

PILOTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Ref. : HQ/COM 928/29 (19)

Minutes of the Pilotage Advisory Committee Meeting

Date : 22 May 2007 (Tuesday)
Place : Conference Room A, 24/F, Harbour Building
Time : 10:30 a.m.

Present

Chairman: Mr. Francis LIU	Deputy Director of Marine
Member: Capt. David WATKINS	Master Mariner
Mr. TSANG Man-ching	Master Mariner
Ms. Gloria CHOY	Representing Containers Terminal Operators
<i>(on behalf of Capt. Rado Antolovic)</i>	
Mr. Edward CHIU	Representing Dry Bulk Cargo Operators
Mr. Peter YIM	Representing HK Liner Shipping Association
Capt. CHAN Chung-wing	Representing HK Pilots Association
Capt. CHEN Yu-chi	Representing HK Pilots Association
Capt. LAM Wing-shing	Representing HK Shipowners Association
<i>(on behalf of Capt. CHAN Lok-ching)</i>	
Mr. CHENG Siu-lun	Representing Oil Terminal Operators
Capt. WU Ka-shun	Representing Tug Operators
<i>(on behalf of Capt. Alan LOYND)</i>	
Mr. SIN Tak-cheung	AD/PC, Marine Department
Mr. BUTT Lee-yuen	GM/VTS (Ag.), Marine Department
Mr. TONG Ho-lok	S(N)Exam, Marine Department
Secretary: Mr. John LEUNG	ADS/C&G, Marine Department

In Attendance

Mr. Terence SIT	HK General Chamber of Commerce
Mr. CHOR Yee-on	HK Pilots Association (HKPA)
Mr. WANG Chi-cheong	- ditto -
Mr. YEUNG Wai-tin	- ditto -
Mr. Andrew NG	MO/Pilotage, Marine Department

Absent with Apologies

Capt. Joseph FONSEKA
Mr. TO Wing-sing
Mr. LI Pok-yan

Master Mariner
Representing Break Bulk Cargo Operators
Representing Dockyard Industry

OPENING REMARKS

1. The Chairman welcomed all present. He extended particular welcome to -

- (a) Capt. LAM Wing-shing, who was attending the meeting on behalf of Capt. CHAN Lok-ching representing the HK Shipowners Association;
- (b) Ms. Gloria CHOY, who was attending the meeting on behalf of Capt. Rado Antolovic representing the containers terminal operators;
- (c) Capt. WU Ka-shun, who was attending the meeting on behalf of Capt. Alan LOYND representing the tug operators;

and the following members who were attending the meeting for the first time –

- (a) Capt. David WATKINS
- (b) Mr. TSANG Man-ching
- (c) Capt. CHAN Chung-wing

2. The Chairman told the meeting that the following members were not able to attend the meeting and had sent apologies for absence –

- (a) Capt. Joseph FONSEKA
- (b) Mr. TO Wing-sing
- (c) Mr. LI Pok-yan

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting

3. The minutes of last meeting were confirmed without any amendment.

II. Interviewing of Apprentice Pilot

4. Mr. CHING Kwan-ming briefed members of his background and was asked some questions about his experience and the reason why he would like to join the pilots profession. Members were satisfied with his qualifications and experience. The Chairman confirmed that Mr. CHING had already passed the necessary medical examinations, and with unanimous agreement from members he would recommend him to the Pilotage Authority for registration as apprentice pilot.

(Post-meeting notes: With the approval from the Pilotage Authority, Mr. CHING registered as apprentice pilot on 23.5.2007.)

III. New Discussion Item

PAC Paper No. 1/2007 – “Proposed Amendments to Berthing Guidelines”

5. The Chairman informed members that the amendments proposed in this paper had been circulated within the PAC Working Group on 7.5.2007. The majority of the Working Group members endorsed the amendments while comments had been received from three members.
6. In response to the comments, Mr. Andrew NG said that he agreed that in terms of maneuverability twin-screw tugs were better than single-screw tugs. However, grade II tugs were used for berthing/unberthing of all vessels up to 130m and as there were only two twin-screw grade II tugs available for the purpose of the

berthing guidelines, it would seem not practical for them to serve all vessels up to 130m. Furthermore, from the experience of the pilots, the performance of single-screw grade II tugs with sufficient power was found satisfactory. The two new tug service providers had been providing tug service for over 20 years, and therefore had good experience in this trade. One of the service providers, Kong Luen Tug was providing tug service to oil tankers berthing/unberthing at Sha Chau and Tsing Yi Oil Terminals. The inclusion of new tug service providers in the berthing guidelines was not a tender exercise, but served to provide information of tug services available in the market. The terms of reference for employment and operational audit of all the tug companies were commercial decisions which should be considered by users rather than PAC.

7. Capt. WU Ka-shun disagreed that there was shortage of grade II tugs as grade I tugs were often used as grade II. In the light of the comments made in paragraph 4. of the Paper, he supported further consultation be carried out.
8. The Chairman asked the pilots whether there had been any complaint or problem with the single-screw tugs. Capt. CHEN Yu-chi's response was in the negative. He said that at the last PAC meeting held on 14 December 2006 members endorsed the definition of grade II tugs as "local licensed with horsepower at least 1,248 HP (total)", which meant that both single- and twin-screw tugs were included.
9. Capt. WU Ka-shun expressed concern on the safety of using single-screw tugs, in the case of engine failure especially under conditions of strong tidal stream or restricted waters such as in the vicinity of oil terminals at Sha Chau and Tsing Yi. He also asked why twin-screw tugs were taken out from the guidelines. Capt. CHEN Yu-chi responded that the current practice was that twin-screw tugs were used for all vessels less than 130m at all terminals, and re-iterated that the word 'total' included twin-screw tugs.

10. Capt. WU Ka-shun raised further concern on the tug masters' experience of the new tug service providers. He opined that there was a long and good relationship between pilots and tug masters and worried that if the tug masters of the new service providers were not adequately trained, there might be communication problems between the pilots and the tug masters. Capt. CHEN Yu-chi replied that he had never received such complaints, and if a pilot found that any tug master had not been properly trained to perform his duties, the pilot would stop using the service of the tug master.
11. After some more discussion, members agreed that the guidelines should be revised to clarify the types of tugs considered suitable for the service. The revised guidelines would be circulated to PAC Working Group members for comments.

IV. Any Other Business

Declaration of Interests

12. The Chairman said that at present members were required to register their interests on appointment and annually thereafter. A member was also required to disclose his interest if he perceived a potential conflict of interest in a matter placed before the committee. The guidelines on the system of declaration of interests by PAC members were last issued in 1994, and the Government had updated the guidelines recently. The Secretary briefed members on the updated guidelines and said that in general, the types of interests required for disclosure had remained unchanged. The updated guidelines provided further explanation on the system and clarification on situations where disclosure of interests was required. A new PAC paper on the updated guidelines was being prepared and would be circulated to members as soon as available.

Pilot Detention Charge at Tap Shek Kok

13. Mr. Peter YIM raised the issue that only 15 minutes of free time was granted for transfer of pilots between Hong Kong and Shekou/Chiwan, and a pilot detention charge of HK\$1,200 per hour would be imposed on the carrier/liners after 15 minutes. There were a large number of vessels exceeding the 15 minute free time when Hong Kong and Mainland pilots were transferred. Mr. YIM would like to request the HKPA to extend the free time to 30 minutes. A brief discussion concluded that the Liner Shipping Association and the HKPA should communicate directly to sort out the problem.

V. Date of Next Meeting

14. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11:45 a.m. The date of the next meeting would be announced in due course.