MINUTES OF MEETING WITH THE JOHANNESBURG REGISTRAR OF DEEDS & OTHERS ON 11 MARCH 2015 AT 11H00

PRESENT:

- Registrar
- Deputy Registrar
- Pauline (Jhb Deeds Office)
- Marie (Roving Conveyancer's Representative)
- Nicci Sauli-Koren (JAA)
- Dylene Soobramoney (JAA)

AGENDA:

1. Feedback from previous meeting held on 11th February 2015
2. Request for notice to be issued regarding the current delays in receiving copies and delivery of deeds
3. Interdicts – restriction on taking pictures with a cell phone
4. Distribution room and the tracking of matters where rates are due to expire
5. Rejections relating to incomplete VA copies
6. Internal notes between examiners
7. Payment of accounts after 30 (thirty) days

MINUTES

1. FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2015

1.1. VA COPIES, SCANNING FACILITIES AND DELIVERIES

1.1.1. **INFRASTRUCTURE** - The Registrar confirmed that the new infrastructure was installed on Thursday, 5th March 2015. She also advised that they are still in the process of completing the migration of all information from the old system.

1.1.2. **GENERATORS** - The Registrar also confirmed that they are in the process of acquiring new generators for installation which will allow them to keep ***key functions*** operational during load-shedding. This will avoid the need to re-boot their systems and will considerably improve their current turn-around times.

She also advised that it is too soon to assess the results of the new system and that the backlog will take some time to be resolved and minimised.

1.1.3. **VA COPIES** – Marie confirmed that with the installation of the new infrastructure/systems there seems to be a noticeable improvement in the turn-around times in receiving VA copies but there are still the backlogs that have to be dealt with.

1.1.4. **STAFFING** - It was raised that staffing in the VA copies section is an issue as they are short staffed and too much of their current time is being spent on crisis-management and/or dealing with constant queries on the telephone.

1.1.5. The Registrar acknowledged that staffing is an issue and that they are currently under-staffed. She also confirmed that they are proceeding with their recruitment plan and should be employing more junior examiners shortly. She also pointed out that the junior examiners will not be immediately examining deeds as they will still need to spend a month at registrations and approximately a month in training.

1.1.6. **DELIVERIES** – The Registrar advised that 10 (ten) staff members have been re-allocated to the deliveries section to assist with the backlog.

1.1.7. **ELEVATORS** – The Deputy Registrar confirmed that he has already engaged with the landlord regarding the issues with the elevators, who in turn has already engaged with OTIS. He advised that the current timeline for the completion of the renovation of the elevators is the end of July 2015 and that he will follow up on the immediate maintenance issues with the landlord. Marie requested that the goods lift be made available for use when there are power outages.

1.1.8. **REGISTRAR'S CIRCULAR 2 OF 2015** – Nicci confirmed that this was not emailed to her. **The Deputy Registrar undertook to email same to Nicci**.

2. REQUEST FOR NOTICE TO BE ISSUED REGARDING THE CURRENT DELAYS IN RECEIVING COPIES AND DELIVERY OF DEEDS

2.1. Marie advised that she is receiving numerous requests from her clients regarding the delays in obtaining VA copies and the delivery of deeds.

2.2. Marie also advised that some of the firms do not want to accept her explanation regarding the delays and challenges at the deeds office.

2.3. **Marie requested that the Registrar issue a notice to all conveyancers which confirms the current delays and challenges and that same is being attended to.**

3. INTERDICTS – RESTRICTION ON THE TAKING OF PICTURES WITH A CELL PHONE

3.1. The Registrar advised that taking photographs of interdicts with cell phones is prohibited because the deeds office sells this information to the public. If photographs are taken then it may be distributed freely without the public having to pay for the information.

3.2. **She also confirmed that the interdicts department must deal with interdict queries immediately and that the process for these requests (interdicts and flyleaf conditions) will be streamlined.**.

4. DISTRIBUTION ROOM AND THE TRACKING OF MATTERS WHERE RATES ARE DUE TO EXPIRE

4.1. Marie explained that she and other conveyancers are experiencing difficulties in obtaining their files from the distribution room. She advised that on one particular matter (in which her clearance certificate was expiring on the day) she had to wait for extended periods of time to obtain her documents.

4.2. The Deputy Registrar advised that in order to avoid these frustrations and any confrontations, conveyancers must also get actively involved in their matters and regularly track the progress of their matters (where clearances are due to expire). He advised that queries on the last day places the distribution room under pressure as well. Therefore these matters should be dealt with at least two to three days before the end of the month.

4.3. **The Registrar confirmed that they will only deal with requests for expedited registration if the matter has been lodged for a period of 7 (seven days) or more. Requests for documents lodged for a period of less than 7 (seven) days will not be dealt with. Nicci requested that a notice in this regard be sent to all conveyancers.**

4.4. The Registrar also confirmed that some conveyancers are abusing the system in that they request expeditions to register when their clearances are not due to expire but when their HOA certificate is due to expire. The Registrar confirmed that expedition requests are limited to rates clearance certificates only and not HOA certificates. **A notice in this regard was also suggested.**

5. INCOMPLETE VA COPIES

5.1. Marie advised that there have been instances where matters have been rejected because the VA copies are incomplete.

5.2. The Registrar confirmed that the correct procedure is that the examiner and not the conveyancer must go to the VA section and personally make enquiries regarding the missing pages.

6. **INTERNAL NOTES BETWEEN JUNIOR AND SENIOR EXAMINERS**

These notes are left for the conveyancer to remove and the Registrar requested that these types of instances must be brought to her attention as this practice is not permitted in the deeds office.

7. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AFTER 30 (THIRTY) DAYS

7.1. Pauline confirmed that the late payment by numerous conveyancers has become a financial concern for the deeds office.

7.2. The Registrar advised that she has a list of "repeat offenders" and will be addressing a letter to the conveyancers confirming that, with effect from 1st April 2015 should they default on their payment within the ensuing 6 (six) months then the deeds office will not provide any further services to the firm on credit but will instead insist on cash upfront. The defaulting firms' account will be closed as opposed to suspended and no further lodgements will be allowed.

7.3. Nicci requested that a copy of the notice be emailed to her to place on the JAA website.

APRIL 2015 MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting will be held on 8th April 2015.