

# Minutes of Meeting

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Minutes of the **Special General Body Meeting** of the Members of the Kanara Catholic Association held at 5.00 pm on Saturday, **July 8, 2017**, at the Ground Floor Hall at the KCA Premises in Bandra (W), Mumbai

Since there was no quorum of 30 Members at 5.00 pm, the meeting was adjourned till 5.30 pm as provided by Rule 15 of the KCA Rules & Regulations.

Meanwhile, refreshments were served to the Members.

The adjourned meeting commenced at 5.30 pm. 45 Members present.

**Sunil Alva**, President, took the Chair. Members of the Managing Council, including 4 Office Bearers and 4 Managing Council Members (one MC Member absent), took their seats on the dais.

**Praveen Pereira**, Hon Secretary, led the general body in an opening prayer. The Notice & Agenda was read out following which the Chairman made a brief presentation explaining why the General Body Meeting was called. The key features of the updated Hall Policy, that was the subject of discussion, was covered in the presentation.

The policy had been finalized in May 2017 after meetings and consultations with 8-10 KCA Members who were Members of the various sub-committees. Following this, the policy was put up for ratification and finalized at the Managing Council Meeting held on May 13, 2017.

A detailed explanatory statement had also been provided along with the Notice & Agenda, providing the context of the meeting and features of the updated Hall Policy.

Members were then invited to put forward their questions.

**Edgar Sylva (S-12)** raised a number of questions. A summary of the questions and the responses provided are as follows

*Q: Why had the hall income fallen in FY16 and increased in FY17?*

A: Since halls are used mainly for functions, meetings etc, the income was sporadic and was difficult to predict. The Income from Halls in FY16 was 16.4 lacs, which increased to 21.4 lacs in FY17. Even this income was very low, considering the huge area of our prime property in Bandra. Capacity utilization was 10-15% and the halls lie unused for several days at a stretch.

*Q: What was the need for a bulk booking policy? When was it started?*

A: In June 2016, the Managing Council took a decision to allow discounts to customers who would commit to a certain number of hours of hall usage. This policy came to be known as the bulk booking policy.

The Managing Council believes that if we have more of these 'bulk' customers, we would have a better predictability of income. Today, most of KCA cost is 'fixed' (salaries, electricity, taxes) etc but income was variable and could not be predicted. This is not healthy from a financial standpoint. In fact the Managing Council is also considering some arrangements which would result in fixed monthly income for the KCA.

We need to try for maximum utilization of the halls to increase our income to pursue our goals of social service, education etc to our community in a more impacting and substantial way.

*Q: What was the income from bulk booking customers? Could members also make bulk bookings?*

A: Income from Bulk booking customers was approximately Rs. 7 lacs in FY17, which was 30% of the total Hall income of FY17.

Yes, KCA Members can also avail of bulk booking discounts. In fact, one of our Members already avails of the discounts as per this policy.

*Q: Why was the bulk booking policy not publicized earlier?*

A: This information has been available on the KCA website since July 2016, when the policy was initially finalized by the MC. We had also publicized this at the recent Thanksgiving Mass Function.

Further, all customers visiting the KCA Office, are made aware of this policy. In fact, KCA Staff has been contacting potential customers like dance classes, banks etc to hold their classes / seminars in our halls and avail of the bulk booking discounts.

*Q: Whether members were deprived of booking the hall if the bulk booking customers had already booked it?*

A: KCA has been following a first-come-first-served policy for several years. This policy will continue.

As far as Members are concerned, it is interesting to note that just 7 KCA Members booked the Halls in the last year, contributing to 5% of the Hall Income. It is unlikely that Members will be deprived of Hall usage and we have not received any complaints on this front, except for 1 Member (an office bearer!) who woke up too late to book in the peak season of December-January.

For the December-January peak period, booking are made several months in advance as is the case at most halls, gymkhanas etc. Further, Members will not be deprived of bookings, as in peak periods, Members will have to book at least one month in advance after which it will be given to bulk bookers.

*Q: Why were members being forced to use the services of caterers and decorators only from the panel?*

A: The policy to have a panel of caterers, decorators & music-sound providers, was in line with best practices followed by several institutions, including leading clubs, gymkhanas etc.

Panel members had to keep a deposit with the KCA and were subject to rules & regulations, which were formulated in response to issues like mess left behind by caterers, damage to KCA property by decorators, and playing music beyond the time by music-sound providers. These issues are likely to be resolved once a panel is in place.

If any member wanted to have a specific caterer or decorator, they could get them to empanel with the KCA. The registration fee was a nominal Rs. 500 and the refundable security deposit was Rs. 10,000, which are small amounts in the overall context.

*Q: Why are some KCA staff members allowed to do catering or decoration? Isn't there a conflict of interest?*

The Managing Council is aware of this issue and decided to take a more compassionate view of this matter, considering the 2 staff involved were not from well-to-do backgrounds and were doing this to earn some additional income to support their families, outside of their official hours of duty.

It was felt that we need to encourage their entrepreneurial spirit. Both the staff members concerned have recently registered their businesses in the names of their family members and have been accepted on the KCA panel. They will be subject to the same Rules & regulations as other Panel members. They will not be directly involved in this activity during working hours.

*Q: Why don't we put up the booking calendar on the KCA website so that members know when the halls are available for their bookings?*

A: This suggestion will be considered by the Managing Council. There may be certain privacy issues involved. We will also see what is followed by other institutions on this matter.

In any case, hall availability can be checked with a simple phone call or visit to the KCA office, where the staff have all available information in a computerized booking calendar.

**Adrian Correa (C-56)** enquired whether the bookings or usage of the hall had increased after the policy was instituted.

The Chairman informed that this was sadly not the case. In fact, over the next 3 months, we had just 2-3 bookings for the each month. Further, due to the uncertainty of the policy and complaints / interference of some KCA Members, bulk booking customers had, in fact, cut-down their bookings, and even taking their business to other venues.

While the new Hall policy may take some time to yield the desired results, members were encouraged to spread the word and help increase the patronage & usage of our halls.

**Eric D'Sa (D-24)** (Managing Council Member) stated that several facilities had been upgraded and improvements made by this Managing Council over the past few months. Despite this, the capacity utilization of our halls was very low. We need to show more flexibility in the way we deal with Hall customers and offer various discounts & incentives to induce more people to use our Halls.

We had several disadvantages including, no lift for the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor AC halls, KCA location in a narrow one-way street, limited parking etc, compared to other venues in and around Bandra. If we have to maintain our property at a certain standard and provide better services to members, there was no option but to increase the income of the Halls.

In fact, from the time we created the halls on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor by demolishing the hostel 10 years ago, the income from the halls has actually been lower than the income from the Hostel, which now occupies just 1 floor vs. the Halls which are on two floors.

**Ms Lidvina Pereira (P-81)** (Managing Council Member) stated that the Managing Council had spent a lot of time and effort, and had done a thorough due diligence done before finalizing the Hall policy and was always open to suggestions & improvements from Members. She requested the Members present for their support & trust in the running of the Association and that we should all work together in the best interest of the KCA.

She also added that empanelling family concerns of staff would result in empowering them and improving their standard of living. However, proper checks and controls will be in place to ensure there is no conflict of interest.

**Jeffrey Saldanha (SA-8)** queried why he was asked to pay a Security deposit of Rs. 25,000/- for his bulk booking when he was only booking the small hall for a weekly prayer meeting / Latin Mass.

The Chairman mentioned that as per the Bulk booking policy, the deposit was Rs. 25,000/-. He requested Mr. Saldanha to write a letter to Managing Council requesting for a lower deposit and the Council would consider the same.

**Ryan Pais (P-76)** (Managing Council Member) suggested that since there was a provision in the KCA Rules & Regulations that contracts greater than Rs 1 lac should have prior approval of the General Body, we should take this into consideration when putting the resolution to vote.

The Chairman agreed to the suggestion and stated that we can suitable modify the wording of the resolution to incorporate this point.

**Adrian Correa** then suggested that the resolution be brought forward and requested the Hon. Secretary to put the Resolution to vote.

The Resolution was put to vote:

*“Resolved that that the General Body has reviewed & approved the updated policies for use of the KCA Community Halls and authorizes the Managing Council to put in place such schemes, discounts, rules & regulations from time to time, including entering into contracts (for a duration up to 1 year), to maximize the usage of the halls and income of the Association.”*

Proposed By :           Adrian Correa

Seconded By:         Dr. Christopher Rego

Resolution Passed     For : **38**

Against : **1**             Abstained: **1**

The meeting ended at 6.45 pm with a vote of thanks to the Chair and a closing prayer led by **Ms Lidvina Pereira** in thanksgiving for a peaceful and fruitful meeting and exhorting members to work together and move forward in unity.