

MEETING OF THE COURTS SERVICE BOARD

27th June 2016

The Courts Service Board met on 27th June, 2016.

At the meeting the Board considered and approved reports in the following matters:

Minutes and Documentation from Committees of the Board

The Board noted minutes of meetings of Committees of the Board as follows

- Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting of 14th March, 2016
- Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting, 4th April, 2016
- Minutes of Family Law Court Development Committee Meeting, 15th February and 26th April, 2016
- Minutes of Building Committee Meeting, 15th March, 2016

Resignation of Ms. Elaine Jones from the Board

- The Board noted the resignation of Ms. Elaine Jones, Courts Service staff representative, from the Board. Arrangements are now being made for the election of a new staff representative.

Report on Budget and Expenditure

The Board considered and approved the Report. The Chief Executive briefed the Board on the key issues:

- Expenditure - The Board was briefed on expenditure to end May, 2016 and the variances against budget under the various subheads.
- Budget Review – the budgetary review was carried as part of the budgetary monitoring process and examined actual expenditure and income to end March 2015 and income trends. The Board noted the projected expenditure/income forecasts and that the most significant issue continues to be a projected overrun on ICT. The matter has been raised in correspondence with the Secretary General (Acting) of the Department of Justice and Equality and a meeting to discuss the issue has been scheduled. A further budget review will be carried out, based on the financial position at the end of June and the Board will be briefed on the matter at its next meeting.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

The Board considered and approved the Chief Executive Officer's Report. The Chief Executive Officer briefed the meeting on some of the major issues outlined in his report including

- **eLicensing Application** – rollout of the on line facility to solicitors in the pilot Districts will take place in October and full roll out is due to be completed by Q12017 subject to the necessary funding being available.
- **Progress on the PPP bundle of 7 courthouses** – construction has commenced and the projects are on target for completion by end 2017. The Chief Justice and Chief Executive have finished 5 of the sites and are very impressed with the design of the new buildings, the heritage work and the progress being made.
- **Development of the Hammond Lane Project** – work is continuing and a design workshop will be held on 19th July to consider preliminary designs.
- **Borrisokane Courthouse** – this building is no longer in use and there are no plans for its future use by the Courts Service. Following consideration by the Building Committee it is proposed to withdraw from the building.
- **Courts Service News** – the eCommemoration edition of the newsletter has been very successful and it is now proposed to produce it in hard copy as a record of the commemoration events and lecture series.
- **Training Initiative in the Central Office** – this initiative for trainee solicitors is underway and has been designed in consultation with the Law Society to provide practical assistance to trainee solicitors.
- **Special Criminal Court No. 2 – this Court sat for the first time on 6th May.**

Risk Management

The Board considered and approved the report on risk management which set out the key risks for the organisation and included a detail list of control actions designed to mitigate the risks. The Board was also briefed on a recent Review of Risk Management which found that the organisation had established a solid and workable foundation. A number of recommendations were made and a report on their implementation will be brought to the next meeting of the Board.

The Board was also briefed on recent ICT security audits.

Annual Report 2015

The Board considered and approved the Draft Annual Report for 2015 subject to minor amendment. The finalised Report will be submitted to the Tanaiste by 30th June, 2016 in accordance with the Courts Service Act, 1998. The Report will be formally presented to the Tanaiste on 12th July, 2016.

Installation or Expansion of ESB substations serving Courts Service

The Board considered and approved a report proposing that the Chief Executive (or an Officer designated by the Chief Executive) be given authority to

- approve minor property transactions between the Courts Service and ESB Networks for the purpose of installing and or upgrading substations serving Courts Service premises
- approve the use of long term lease of the property to the ESB, as set out in the Report, where a new or upgraded substation is required.

The Framework Document will be amended accordingly.

Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies – annual return to the Tanaiste on Courts Service compliance with Government policies and controls

The Board considered and approved the Annual Return to the Tanaiste on Courts Service compliance with Government policies and controls. This return is required under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and will be submitted on behalf of the Board by the Chief Executive.

Appropriate Authority for Civil Servants

The Board noted the proposals by the Government to amend the definition and function of the “Appropriate Authority” for civil servants. Under the new proposals the Secretary General of a Government Department or the Head of a Scheduled Office will be the Appropriate Authority for staff of all grades.

Any Other business

The Board considered the need for the appointment of a Co. Registrar in Co. Westmeath and was advised that the matter is under consideration by the Department of Justice and Equality and a decision is due very shortly.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will take place on 17th October, 2016.

Attendance

Present: The Hon. Mrs. Justice Susan Denham, Chief Justice and Chairperson
The Hon. Mr. Justice Peter Kelly
The Hon Mr. Justice Liam McKechnie
The Hon. Mr. Justice Michael Peart
The Hon. Mr. Justice Ray Groarke
Her Honour Judge Dóirbhíle Flanagan
Her Honour Judge Rosemary Horgan
Judge Gerard Haughton
Mr. Brendan Ryan
Mr. David Barniville
Mr. James McCourt
Mr. Conan McKenna
Mr. Pat Doyle
Mr. Shane Browne

Apologies: The Hon. Mr. Justice Sean Ryan
The Hon. Mr. Justice Patrick McCarthy
Mr. Liam Berney

Officials Present: Mr. Sean Quigley, Head of Resource Management
Ms. Helen Priestley, Information Officer
Ms. Marie Ryan, Secretary
Ms. Miriam O'Flanagan, Office of the CEO