BECS project and they raised an issue regarding Department of Finance approval for the project, however, the CE pointed out that the IBTS had department of health approval as the organisation doesn't have a 'vote' from the Department of Finance, this has always been the practice. An audit on CORE was also completed by the internal auditors and this was deemed satisfactory. The TORs for the Committee have been reviewed and will be revisited again at the A&C Committee meeting in April 2014. It was also agreed that the A&C would have a training day, to be arranged.

13. Date for strategy

The Board provisionally agreed on Monday 21st October as the date for Strategy. This date and other options are to be circulated to all Board members.

14. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Board will take place on **Monday 18th November at 12 noon at the NBC.**

Signed: _____

Date: _____