

Hydrographic Society Benelux

HSB Council convoked the members for an EGM at Van Oord in Rotterdam on 29th October 2004 to vote on the HSB joining the International Federation of Hydrographic Societies as a founding member. Present at the meeting were thirteen members, including five from the board and two corporate members.

Chairman Rob Luijnenburg introduced the motion to join the IFHS by explaining events of the past year. HSB hesitation with regard to the developmental status of IFHS at the end of 2003, it having only the Memorandum and Articles of Association available at the time, had led to rejection at the AGM in February 2004 of a proposal to join the federation. The legal process for transference of the former THS to the restructured IFHS under British charity law had proved cumbersome and time-consuming. In July, a fresh IFHS developmental initiative was put forward by Paul Hornsby, chairman of the Hydrographic Society of Australasia; Paul was elected by the THS council as its new chairman.

Armed with a defined mission and vision of IFHS purpose and objectives presented in a strategic plan, he approached the HSB inviting a proposal for an IFHS business plan. A dedicated commission of three HSB members, P. Boon, C. Don and R. van Dam, prepared a proposal which the HSB board discussed and accepted as an outline for presentation to the IFHS. The Hydro4 conference in Galway would provide an ideal occasion to arrange formal commitment of the founding members to constitution of the IFHS. If the HSB was to continue international participation it would be necessary to see if its membership accepted the changes since February, even though the legal structure would remain as presented before. The motion proposed to the EGM was this:

“The general HSB membership agrees to the HSB joining the IFHS as a founding member; this resolution supersedes earlier resolutions with regard to membership of the IFHS, made on 13th February 2004.”

Discussion prior to the ballot focused on IFHS financial structure and control and the level of authorisation of the board. The motion was carried with a large majority. All members present at the EGM voted in favour and nearly all proxy votes of 28 corporate members and 45 individual members; one corporate and one individual member voted against. From the discussion there emerged three conditions for HSB international participation, distilled as follows:

- By 1st January 2005 the IFHS board will present a sound budget based on an agreed list of activities; actual expenses to be reviewed against the budget in quarterly phasing.
- The level of authority of the IFHS board with regard to expenditure will be defined.
- IFHS contribution levels will be set in such way that eating into any remaining assets is ended.

Stressing that these conditions be put to the IFHS constitutional meeting during Hydro4, the chairman thanked the members present and closed the meeting.

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