

PILOTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Ref. : HQ/COM 928/29 (20)

Minutes of the Pilotage Advisory Committee Meeting

Date : 15 October 2009 (Thursday)
Place : Conference Room A, 24/F, Harbour Building
Time : 9:30 a.m.

Present

Chairman: Mr. Francis LIU	Deputy Director of Marine
Member: Capt. WU Kou-qing	Representing HK Shipowners Association
<i>(on behalf of Capt. CHAN Lok-ching)</i>	
Mr. Peter YIM	Representing HK Liner Shipping Association
Ms. Gloria CHOY	Representing Container Terminal Operators
Mr. Edward CHIU	Representing Dry Bulk Cargo Operators
Mr. TO Wing-sing	Representing Break Bulk Cargo Operators
Mr. CHENG Siu-lun	Representing Oil Terminal Operators
Mr. NG Ming-fai	Representing Dockyard Industry
Capt. WU Ka-shun	Representing Tug Operators
<i>(on behalf of Mr. Phileas FONG)</i>	
Capt. CHEN Yu-chi	Representing HK Pilots Association (HKPA)
Mr. SIU Wai-lim	Representing HK Pilots Association
Mr. LEE Yuk-kwong	AD/PC, Marine Department
Mr. Raymond CHUNG	GM/VTS, Marine Department
Secretary: Mr. John LEUNG	ADS/C&G, Marine Department

In Attendance

Mr. Dickson CHIN	HK General Chamber of Commerce
Mr. CHOR Yee-on	HK Pilots Association (HKPA)
Capt. CHU Wah-sau, Summy	- ditto -
Mr. Andrew NG	MO/Pilotage, Marine Department

Absent with Apologies

Mr. LAM Wing-shing	Master Mariner
Mr. TSANG Man-ching	Master Mariner
Capt. David WATKINS	Master Mariner
Mr. TONG Ho-lok	S(N)Exam, Marine Department

OPENING REMARKS

1. The Chairman welcomed all present. He extended particular welcome to the following members who were attending the meeting for the first time –

- (a) Ms. Gloria CHOY
- (b) Mr. LEE Yuk-kwong

and the following observer -

- (a) Mr. Dickson CHIN

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting

2. The minutes of the Special Meeting held on 9.4.2009 were confirmed without any amendments.

II. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes of Meeting

Review of Class I Pilots' Continued Proficiency Development Programme (CPDP)

3. Mr. Andrew NG reported to members that the second meeting of the Working Group on CPDP had been held on 10.3.2009. The HKPA had prepared the

scenarios for ship simulation for the Working Group members' consideration in August 2009. Subsequently, the scenarios had been finalized and trial runs had been conducted at MD's Training Centre at the end of August 2009. The first combined CPDP course on "Managerial and Practical Aspects" would be held on 29 and 30 October 2009 at MD's Training Centre. Members of the Working Group would be invited to attend the course to evaluate its effectiveness.

4. Members had no further comments on the CPDP. The Chairman concluded that the programme was finalised as proposed.

[Post-meeting note: Capt. WU Kou-qing (on behalf of Capt. CHAN Lok-ching), Mr. Raymond CHUNG and Mr. Andrew NG attended the first combined CPDP course on "Managerial and Practical Aspects" on 29 October 2009. The course had been found satisfactory.]

III. New Discussion Items

PAC Paper No. 5/2009 – "Adjustment to Pilotage Dues"

5. Capt. CHEN Yu-chi briefed members that the HKPA had been approached by the Hong Kong Liners Shipping Association (HKLSA) proposing to reduce the pilotage dues to help out the liners industry in the economic downturn. After discussions between the representatives of HKLSA and HKPA, it had been agreed that the additional pilotage due of \$1900 for the pilot to board or disembark a ship off Ngan Chau or at the West of Lamma Island would be reduced to \$1820 for a period of 18 months from the commencement date.
6. Mr. LEE Yuk-kwong asked how the amount of \$80 was calculated, and whether consideration would be given to continue the reduction after 18 months if the economy had not improved. Capt. CHEN said that if the economy remained difficult upon the expiry of the reduction period, they would be happy to discuss with the HKLSA as necessary. He also said that the amount of \$80 was

mutually agreed between the HKPA and the HKLSA after detailed discussion, and it represented the most that the pilots could afford to reduce.

7. Mr. Andrew NG said that the proposal was expected to be submitted to the Legislative Council's Panel on Economic Development (the Panel) for consultation on 16 November 2009. Subject to the Legislative Council's approval, the proposed reduction might become effective early next year. Members had no other comments on the paper. The Chairman concluded that the paper was endorsed unanimously.

[Post-meeting note: The consultation with the Panel was completed on 16 November 2009. Tentatively, the proposed additional due of \$1820 would come into operation on 1 February 2010 and be restored to \$1900 on 1 August 2011.]

PAC Paper No. 6/2009 – “Proposed Amendments to Pilotage Ordinance, Cap. 84”

8. The Chairman pointed out that all seven proposed amendments on the Pilotage Ordinance, Cap. 84 had been previously endorsed by PAC between 1995 and 2006. Due to limited legislative slots and priority, these proposed legislative amendments were still outstanding. As the consultations had been done for some time, opportunity was taken to update the proposed amendments and to consult members again. Mr. Andrew NG presented the paper and briefed members on each proposed amendment in details.

Proposed addition of a representative from the local shipping agencies' sector (para. 3(ii))

9. Mr. Peter YIM opined that most of the liner companies in Hong Kong already acted as agents for their parent companies, and therefore these companies rarely needed to appoint a local agent. Mr. Andrew NG said that there were some local shipping agencies which handled considerable tramp ships calling at Hong

Kong. Furthermore, some shipping companies which did not have ships calling at Hong Kong frequently might still have to appoint local agents. The Chairman said that the proposed new membership would nevertheless represent consumers' interest more comprehensively.

Proposed substitution of the term "gross registered tonnage (GRT)" with "gross tonnage (GT)" (para. 3(iv))

10. Mr. Peter YIM asked if other terms such as "net registered tonnage (NRT)" used in other contexts, such as port charges, would also need to be substituted so that the use of terms would be standardized. Mr. Andrew NG said that NRT was not used in the Pilotage Ordinance. Mr. Raymond CHUNG said that the proposed amendment would not change the pilotage dues at all.

Proposed relocation of the Urmston Road Pilot Boarding Station (para. 3(v))

11. Mr. Edward CHIU opined that for navigation safety, the proposed change should not have been required to wait for such a long time. Mr. Andrew NG said that before the legislation was amended, operational procedures had already been adopted to match the timing for embarking/disembarking of the Hong Kong and Shekou pilots near the proposed new position of the pilot boarding station in Urmston Road.
12. Mr. Andrew NG said that MD aimed to submit the proposed amendments to the Legislative Council in the 2010-2011 legislative session under one amendment bill. Members had no other comments on the paper. The Chairman concluded that the paper was endorsed unanimously.

IV. Any Other Business

Necessity of Deploying Higher Powered Tugs for Berthing and Unberthing Very Large Container Ships (VLCS)

13. Copies of a letter from Mr. Phileas FONG, representative of the tug operators,

dated 30 September 2009 on the necessity of deploying higher-powered tugs for berthing and unberthing VLCS had been tabled for members' reference. Capt. WU Ka-shun said that it had been noted that the number of VLCS with overall length of about 400m calling at Hong Kong had been increasing, and more powerful tugs would have to be deployed as a result.

14. Mr. Peter YIM said that it was noted from Mr. FONG's letter that orders for three high-powered tugs had been placed. He asked when they would be delivered. Capt. WU replied that he did not have details of the orders from the two companies concerned, but it would usually take more than one year for delivery. So there would be enough time for discussion. Mr. YIM said that the tug charges might be increased if higher-powered tugs were deployed unless the number of tugs could be reduced. Capt. CHEN Yu-chi opined that for safety reason, increased demand for higher-powered tugs would be inevitable in the next couple of years with the increase in the size of the vessels calling at Hong Kong. .

15. After discussion, the meeting agreed that a working group with parties concerned, including representatives from the parties concerned, such as HKPA, HKLSA, tug operators, master mariners, should be set up to discuss this issue. The Chairman asked Mr. Andrew NG to arrange the setting up of the working group.

Government Mooring Buoy (GMB) mooring requirements

16. Mr. SIU Wai-lim raised that the number of ships using GMBs had been reduced significantly in recent years; however, the number of accidents involving mooring gang crews during GMB mooring/unmooring operations had increased. He opined that the accidents were mainly attributed to the design of the GMBs, not human error. Capt. CHEN Yu-chi said that as the utilization of GMBs had been reduced significantly, some new pilots and new mooring gang crews might not be able to gain sufficient practical experience in GMB mooring/unmooring operations. He suggested that a study group be set up to look into the mooring

procedures and whether the mooring components could be improved as the existing mooring components were too cumbersome for handling.

17. Capt. WU Ka-shun opined that some service users seemed to have adopted their own mooring procedures without regard to proper guidelines. Mr. Peter YIM pointed out that the HKPA had provided guidelines on mooring/unmooring to the shipping companies for distribution to their fleet some years ago. The Chairman said that a number of GMBs had been removed due to very low utilization rate, and this trend would likely continue. Mr. Andrew NG said that 12 GMBs would be removed by the end of this year, and there would be a total of 17 GMBs left next year. Capt. WU said that it was possible that mooring gang crews had become less experienced and therefore more prone to accidents. After discussion, the Chairman asked Mr. Andrew NG to liaise with MD's Mooring Unit to seek their views on the matter, and report to members at the next meeting.

[Post-meeting note: MD's Mooring Unit will visit their GMB manufacturer in Shandong Province in early December 2009 and will look into the availability of more advanced mooring components.]

V. Date of Next Meeting

18. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:55 a.m. The date of the next meeting would be announced in due course.