



Shree Pretoria Hindu Seva Samaj

Established in 1932

264 - 13th Avenue
Laudium, Pretoria 0037
E-mail: sphss108@telkomsa.net

Tel/Fax: 012 374 6354
PBO Ref No.: 930014581

P.O. Box 14368
Laudium, Pretoria 0037
Web: www.sphss108.co.za

"Satyameva Jayate" - Truth Alone Prevails

Celebrating 83 Years of Selfless Service

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & TRUSTEE MEETING OF THE SHREE PRETORIA HINDU SEVA SAMAJ

Held at : The Boardroom, Shree Pretoria Hindu Seva Samaj
Date : Wednesday, 24 June 2015
Time : 19:30

1. PRAYER & WELCOME
In the Chair - Pravinbhai Daya

The meeting commenced with a prayer and welcome to all members present. A minute's silence was held for all those members of the community who passed on since the last meeting.

2. ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

In Attendance: Vineetbhai Rama; Harshadbhai Pema; Sheetalbhen Ranchod; Rameshbhai Chhagan; Pranaybhai Devchand; Madhubhen Modhi; Mukeshbhai Joshi; Bharatbhai Kooverjie; Nareshbhai Kallan; Pravinbhai Daya; Chandrasenbhai Bhana. Urvibhen Mehta & Vinaybhai Chagan attended in their capacity as administrators.

Apology: Harshilabhen Kooverjie; Bhadrakanbhai Chiba; Bhaavicbhai Chhana; Dhruvbhai Sodha; Jyotibhen Joshi; Kishorbhai Naran.

3. MATTERS DISCUSSED

The Chairman explained that this was a special meeting to discuss the Samaj's response to issues raised by Sanjaybhai Govind and Mansukhbhai Chhiba with respect to a voters roll. In his correspondence, Sanjaybhai had included the private correspondence from Pankajbhai Joshi as well. Trustees & Executive Committee members were informed that they were also free to raise any other urgent matters.

3.1 Response to Sanjaybhai et al's emails: Voters' Roll

In the emails of Mansukhbhai, Pankajbhai and Sanjaybhai addressed to the Chairman they allege, amongst other matters, that the Trustees and the executive committee were in breach of the constitution for proposing the formation of a Samaj Verification Committee to help in establishing a voters' roll. They further demanded that a public meeting be called to discuss the proposal.

After some discussion, members resolved to respond to the accusations by sending a letter to the persons concerned as follows:

- Pointing out that there is nothing in the constitution that prohibits officials from forming a Samaj Verification Committee for the purpose of finalising a voters roll; that such a step was in fact not only constitutional but desirable in resolving the difficulty faced after the elections were declared null & void;
- Explaining that a public meeting was not the sensible way to proceed as the legitimacy of any decisions made at such an open meeting can be questioned on the grounds that the people who attended would not have been vetted as being “bona fide members”. The vagueness in the constitution with respect to “membership” and which was then exploited by some people to use innocent newcomers to vote in a certain way was precisely one of the reasons why the electoral officer had declared the elections null & void.
- Emphasize that to avoid any accusation of bias on the part of officials, the only practical way forward would be to garner the support of a group of well-known community members who have a sound record of community service to help determine what criteria and procedures should be followed in creating a voters roll and then overseeing this process.
- Once a voters roll on the basis of agreed criteria has been established, to then call up new elections

3.2 Pujari's Diary

The Chairman informed the house that he had received a letter from Mukeshbhai complaining about the decision taken by the joint sitting of trustees and executive members on 2 June 2015 that the office will be responsible for managing his diary. Mukeshbhai, who was present at the meeting, appealed for this decision to be reversed on the grounds that the complaint received from the family of the late Maganbhai Parbhoo was full of lies & inaccuracies and also that he believed they had been influenced by someone to write the complaint. He also stated that his reason for not performing the last rites was that he had a back-problem and therefore ill. He wanted to know if he was not entitled to sick leave and complained that Rameshbhai did not express any sympathy when he informed him of his back problem.

Members responded that the only way to determine who was lying or not was to hold a formal hearing on the matter. However, as other complaints had also been received the decision to have the office manage Mukeshbhai's diary was not based solely on the complaint received from Shobhnabhen. In fact subsequent to Shobhnabhen's complaint, the office was informed by a Sheetalbhen that Mukeshbhai had informed her that he was unavailable to perform a ceremony for her at the time requested as he was already booked for that time. On his argument that he was ill, Mukeshbhai was reminded that his contract entitled him to receive sick leave but he had not at any time informed anyone of his illness or applied for sick leave so no one was aware of his back problems. As for Rameshbhai's failure to express sympathy, Rameshbhai reminded Mukeshbhai that he (Mukeshbhai) had only told him about his back problem at the time when Rameshbhai was conveying the decision of the trustees to him. As an employee, the proper action on his part would have been to inform the executive of his illness at the time when he was ill so that he could be relieved of his duties and alternate arrangements could be made.

The Chairman then read out a clause from Annexure A of Mukeshbhai's contract which clearly states that his diary should be managed by the office. The decision to have his diary managed by the office was therefore simply aimed at regulating what was already contracted many years ago with him by the previous administration. Mukeshbhai claimed he was not aware of the provisions of Annexure A. In the end it was unanimously agreed by all trustees and executive committee members present, including Mukeshbhai, that the agreed arrangement will remain in force. On the Chairman's recommendation it was further agreed that a delegation (Rameshbhai, Mukeshbhai & Pravinbhai)

should visit the aggrieved family to sympathise & apologize on behalf of the Samaj. Also, that a letter of apology is to be sent to Shobhnabhen.

3.3 *Mukeshbhai's Involvement in Community Politics*

Rameshbhai raised a concern he had with reports that Mukeshbhai was involving himself in community politics. He cited the fact that Mukeshbhai was included in the string of emails sent by both Sanjaybhai and Mansukhbhai as giving strength to these reports and was indicative of Mukeshbhai's involvement. He asked that Mukeshbhai refrain from getting involved in community politics firstly because he was an employee but more importantly because he was the resident priest and it was imperative that such a person plays a unifying role rather than be party to divisions. Pravinbhai stated further that it was the responsibility of the priest to offer his services to all members of the community and not to be seen as being part of one faction or the other. After initially denying he was part of a faction, Mukeshbhai nonetheless gave a solemn undertaking that he would henceforth not be party to any community politics.

3.4 *Non-Attendance at Meetings*

Rameshbhai raised a concern that since January of this year and much of last year, Mukeshbhai had not attended meetings of the executive committee without giving any valid reasons. Whenever Rameshbhai had tried to set up a meeting with Mukeshbhai to discuss matters of importance relating to the Religion & Culture portfolio, Mukeshbhai was never available, promised to get back with a date but then never bothered to do so. Rameshbhai interpreted this as a deliberate snub and a lack of respect both for the office of the president and the Executive and showed that Mukeshbhai was unwilling to fulfil his responsibilities as an elected official. Mukeshbhai did not respond to this charge.

3.5 *International Yoga Day*

Urvibhen was congratulated on successfully arranging & coordinating the first International Yoga Day that was held at the Samaj Auditorium on Sunday, 21st June. The event had a great turnout & many positive reviews were received.

3.6 *Concerns of Trustees & Officials*

Many members expressed their anger at the constant sniping and insults that are directed at them by certain members of the community. What they found disturbing was that at a time when the Samaj was functioning well, some people were constantly finding fault. Such a display was disappointing not only to them but to all youngsters they speak to who are now disheartened by the pettiness they see and are not interested in "seva". Members felt strongly that the minutes should reflect that no one in the current Exec or trustees is power hungry and that everyone is serving on a voluntary basis without any self-interest, contrary to the claim made by Sanjaybhai Govind. Attacks on their integrity are issues they are not willing to tolerate any further.

3.7 *Funerals over Week-Ends*

Clarity was sought on who would be responsible for informing Mukeshbhai about his duties over week-ends (e.g. funeral). It was agreed that members of the Facilities Management & Funeral committee (Bharatbhai, Kishorbhai & Vineetbhai) are responsible to inform Mukeshbhai that he needs to preside at the funeral.

4. CLOSURE

With no further business, the meeting ended at 10:30pm

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