

1. FACTUAL DETERMINATION OF QUASI-JUDICIAL BODIES SHOULD BE ACCORDED WITH FINALITY

NWPC Case No. W.O. 15-001

IN RE: APPEAL FROM WAGE ORDER NO. NCR-19

ASSOCIATION OF MINIMUM WAGE EARNERS-PHILIPPINE TRADE AND GENERAL WORKERS ORGANIZATION (AMWEA-PTGWO), Appellant.

Wage Order; Appeal; Compliance with the Procedural Rules. – Procedural rules are not to be belittled or dismissed simply because their non-observance may have resulted in prejudice to a party’s substantive rights. Like all rules, they are required to be followed except only for the most persuasive of reasons when they may be relaxed to relieve a litigant of an injustice not commensurate with the degree of his thoughtlessness in not complying with the procedure prescribed (Lazaro v. Court of Appeals (386 Phil 412, 417 [2000]) citing Galang v. CA (G.R. No. 76221, July 29, 1991, 199 SCRA 683)

Same; Same, Factual Findings of Quasi-Judicial Bodies. – The Commission stressed that unless it finds arbitrariness and/or whimsical exercise of the power of the Board, its factual determination in the issuance of wage orders, including the amount and form of wage increase, is generally accorded respect. Well-embedded is the jurisprudence that factual findings of quasi-judicial bodies in the exercise of their quasi-judicial duties are accorded not only with respect but also with finality if such findings are supported by substantial evidence (Villareal v. CA, 219 SCRA 219). It is only upon clear showing of grave abuse of discretion and disregard of the NWPC Amended Rules of Procedure on Minimum

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Wage Fixing and the Rules on Exemption that such factual determinations may be altered or modified.

FACTS:

In response to AMWEA-PTGWO's petition for a P146.80 per day wage increase, the Board conducted public consultations/hearing in various areas in the region and thereafter issued Wage Order No. NCR-19 granting a P15.00 per day wage increase to all covered private sector minimum wage earners in the region. Hence, the unverified appeal of AMWEA-PTGWO alleging that the Board committed grave and reversible error in failing to grant the amount of P146.80 daily minimum wage increase.

ISSUE:

WHETHER OR NOT THE BOARD COMMITTED GRAVE AND REVERSIBLE ERROR IN GRANTING ONLY A P15.00 PER DAY WAGE INCREASE UNDER WAGE ORDER NO. NCR-19

HELD:

The Commission, before resolving the issue, stressed the importance of compliance with the verification, number of copies and appeal memorandum requirements, citing *Lazaro v. Court of Appeals* (386 Phil 412, 417 [2000]) and *Galang v. CA* (G.R. No. 76221, July 29, 1991, 199 SCRA 683), where the Supreme Court declared that procedural rules are not to be belittled or dismissed simply because their non-observance may have resulted in prejudice to a party's substantive rights. Like all rules, they are required to be followed except only for the most persuasive of reasons when they may be relaxed to receive a litigant of an injustice not commensurate with the degree of his thoughtlessness in not complying with the procedure prescribed.

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The Commission in its Decision dated 11 May 2015 found that the Board did not commit grave and reversible error in granting a P15.00 wage increase only, since it followed the substantive and procedural due process in the issuance of the Wage Order as set forth in R.A. 6727, the Commission's Amended Rules of Procedure on Minimum Wage Fixing and the Amended Rules on Exemption, such as: conduct of sectoral consultations and public hearing, review and study of prevailing socio-economic conditions and publication of Wage Order issued in a newspaper of general circulation in the region.

The Commission stressed that unless it finds arbitrariness and/or whimsical exercise of the power of the Board, its factual determination in the issuance of wage orders, including the amount and form of wage increase, is generally accorded respect. Well-embedded is the jurisprudence that factual findings of quasi-judicial bodies in the exercise of their quasi-judicial duties are accorded not only with respect but also with finality if such findings are supported by substantial evidence (*Villareal v. CA*, 219 SCRA 219). It is only upon clear showing of grave abuse of discretion and disregard of the NWPC Amended Rules of Minimum Wage Fixing and the Rules on Exemption that such factual determinations may be altered or modified.

The appeal filed by the AMWEA-PTGWO is denied for lack of merit. The assailed Wage Order No. NCR-19 issued on March 16, 2015 by the Board is Affirmed.

CONFERIDO (Chairperson-Designate); ESGUERRA (Vice-Chairperson); DIWA, RONDAIN (Commissioners); SY (Member), voted to deny the appeal.

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