

CENTRAL BLOOD LABORATORIES AUTHORITY

Minutes of the tenth meeting of the Central Blood Laboratories Authority held on 25 January, 1984 in the Board Room, The Crest.

Present:

- Mr R D Smart (In the Chair)
- Dame Phyllis Friend
- Dr H H Gunson
- Dr E L Harris
- Mr A S Jerwood
- Dr G A Stewart
- Mr G M Storey
- Dr D P Thomas

In attendance:

- Mr W P N Armour (Secretary)
- Dr A M Holburn (Director, BGRL)
- Dr R S Lane (Director, BPL and PFL)
- Mr A Williams (DHSS)
- Mr P Winstanley (DHSS)

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr A Williams who was succeeding Mr P Winstanley as DHSS observer. The Chairman thanked Mr Winstanley for his past assistance to the Authority.

PART 1

1/84 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Professor A Bloom.

2/84 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November, 1983 were approved and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:-

Item 91/83 (91.5) 1st paragraph, last sentence to read, 'Dr Lane said that BPL wished to commence work immediately on this project and Dr Holburn stressed the need for BGRL to have equal access to the cell line'.

Item 95/83 last line, substitute the word "reagents" for "blood".

Item 97/83 2nd paragraph, last sentence to read 'Dr Harris expressed the need for him to be informed if this could not be settled internally. If the situation could still not be resolved after this stage, the Chairman should, as a last resort, write to the Minister advising him of the impasse in this matter'.

3/84 Matters Arising from the Minutes

3.1 Collaboration with Wellcome

The Secretary reported that a contract had now been drawn up and although further discussions would be taking place with Wellcome, no further delays were expected.

61/307

3.2 UK Transplant Service - Anti-D Monoclonal Antibodies

The Secretary confirmed that a response from the DHSS was expected in due course.

3.3 BGRL Products - Surplus of Anti-A and Anti-B Monoclonals

The Secretary referred to detailed discussions with Celltech and problems that had arisen in regard to the price of the products concerned.

The Chairman said that a number of institutions preferred to go elsewhere for their products, thus causing a surplus, and he emphasised the need for a mechanism for making them aware of BGRL's service. Dr Gunson said that DHA's could be advised of this but hospitals still had the freedom to go where they wanted and he felt that the matter should be taken up with District Treasurers. Dr Harris confirmed that the DHSS would take up the matter further.

3.4 Product Pricing

The Secretary reported that further preliminary work was being undertaken prior to a meeting he had arranged with Mr J Parker and Mr A Williams for the following week. The Secretary reminded Members that it had been agreed that sufficient flexibility of pricing was necessary if the Authority were to sell its surplus materials in a fluctuating market.

3.5 NHS Management Inquiry (Griffiths Report)

A copy of the Chairman's reply to the Secretary of State on the Griffiths report had been provided for members as agreed. Its content was endorsed.

3.6 Collaboration with Celltech

The Secretary reported that the stage had been reached of finalising the legal agreement and draft contracts would be initialled within the next few days.

3.7 Biological Laboratories Ballina Ltd

Mr Storey asked about the current situation in this matter. The Chairman confirmed the need to evaluate alternatives because it was felt that the framework of Ballina's business was not ideal for the proposals they had put forward.

4/84 Plasma Supply

A copy of Dr Gunson's report on Plasma Supply (CBLA 84/1) was received and noted.

Dr Gunson expressed concern that during the latter part of 1983 the targets, which had been agreed earlier in the year as a planned programme of producing sufficient plasma to ensure optimum working of the new BPL and ensuring self sufficiency in blood products, were now in jeopardy because of difficulties in obtaining the necessary funds. He said that many RHA's were reluctant to commit themselves for more than 1 year at a time, and that he understood their views on fulfilling other priorities.

69/308

Dr Gunson outlined possible options for consideration as a result of the probable difficulties. The most feasible option was for the production of plasma above the 1983/84 figure being financed through CBLA with RHA's acting as agents for this part of their activities. In the meantime, Dr Harris stressed the need for pressure to be put on Regional Medical Officers and Regional Treasurers, emphasising the importance of making sufficient plasma available to BPL. He suggested 3 possible ways of dealing with the problem which were, respectively:- through meetings of Regional Chairmen with the Secretary of State; through Annual Regional Reviews; and through the NHS Supervisory Board as suggested in the Griffiths Report.

The Chairman thanked Dr Gunson for his report, the contents of which were viewed with the gravest apprehension and said that the situation should be kept under review both by the CBLA and the DHSS.

5/84 Annual Report

A copy of the report on the format of the Annual Report and draft reports on BPL and BGRL (CBLA 84/2) was received and noted.

It was agreed that an edited draft should be prepared for members as soon as possible: formal approval would be sought at the special meeting to be held on 22 February, 1984 or at the next full meeting in March. It was noted that the annual report would be for general publication and therefore it was agreed that any confidential information would be contained in additional tables which could be added to the report when necessary.

Dr Holburn referred to his BGRL report and the need to build a third cold store. He confirmed that his original estimate of £20,000 for this store was far in excess of the cost now being quoted, which was approximately £6,000, and on this basis he requested approval to go ahead. Dr Holburn's request was approved.

6/84 Medicines Inspectorate

A copy of Dr Lane's report on the visit of the Medicines Inspectorate (CBLA 84/3) was received and noted.

Dr Lane confirmed that following the inspection, a report was issued to BPL and a detailed response to the Medicines Division has been prepared, which Members could see if they so wished. Whilst accepting the inadequacies on the present BPL site, Dr Harris said that in the circumstances the CBLA's main concern was that all steps that could reasonably be taken at the present time to improve matters were being taken.

7/84 Visit to Scottish Health Service Common Services Agency

The Secretary reported that the Chairman, Director of BPL and himself had visited the Scottish Health Service Common Services Agency at their invitation when matters of mutual interest had been discussed. He said that it had been a very useful meeting which had produced a closer understanding which should enhance the working relationship between the two centres.

There followed discussion on the appointment of Director to the Scottish BTS and it was noted that as yet no suitable candidate had been appointed.

8/84 Redevelopment of BPL

A copy of the report on the Redevelopment Project (CBLA 84/4) was received and noted. There followed discussion on the delay in design work on engineering which, it was noted, was still the main concern with regard to the project.

67/309



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Finance9.1 Budget Statement

A copy of the budget statement and Secretary's report (CBLA 85/5) was received and noted.

9.2 Forecast Estimates 1984/85

A copy of the report on the sub-committee meeting held on 8 December, 1983 to examine in detail forecast estimates 1984/85 and the revised forecast estimates, including capital (CBLA 84/6), was received and noted.

It was agreed that the forecast estimates be passed to the DHSS with an explanation of cost increases for the next year, including the numbers of staff and where they are required. Dr Harris drew attention to the large sum (£630,000) required for warehousing within BPL's forecast estimates 1984/85 and said that there would need to be justification of this figure with the DHSS. It was subsequently agreed that Members be given the background information relating to the warehousing figure.

9.3 Report on BPL Products

A copy of the report on the production and issue of BPL products (CBLA 84/7) was received and noted.

Dr Gunson expressed some concern about the current level of production of Factor VIII whereby at the time of changeover to the new factory, RHAs would probably have to buy more Factor VIII than currently, as a loss of production at this time was inevitable. The Chairman said that the Scottish BTS was likely to have a surplus of Factor VIII at the time of transition and it might be possible to use some of their stocks.

9.4 Report on BGRL Products

A copy of the report on BGRL production (CBLA 84/8) was received and noted.

9.5 Audit of Accounts 1 December, 1982 - 31 March, 1983

A copy of a report on the audit of the accounts of the CBLA for the period 1 December, 1982 - 31 March, 1983 (CBLA 84/9) was received and noted.

10/84 Appointment of Top Grade Scientist, BGRL

A copy of a report from the Director BGRL (CBLA 84/10) was received and noted.

After discussion, approval was given for the appointment of a top grade scientist as Head of Reference and Research at BGRL.

11/84 Salary Structure

The Secretary reported upon further meetings that had taken place with the DHSS since the last CBLA meeting and confirmed that he had now received a letter from the DHSS who had conceded the need for a special salary structure for production staff. It was noted, however, that the DHSS had not accepted the case for support staff who they asserted should be on a lower scale than

61/3 10

proposed and nearer to NHS manual workers. The Secretary said that this development had improved the situation somewhat and he was hopeful that a staff structure would be finalised in time for the next full Authority meeting on 28 March.

The Director BPL remained concerned that the DHSS continued to regard process workers and junior technicians as being quite different: in his opinion they were equally important.

The Chairman expressed his appreciation for the recent progress made but maintained the need for further discussion regarding the Director's concern about the separation of lower scale workers. Dr Harris agreed to take up the matter further within 3 weeks at the DHSS if no solution was evident.

12/84 Logo

A copy of the Secretary's report (CBLA 84/11) was received and noted.

It was agreed that the Authority should have a logo which could be used appropriately on letterheads, advertisements, vans, products and packages, and approval was given to hold a competition, with a prize, for all staff of the Authority to produce a suitable design.

13/84 Research and Development

It was agreed that a special meeting of the Authority would take place on 22 February, 1984 at 10.30 a.m. to discuss Research and Development.

14/84 Collective Grievance on Process Workers

A copy of the Secretary's progress report (CBLA 84/12) was received and noted.

15/84 CBLA Constitution

A copy of the Blood Products and Plasma Fractionation Laboratories Technology Agreement (CBLA 84/13) was received and approved.

16/84 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on 28 March, 1984. The Directors having completed their contributions, received the thanks of the Members for their attendance and withdrew.

64/311