

PORT WELFARE COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the Port Welfare Committee Meeting
held on 29 September 2020 at 2:30 p.m.
in Conference Room A, 24th Floor,
Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong**

Present

Mr CHAO Sih-hing, Francois	Chairman	Hong Kong Shipowners Association
Mr CHAN Kam-foo	Member	Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce
Capt Paritosh DUBE <i>(on behalf of Capt Firoze Minoo MIRZA)</i>	Member	Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce
Mr CHAN Wai-leung	Member	Merchant Navy Officers' Guild – Hong Kong
Mr LIAO Bowen	Member	Hong Kong Seamen's Union
Miss KAM Wing-yin, Gloria	Member	Labour Department (ex-officio)
Dr LAU Ming-ho <i>(on behalf of Dr LEUNG Yiu-hong)</i>	Member	Department of Health (ex-officio)
Mr CHAN Ming-yau	Member	Marine Department (ex-officio)
Ms Lisa CHIU	Secretary	Marine Department (ex-officio)

In attendance

Ms Jessica LAM	Marine Department
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OPENING REMARKS

The Secretary welcomed all to the meeting and introduced the following Members –

- (a) Mr CHAO Sih-hing, Francois of the Hong Kong Shipowners Association;
- (b) Mr CHAN Kam-foo as representative of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce;
- (c) Capt Paritosh DUBE, who attended the meeting on behalf of Capt Firoze Minoo MIRZA, as representative of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce;
- (d) Mr CHAN Wai-leung as representative of the Merchant Navy Officers' Guild - Hong Kong;
- (e) Mr LIAO Bowen of the Hong Kong Seamen's Union;
- (f) Dr LAU Ming-ho, who attended the meeting on behalf of Dr LEUNG Yiu-hong of the Department of Health, as ex-officio Member;
- (g) Miss KAM Wing-yin, Gloria of the Labour Department as ex-officio Member;
- (h) Mr CHAN Ming-yau of the Marine Department as ex-officio Member; and
- (i) Ms Jessica LAM of the Marine Department who was in attendance at the meeting.

2. The Secretary introduced the Membership of 2020-2023 term of the Port Welfare Committee (the Committee) and invited Members to note the Terms of Reference of the Committee as follows –

- (a) To co-ordinate on behalf of Government arrangements in Hong Kong for social and recreational welfare of all serving seamen, with the exception of those who are residing in Hong Kong. The term “serving seamen” shall be construed to mean “those seamen visiting the port and those temporarily residing here, consequent upon discharge for health or other reasons, awaiting re-engagement or repatriation”.
 - (b) To allocate any grants of monies which the Committee may receive from all sources for the social and recreational welfare of seamen.
 - (c) To obtain information on developments and facilities in connection with seamen’s welfare in other ports, and to take appropriate action in the light of this information.
 - (d) To take such other action as it may see fit to promote the welfare of seamen, including action in conjunction with other social and recreational bodies.
 - (e) To publish an annual report and audited accounts.
3. The Secretary informed Members that the minutes of the last meeting were circulated to Members and confirmed in March 2020.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. (a) Declaration of Interests

4. The Secretary referred Members to the extract of the notes of the Committee meeting held on 13 September 2002 and PWC Paper No. 1/2002 “Declaration of Interests by Members of the PWC” at Appendix A of the agenda. She briefed Members that since 2002, the Committee had adopted a one-tier system for declaration of interests whereby the Chairman/a Member was required to disclose his/her interest at the meeting when he/she considered that there was a potential conflict of interest in a matter placed before the Committee. All cases of declaration

of interests should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Members noted the one-tier declaration of interests system.

(b) Change of the Key Controller

5. The Secretary briefed Members on the change of the key controllers for the bank accounts of the Committee. Arrangement had been made to update the bank records for Ms CHIU Kwok-yi taking up the post of the Secretary of the Committee *vice* Ms NG Yin-nei and Miss CHAU Pui-tin taking up the post of the Treasurer of the Committee *vice* Miss TUNG Mei-yi. Arrangement would also be made to inform the bank on the change of Chairmanship after the meeting. A service charge of HK\$200 would be debited by the bank.

II. Election of Committee Chairman

6. The Secretary advised that the Chairman for the new term of the Committee was to be elected among the non-official Members and invited for nomination. Mr CHAN Kam-foo nominated Mr CHAO Sih-hing to be the new Chairman and Mr CHAN Wai-leung seconded the proposal. With the unanimous support of Members, Mr Chao was elected Chairman of the Committee for the term of 2020-2023.

7. Mr Chao thanked Members for their support and expressed his gratitude to take up the Chairmanship of the Committee.

III. Discussion Items

(a) Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2020

8. The meeting noted the following financial position of the Committee for the year ended 31 March 2020 as set out on page 2 of the financial statement at Appendix B of the agenda which had been circulated to Members before the meeting –

	<u>HK\$</u>
Income	176,000
Expenditure	<u>176,200</u>
Deficit	(200)
Surplus at the beginning of the year (i.e. 1 April 2019)	<u>34,574</u>
Surplus at the end of the year (i.e. 31 March 2020)	34,374

9. Members endorsed the Committee's account unanimously. They further endorsed the re-appointment of the Marine Department's Treasury Accountant / Internal Auditor as the Honorary Auditor for the Committee's account in 2020-21.

(b) Potential Donors for 2020-2021

10. The Secretary said that a list of recommended donors and a list of potential donors for 2020-2021 had been circulated to Members together with the agenda of the meeting. She elaborated that the recommended donor list at Appendix C had included organisations/companies which had made donations to the Committee in 2019-2020 and recommended the Committee to continue to appeal for their donations in 2020-2021. The list at Appendix D included other potential donors to whom the Committee could appeal for support this year and any suggestions were welcome.

11. The Chairman appealed for Members' support and assistance. He invited all Members to review the donor lists and let the Secretary have the suggestions by mid-October 2020.

(c) Draft Annual Report for 2019-2020

12. The Secretary reported that a copy of the draft Annual Report for 2019-2020 had been sent to Members before the meeting (Appendix E of the agenda). The Report, among others, had given a detailed account of the work and achievements of the two voluntary agencies, namely the Sailors' Home and Missions to Seamen and the Danish Seamen's Church,

Hong Kong, in providing social and recreational welfare for seafarers visiting Hong Kong and those temporarily residing in Hong Kong. The Annual Report would be sent to the potential donors together with the appeal letters inviting for donations, which would be issued by the Chairman on behalf of the Committee.

13. The Chairman invited Members' comments on the draft Annual Report. Members confirmed that they had no further comment on the draft Annual Report.

IV. Any Other Business

14. The Chairman expressed that with the COVID-19 crisis, it had been a challenging period for seafarers in the past few months. He referred to the Terms of Reference of the Committee and invited Members to consider if there would be issues for discussion.

15. Mr Dube raised the issue on signing-on/off of seafarers at the Hong Kong Port during the pandemic. The Chairman said that Hong Kong was one of the first batch of cities to have responded positively to the global seafarers' crisis. While safeguarding public health was of paramount importance, he considered that the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (the Government) should be helpful and sympathetic towards the seafarers. He enquired how the Committee could convey its view and urge the Government to extend greater support to seafarers. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Secretary would check for the possible follow-up actions.

[Post meeting note: The Secretary on behalf of the Committee wrote to the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) on 19 October 2020 about the Committee's concern over the welfare of seafarers stranded on board ships, and its request for the Government to consider possible measures to facilitate crew change in the Hong Kong Port. THB replied on 6 November 2020 and its reply is at Annex.]

V. Date of Next Meeting

16. The Secretary said that the next meeting would be held in six months' time, i.e. around March 2021. Members would be informed of the date and details in due course.

17. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 3:10 p.m.

No signature on website copy
(Mr CHAO Sih-hing, Francois)
Chairman

No signature on website copy
(Ms Lisa CHIU)
Secretary

The minutes of the meeting were confirmed on 26 March 2021.

Port Welfare Committee
March 2021