

ANIMAL WELFARE BOARD OF INDIA

Minutes of the 49th Annual General Meeting of the Animal Welfare Board of India held on 19th September, 2018 (Wednesday) at 11 a.m. at Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jor Bagh, New Delhi

The following members were present in the meeting :

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| 1. | Shri S.P. Gupta, IAS (Retd.) | - | Chairman |
| 2. | Shri Girish J. Shah | - | Member |
| 3. | Shri Sunil Mansinghka | - | Member |
| 4. | Shri Rajeev Gupta, IAS (Retd.) | - | Member |
| 5. | Prof. R.S. Chauhan | - | Member |
| 6. | Shri Mohan Singh Ahluwalia | - | Member |
| 7. | Shri Ram Krishan Raghuvanshi | - | Member |
| 8. | Shri Ajit Sharad Kelkar | - | Member |
| 9. | Shri Dhan Pal Singh | - | Member |
| 10. | Ms. Anjali Gopalan | - | Member |
| 11. | Shri Rakesh Gupta | - | Member |
| 12. | Shri Jerome Minz | - | Secretary |
| 13. | Shri S. Bharat Kumar | - | Assistant Secretary(l/c) |

Dr. Suresh S. Honnappagol, AHC, Prof. Balram Bhargava, DG, ICMR and Dr. Hitesh Jani, members requested for leave of absence and it was noted.

The Secretary, AWBI started the meeting with greetings to all members and requested the Chairman to give his introductory / welcome remarks to the members.

Hon'ble Chairman extended a warm and hearty welcome to all the Members of the Board to its 49th Annual General Meeting. The Chairman informed that the Board is functioning to the best of its capabilities despite poor infrastructure, staffing problems and no person on the posts of Secretary and Assistant Secretary since last 3-4 months. However, some staff is working tirelessly specially Dr. S. Bharat Kumar and Shri N. V. Raveendran.

Hon'ble Chairman informed about the continuous complaints made by Hon'ble Minister Mrs. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi on baseless and false allegations and her

continuous interference in the functioning and affairs of the Board. The Board has already replied to the ministry of such complaints and also passed a resolution in its Special General Meeting of the Board held on 30.07.2018 in order to request the Hon'ble Minister, MoEFCC to take up the matter with Hon'ble Minister Mrs. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi not to interfere in the affairs of the Board by levelling false and defamatory remarks against the members including Chairman for smooth and better functioning of the Board.

The Chairman said that to stop the mis-use of the HAWO cards issued earlier without proper verification were cancelled and existing cards having validity were given opportunity afresh for applying the Animal Welfare Officers at District and State Level. Now, the Board has started nominating Honorary District Animal Welfare Officers, Honorary State Animal Welfare Officers and Honorary State / District Legal Animal Welfare Officers to reach at every village of the country. The Chairman appreciated the efforts of member in this regard specially of Shri Girish J. Shah and Shri Sunil Mansinghka for their continuous arduous support in identification, verification and consequently nominating such officers.

The Chairman requested the Secretary to start with the agenda items. The Secretary started with the agenda and the discussion on the agenda items were as under :

Item No.1: Approval of draft Annual Report and adoption of Audit Report and Annual Accounts of the Animal Welfare Board of India for the year 2016-17.

The Members adopted the Audit Report for the year 2016-17 and the Chairman asked the members to send their comments on Annual Report within 15 days for finalization. The Final Annual Report shall be sent to all members after receiving comments, if any.

Item No.2: Approval of draft Annual Report of the Animal Welfare Board of India for the year 2017-18.

The draft Annual Report for the year 2017-18 has been circulated to the Members for their suggestions and comments within 30 days for its placing in the Next Annual General Meeting of the Board.

Item No.3: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 45th General Meeting of the Board held on 10.05.2018.

The Members confirmed the minutes of the 45th General Meeting of the Board held on 10.5.2018 unanimously.

Item No.4: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 46th General Meeting (Special Meeting) of the Board held on 30.07.2018.

The Members confirmed the minutes of the 46th General Meeting (Special Meeting) of the Board held on 30.7.2018 unanimously.

The Chairman informed the members about the constitution of Inspection Committee with respect to illegal slaughtering / sacrifice and transportation of animals which has given a very good result specially in the State of West Bengal in which Dr. S.K. Mittal done appreciable efforts. It was because of the Inspection Committee efforts, the West Bengal Government has issued advertisement not to kill / slaughter cow on Bakrid.

The Chairman said that Mrs. Gandhi has levelled various allegations against Dr. S. K. Mittal (who is the member of the Inspection Committee) after which he has withdrawn himself from all the assignments of the Board since hurt by such false and baseless allegations. Dr. Mittal has sent his reply to the allegations which has been forwarded to the Ministry for appropriate action. Dr. Mittal has also sent a copy of the defamation notice to the Board issued to Mrs. Gandhi. Dr. Mittal has also done commendable efforts in Jallikattu events due to which jallikattu event has been done successfully this year without any case of cruelty.

Prof. R. S. Chauhan, Girshi J. Shah and Shri Ram Krishan Raghuvanshi and other members suggested that withdrawal of Dr. Mittal from the assignments of the Board should not be accepted as the Board has nominated him for the task of inspection committee. However, Shri Rajeev Gupta said his dissent with such approval is that such denial of withdrawal should be only after the consent of Hon'ble Minister Dr. Harshvardhanji which was declined by all the other members present.

Prof. R. S. Chauhan requested that the draft minutes of this meeting may be circulated for their comments. The Chairman replied that the draft minutes shall be circulated to all the members by tomorrow for comments / suggestions of the members within 7 days. After incorporating the comments / suggestions in the minutes, the final minutes shall be sent to all the members.

Item No.5: Ratification of Minutes of the Grants Committee Meeting of the Board held on 19.07.2018.

The Members ratified the minutes of the Grants Committee Meeting of the Board held on 19.7.2018 unanimously.

Item No.6: Ratification of Revised Estimates for 2017-18 and Budget Estimates for 2018-19 submitted to the Ministry.

The Board ratified the Revised Estimates for 2017-18 and Budget Estimates for 2018-19.

Item No.7: Consideration of matter regarding Budget sanctioned and received from the Ministry for the year 2018-19 and Grant-in-aid sanctioned/released/pending for release to AWOs under the schemes of AWBI.

The Chairman informed the Members that against our demand of Rs.85.00 Crores for the year 2018-19, the Ministry has allocated only Rs.10.00 Crores.

The allocated budget of Rs.10.00 Crores will be tried to be utilised in the month of September, 2018, if released. After utilising this Rs.10.00 Crores, the Ministry shall be asked to sanction the remaining funds in the RE for 2018-19. The Grants Committee of the Board has already approved a sum of Rs.33 Crores to the AWOs for the year 2018-19 and issued / sanctioned to the AWOs within the allocated budget from 2018-19. The remaining amount will be sanctioned after getting funds from the Ministry.

The Chairman informed that the Board had taken a decision to launch new schemes, however, after discussion with the Ministry, the Board, instead of introducing new schemes, revised the existing schemes since the new schemes will require the sanction of Ministry of Finance / Expenditure.

The Chairman suggested that the grants may be disbursed in the presence of the Board Members or officers of the Government Department in the concerned State / UT or in any Seminar / Conference / Program of animal welfare by giving sanction letter to the concerned Animal Welfare Organisations in order to show the Board presence in the society / public which was appreciated and approved by the members unanimously.

Item No.8: Nomination of Honorary State Animal Welfare Officers, Honorary District Animal Welfare Officers and Honorary Legal Animal Welfare Officers and Training Programme conducted for them.

The Chairman informed that the Board is nominating the Honorary District Animal Welfare Officers, Honorary State Animal Welfare Officers and Honorary State Legal Animal Welfare Officers to reach at every village of the country. The said officers are being nominated only after proper verification and training. Three training programs have already been conducted by the Board successfully. Shri Girish J. Shah said that considering the usefulness of the training, every Board member should also attend such 5 days training program compulsory which was appreciated by the members. The Chairman said that these training program shall also be conducted for police officers, judiciary members, government officials and other connected persons and in also other States / UTs.

Shri Mohan Singh Ahluwalia requested that a copy of the nomination of Animal Welfare Officers should also be sent to the concerned Board Members of that State which was agreed by the members.

Shri Girish J. Shah informed that at present around 3,215 animal welfare organizations are registered with the Board and 2,000 animal welfare organizations are working only in the state of Rajasthan only. Hence, he suggested that the letters may be written to all the District Collectors of all the States / UTs to ask all the Animal Welfare Organization to be registered with the Animal Welfare Board of India which was welcomed by all the members.

Some members were of the view that in the name of animal welfare, few animal welfare organizations like PETA etc. are working for ulterior motive due to which animals like bulls were put-up in the list of non-performing animals. Like bulls, the elephants and other animals may also be put in the said list which is detrimental

to the animal welfare and for the tourism of the country which was condemned by Shri Girishji and most of the other members. The said activities shall only result in the slaughtering of such animals instead of their welfare.

Shri Ram Krishan Raghuvanshiji suggested that all foreign organizations and other animal welfare organizations working in India in the name of animal welfare should be compulsorily registered with the Animal Welfare Board of India to achieve the objectives of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 and the rules made thereunder which was supported by Girishji strongly. It was also recommended and welcomed by other members whole-heartedly since it is necessary to regulate the activities of animal welfare organizations working for ulterior motives. After discussion and deliberation on the matter, it was decided that this matter may be examined by the legal committee of the Board whether all the Animal Welfare Organizations and foreign organization working in the country for animal welfare can be compulsory registered with the Animal Welfare Board of India. Further action may be taken accordingly.

Ms. Anjali Gopalan said that the issues of bulls and elephants needs to be discussed in greater details as there are issues of cruelty where these animals are concerned. It was replied by Girishji that as such there is no such case of cruelty and whatever is hearsay news and complaints are there, it is by the organizations which are functioning for ulterior motive instead of animal welfare.

Item No.9: Consideration of matter regarding the visit of Hon'ble Members of the Board to various places.

The matter was discussed by the Members comprehensively. The Chairman informed the members that the Board has already wrote to the Ministry for providing status to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Members of the Board in the order of precedence.

It was also informed by the Chairman that the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has written to the Ministry of Home Affairs for examining of grant the requisite Status to which the MHA observed that a cabinet note may be put-up by which the Board was Established / constituted for taking decision on the matter. He further informed that this process shall a very long time. Therefore, he has taken up the matter with the Hon'ble Minister, MoEF&CC to write a D.O. letter to the Ministry of Home Affairs for granting State Guest facility to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Members of the Board on their visit for the animal welfare activities in the State / UT till the matter regarding deciding the status is finalized.

Shri Mohan Singh Ahluwalia raised the question about official and non-official visit of the Members which was replied by the Chairman. After deliberation on the issue by all the Members, it was decided that any member visiting for any animal welfare activities at his / her will, he / she may inform to the concerned respective State / UT Governments and Board Members of the State / UT about his / her visit.

The members shall be paid TA / DA only when the members visit for any animal welfare activities or for any other work of the Board on the specific request of

the Board. It was also decided unanimously that a whatsapp group of the Board members may be made for better coordination among them.

Shri Rajeev Gupta raised the issue that he has shifted his residence to Delhi. In view of this, allocation of the States may be revised among the members which was agreed.

Item No.10: Consideration of the ratification of the minutes of the meeting of the Animal Welfare Resource Committee held on 01.05.2018, 09.08.2018 and 14.09.2018

The main item of 14.09.2018 was already taken in the next item, hence there is no need to ratify the minutes of the animal welfare resource committee by the Board.

Item No.11: Consideration of matter regarding conferring the awards for the welfare of animals

Prof. R. S. Chauhan said that no money should be paid in the awards. Shri Mohan Singh Ahluwalia said that if any money is payable in the awards, it should be sponsored by some organization. Shri Rajeev Gupta said that it is skeptical to give cash awards in view of the limited resources of the AWBI. Shri Rakesh Gupta and other members said that money should be compulsory given in the awards to inspire and promote the animal welfare activities widely across the country at national and international level.

The Chairman informed the members that the Board has asked for a sum of rupees two crores for the award from the Ministry. Further, he stated that initially the funds for the award shall be utilized from the funds raised by the Animal Welfare Resource Committee as far as possible, hence, the members with majority approved the conferring of awards for the welfare of animals as proposed in the Agenda of the meeting dated 14.09.2018. It was requested from the members to suggest the name of the juries up to 26th September 2018 to proceed with the programmes.

Item No.12: Consideration of matter regarding celebrations of Jiva-Jantu Kalyan Divas

It was ratified by the members unanimously to celebrate Vasant Panchami as “**Jiva-Jantu Kalyan Divas**” every year and also to celebrate its award function on the day of Vasant Panchami every year.

Item No.13: Consideration of matter relating to latest status report of Utilization Certificate under Regular Grant and CSS Grant (Shelter, Ambulance, ABC & Natural Calamity).

Shri Girish J. Shah informed that the Utilization Certificates of 174 organizations are pending. These matters may be taken-up by the members concerned by doing the needful for their concerned allocated territory.

Item No.14: Approval for revised guidelines and application format for AWBI Schemes and Recognition to AWOs.

The Chairman informed about the revised guidelines which have already been approved by the Board and sent to the ministry for approval. He also informed that the new application forms for the grants and recognition have been simplified and circulated among the members. Hence, the members may send their suggestions / comments by 26th September 2018 so that the same may be implemented from 1st October 2018 onwards.

Item No.15: Brief on matter relating to important pending court cases.

The member took the note of the list of pending cases in the Court.

Item No.16: Ratification of advisories issued by the Board.

The Chairman requested the members to go through the advisories and spread awareness about the same among various sections of the animal welfare officers, organizations, public etc.

Shri Mohan Singh Ahluwalia raised the issue regarding complaints against the film committee. The Chairman informed that as he has come late, this issue has already been discussed and all the issues of complaints against Film Committee are absolutely wrong, false and baseless. Moreover, the Board has already replied of all such complaints to the Ministry verbatim.

Prof. Chauhan also suggested that the old film committee which was existing at Chennai should be re-constituted. The Chairman informed that the committee has already been re-constituted having experts from the concerned field / stake-holders and it is a continuous process. The list of members of the Committee is available on the Board website. The Chairman further informed that the Board has made a drastic improvement in the Film Committee for bringing efficiency, transparency, accountability and moreover to check cruelty to animals at the time of shooting by the Inspection Committee of the Board. The Chairman also said the members suggestions are welcome to further improve the working of Film Committee since there is always a scope of improvement.

Shri Mohan Singh Ahluwalia said that all complaints against the Animal Welfare Board should be got investigated by independent higher agency. It was replied by the Chairman that all the complaints have already been replied verbatim by the Board and it is up to the Ministry to take any decision with respect to investigation or otherwise.

Further, the Chairman informed that numerous complaints have been received against People for Animals (PFA) for mis-utilization of funds etc. and in fact most of the grants of the Board have gone to the People for Animals. Hence, after deliberation on this issue, most of the members asked to conduct enquiry / investigation against all the units of the PFA and no grants should be released to such PFAs until and unless such enquiry / investigation is conducted and clean chit is given to them.

Shri Sunil Mansinghka suggested that the publication of the Board should be activated and the success stories and activities of the members should be highlighted therein which was appreciated by all the members. The members were requested to send their activities report of animal welfare regularly for their inclusion in the publication of the Board.

Advisory with respect to establishment / activation of District Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) and the model memorandum and rules / bye-laws for adoption for such SPCAs were circulated to all the members. The Chairman asked the members to send their comments / suggestions within one week on the said advisory / model rules for further necessary action which was welcomed by all the members.

The meeting ended with thanks to the Chair.

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