

13. Administrative Bureau – Service Bureau and Finances

13.1 REPORT 1: CHAIRMAN OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BUREAU MANAGEMENT (Art 154)

- A. The Synod enters member's meeting of the Administrative Bureau.
- B. Rev EJ Tiemensma tables the Report.
- C. The Report will be concluded during the Synod session.
- D. **Decision:** Mandate to rev PJ Nel to personally convey to the staff of the Administrative Bureau the gratitude of the Synod for their work.

E. REPORT

1. Objective of Report

- 1.1 This Report does not elaborate in detail on matters, as stipulated in the Regulations, and on instructions given to Management by the Members meeting. Such detail and the associated recommendations are reported in the different subsections of the Report as well as the Supplementary Report of the Administrative Bureau.
- 1.2 The goal of this Report is to provide an introductory and general overview of the Administrative Bureau's Report to the Members meeting on the management of affairs over the past term. This overview encompasses fifteen management meetings, of which three formed part of strategic work sessions. The overview of the management's work is not confined to the period between 2012 and 2014, especially not in terms of the strategic work and planning sessions. On the one hand, the work of the past term specifically relates to previous terms and on the other hand, it also relates to the way forward. Both these aspects are important, within the overall review, towards placing the term 2012-2014 in perspective.

Decision: Points 1.1 and 1.2 noted.

2. Overview of specific aspects

2.1 *In reference to previous terms*

- 2.1.1 The term 2012-2014 cannot be seen in isolation, but relates to terms stretching back to 2003 in establishing the Bureau as a *Service Bureau*. The past term functioned within the broad framework of the strategic planning of terms 2006-2008 and 2009-2011 to offer effective financial and administrative services to the churches by means of congregations, Deputies, Trustees and major assemblies.
- 2.1.2 As a result an Executive Manager (in the person of rev LH van Schaik, upon agreement of the GK Springs East and in accordance with CO, art 14) was appointed during 2009-2011 term. The agreement between the GK Springs East and the Administrative Bureau stipulates that rev LH van Schaik's term of service lapses at the end of 2014 (the same year in which rev LH van Schaik turns 65). The operational functioning of the Administrative Bureau of the 2009–2011 term and partly the 2012–2014 term fell under the supervision and leadership of the Executive Manager.

2.2 *In reference to the past term*

- 2.2.1 Management considered, at the beginning of the past term, the general restructuring of the Administrative Bureau. During this time, br HSJ Vorster requested early retirement (at the age of 60), as of 31 March 2013. The request was approved on 23 August 2012 and finalised by means of an agreement (at his request).

Br HSJ Vorster served at the Administrative Bureau for more than 17 years, since October 1995, and made an especially valuable contribution to the Administrative Bureau and to the churches of the GKSA. Service which Management would like to acknowledge in this Report. It has, furthermore, been noted that br HSJ Vorster will continue to perform certain work for the SDDS until General Synod 2015. The Administrative Bureau remains involved in the SDDS through br J Coetzee as auditor, together with the supporting staff of the financial department.

2.2.2 Management gave urgent attention to the position of Executive Manager for the following two reasons: the health of rev LH van Schaik and his eventual retirement in 2014. Strategic work sessions were held to urgently reflect on the way forward, whilst retaining the Administrative Bureau's character of service. All things considered – including rev LH van Schaik turning 65 in March 2014 – it was agreed that he would fill the position of Executive Manager (advisory) from March 2014 up to 31 December 2014 (as per the agreement with GK Springs East). The work of the Administrative Bureau was restructured as follows: Dr W du Plessis would serve as Administrative Manager (aided by rev W Vogel, member of Management, where necessary); br J Coetzee, as Financial Manager, would handle all financial matters (with the aid of br L Kruger, as member of Management, where necessary); and rev CA Jansen would manage the contact between the churches of the GKSA. The abovementioned actions were carried out in cooperation and consultation with the Executive Manager. In light of rev LH van Schaik's term of service coming to an end (DV) on 31 December 2014, a word of gratitude to him (and to the GK Springs East as well as the GK Cachet) would only be appropriate. Management deems rev LH van Schaik instrumental in the building of the service-oriented nature of the Administrative Bureau, as established in previous terms. Great demands were made on him, during this process, in a range of matters and tasks. Sincere gratitude is expressed for his vocationally faithful service. May he and his spouse be richly blessed by the Lord upon his retirement.

2.2.3 The strategic planning of the past term is not confined only to this term, but also includes the way forward. Management reflected in-depth and critically on the Administrative Bureau's role and function within the GKSA as well as its mandate and its execution. This resulted in the development and establishing of strategies for the Deputies: Liaison and communication in the GKSA. This is reported in greater detail in the Report of the Administrative Bureau. In conjunction with this reflection on the role of the Administrative Bureau, its regulations and the position of Executive Manager were also addressed. These two aspects (procedural regulations and whether to fill the position of Executive Manager) are individually reported, specifically in terms of the way forward.

2.3 *In reference to the next term*

2.3.1 Certain specific amendments to procedural regulations are set out in the Report addressing the procedural regulations of the Administrative Bureau. The suggested revisions are aimed at furthering the role and objective of the Administrative Bureau. It relates to the building and development of the *servicing nature* of the Administrative Bureau of the previous terms that led to strategic adjustment to conform to this serviceableness. The reflection on such *serviceableness* gave rise to a strategic framework, in which the role of the Administrative Bureau has been situated, viz.: *The aim of the Administrative Bureau is to offer its members assistance, support and guidance in being a church within the Kingdom of God.*

This comprises the following two main functions: (1) administrative and financial management; and (2) ministry development towards the growth of the Kingdom of God. In this the Administrative Bureau conforms to the turnaround initiative of the GKSA, which is demonstrated in the suggested amendments to the procedural regulations. It is the prayer and hope of the Management that the way forward will proceed from the perspective that the Administrative Bureau is not a “structure” functioning beside the churches (its members), but in service to the churches.

- 2.3.2 Management looked at the position of Executive Manager from all sides and decided to not fill this position for the time being. Provision has been made in the organisational structure for the promotion of participatory and effective management as well as for cost-effective administration and communication. In consultation with the Executive Manager (advisory), rev W Vogel and dr JA Kruger became involved – on a part-time basis – in communication/advice and management/administration respectively as of 01 July 2014. The yet to be appointed management of the next term is urged to regularly evaluate this work method, for further decision making at the end of 2015, where necessary.

Decision: Points 2.1 to 2.3.2 noted.

3. General overview of operations

Management continuously dealt with matters in which the following members of management were represented: Finances, IT and Systems Management, Trustees, Property, Judicial, Human resource management, Curators, Deputies: Liaison, Administrative Manager and Financial Manager. The work of the past term covered a broad terrain. For the purposes of a general overview of the Management's and Administrative Bureau's operations, the following aspects are highlighted:

3.1 Staff

- 3.1.1 Management considered it a priority to finalise policy and procedural manuals as well as draw up policy on seconded staff. Herein br JH van der Merwe (Human Resources Management) was of great help. Due to his health, he requested in 2014 to be released as member of Management and dr JA Kruger was called on as alternate. He was able to make a valuable contribution from the start, given his previous involvement with the Administrative Bureau.
- 3.1.2 The following may be noted regarding the staff in service of the Bureau: Anneke van der Walt was appointed to the post of Deputies: Youth Care/Kruispadmarketing; Alet-Elize van Jaarsveld was, in cooperation with the Deputies: Historical Affairs, appointed as temporary assistant for the management of archive material; Dalene Pretorius was appointed assistant auditor, on 01 February 2014, to aid with the large volume of work inherent to financial management; br Johan Coetzee was promoted to Financial Manager and dr Wymie du Plessis to Administrative Manager.
- 3.1.3 It cannot be neglected to sincerely thank each member of Management and every staff member connected to the Administrative Bureau for their selfless service; continuous input and contributions; and initiative in working towards the ever-improving objective of the Administrative Bureau.

3.2 Finances

- 3.2.1 Management has been tasked, as stipulated in the procedural regulations, with the allocation and administration of the funds of the Administrative Bureau. Financial reporting on funds administration, ramings, outstanding ramings, compulsory collections, book accounts and budgets was a permanent fixture on the agenda of Management meetings. Management is fully aware of churches' struggle to survive financially; the ever-increasing pressure on sustentation; the negativity around ramings and the state of outstanding ramings. The following needs to be mentioned in regard to outstanding ramings:

- 3.2.1.1 Outstanding ramings have a direct impact on the underlying agreement between the churches.
- 3.2.1.2 The Administrative Bureau does not have the authority to write off ramings, but may negotiate with Church Councils to ease the burden of financial obligations.
- 3.2.2 The funds were management and administration in the following diverse ways:
 - 3.2.2.1 The financial matters of the GKSA were regularly communicated to the churches in writing.
 - 3.2.2.2 Accounts in the red were addressed by discussing how this may be resolved with the relevant parties.
 - 3.2.2.3 A policy on loans was drafted and it should be mentioned that Management succeeded in registering the Administrative Bureau as a credit provider with the credit controller.
 - 3.2.2.4 Outstanding ramings were followed up, through letters/visits to Church Councils and the relevant Classis.
 - 3.2.2.5 Budgets were reviewed on an annual information meeting and Church Councils were updated accordingly.
- 3.2.3 Despite increasing financial pressure, all obligations were met over the past term. There is a great deal to be thankful for, as reflected in the overall management statements. In view of the way forward, financial management was included in the suggested amendments to the procedural regulations. It relates to the envisaged goal of the management and administration of all the funds assigned to Management. Financial management features as a main function of the Administrative Bureau in the suggested amendments to the procedural regulations, from the following perspective: *Assistance, support and guidance by the Administrative Bureau to its members to be a church within the Kingdom of God.*
- 3.3 *Communication*
 - 3.3.1 Communication has come to the fore, this past term, as an issue that cannot be overlooked. It was found that the GKSA can (and needs to) improve their internal and outward communication. The development of communication strategies for the GKSA and associated matters, like the GKSA website, are detailed in a separate Report to that of the Administrative Bureau.
 - 3.3.2 As part of communication, the Bureau conveyed pertinent information arising from management meetings to the churches. The churches were kept abreast of management affairs and developments at the Administrative Bureau.
- 3.4 *Deputies: Liaison*
 - 3.4.1 The place of these Deputies should as of the term 2009-2011, subsequent to Synod 2009 complied with a Point of discussion in this regard, no longer be in question. In no way does it contribute to something like a “ungainly” structure of the Administrative Bureau. The past term showed it to play an important role in communication with and aid to the churches. Church orderly advice sought and workshops held around the country clearly illustrated where guidance on administrative and financial matters could be provided.
 - 3.4.2 It was reported to General Synod 2012 of the development of an information booklet for guidance to Church Councils on administrative, financial and church orderly matters. This information booklet/manual, through which the Administrative Bureau seeks to be of service to the churches, is in the process of being finalised and will then be made available.

- 3.4.3 The importance of Deputies for Liaison related to the past term and also in terms of the way forward is set out in a separate Report by these Deputies. The work of these Deputies has been directly incorporated into the Administrative Bureau's intent to be of assistance to the churches in, for example, the following: ministry development towards the growth of the Kingdom of God and also the provision of resources for such ministry development.

Decision: Points 3.1 to 3.4.3 noted.

4. A Kingdom-directed path

- 4.1 Management had to and did undertake and finalise actions this term, as is already clear from this introduction to the overall Report of the Administrative Bureau.
- 4.2 This was accompanied by the continuous effort to seek ways in which the Administrative Bureau can improve on effectively and efficiently meeting its goal of service.
- 4.3 In conjunction with its continued strive to be of *service*, the Administrative Bureau considers it its calling and duty to be, in dependence on the Lord, *Kingdom-directed* in service to Him in service to His church.

Decision: Points 4.1 to 4.3 noted.