

PORT WELFARE COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the Port Welfare Committee Meeting
held on 15 March 2024 at 3:00 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 TO Wing-hong, Kelvin <i>(on behalf of Captain LAU Mang-tak)</i>	Member	Merchant Navy Officers' Guild – Hong Kong
Captain CHOW Tak- chor, William	Member	Hong Kong Seamen's Union
Ms NG Soo-wah, Louise	Member	Labour Department (ex-officio)
Dr LAU Ming-ho <i>(on behalf of Dr LO Chiu-sing, Patrick)</i>	Member	Department of Health (ex-officio)
Mr NG Ngai-wing, Jammy	Member	Marine Department (ex-officio)
Miss Alletta LAM <i>(on behalf of Ms Lisa CHIU)</i>	Secretary	Marine Department (ex-officio)

In attendance

Ms Angel CHAN	Marine Department
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Absent with apology

Mr CHAN Kam-foo	Member	Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce
Captain Firoze Minoo MIRZA	Member	Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce

OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, in particular the following persons –

- (a) Mr TO Wing Hong, Kelvin, who attended the meeting on behalf of Captain LAU Mang-tak as representative of Merchant Navy Officers' Guild – Hong Kong
- (b) Dr LAU Ming-ho, Port Health Officer (Harbour), who attended the meeting on behalf of Dr Patrick LO as representative of the Department of Health.

Since Captain MIRZA was absent from the meeting, the Chairman expressed that Members might speak in Cantonese during the meeting to facilitate a more interactive discussion. In the long run, the Chairman agreed that an Official Languages Officer colleague from MD would attend the meeting to provide simultaneous interpretation for Members in future.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Matters Arising from the Last Meeting held on 6 September 2023

2. The Chairman recalled that he had invited Members at the last meeting to offer views and advice on the work of the Committee, and

appreciated Captain MIRZA had put up two suggestions. He hence proposed the meeting to start with discussing the suggestions.

3. The Secretary then informed Members that the Secretariat had circulated Captain MIRZA's suggestions for Members' views in November 2023 but no comment was received so far. To facilitate discussion, she briefed Members again of the contents therein and tabled the suggestions for Members' easy reference –

- (i) the activities of the Committee should no longer include raising of donations, rather it should advise all potential donors to contribute directly to the two seafarers' organisations; and
- (ii) the Committee should focus on looking into issues which can positively affect welfare of seafarers visiting Hong Kong Port, and then liaise with the concerned government authorities and related organisations to make any necessary changes.

4. The Chairman agreed with the Secretary's advice that the Committee had the obligation to raise and allocate the grants to the two Agencies for providing the welfare of seafarers as previously did and that the Committee would earn a good reputation and standing in the community of visiting seafarers by maintaining the status quo. The Chairman and Members hence did not support the first suggestion. The Chairman asked the Secretary to inform Captain MIRZA accordingly.

(Post-meeting notes: Captain MIRZA was informed on 7.5.2024)

5. Mr Jammy NG supported that the Committee should maintain the long-established practice in fund raising and monitor the allocation of funds to appropriate seafarers' organisations.

6. Regarding Caption MIRZA's second suggestion, the Chairman considered that the Committee should focus on deliberating issues on the welfare for seafarers and he welcomed suggestions from the Members.

7. The Secretary shared the Chairman's advice and reminded the Members about the Terms of Reference of Port Welfare Committee. She further elaborated that the social and recreational welfare covered among others, the provision of hotel accommodation and activities/visits as

organised by two seafarers' organisations.

8. Mr Jammy NG supplemented that the Maritime Labour Convention also listed out the shore-based welfare and recreational facilities, such as hotels, meeting rooms, sports facilities, etc.

9. Captain CHOW Tak-chor proposed the Secretariat to explore with the two agencies on the feasibility in providing free or discounted data SIM cards for seafarers so that the latter can maintain close contact with their family members while they are visiting Hong Kong ports.

10. The Secretary informed the meeting that the Sailors Home & Mission to Seafarers has been supplying data SIM cards at discounted price to visiting seafarers over the years.

11. The Chairman hence asked the Secretary to relay Captain CHOW's views to the Sailors Home & Mission to Seafarers for consideration.

(Post-meeting notes: Captain CHOW's views were conveyed to the Sailors Home & Mission to Seafarers on 10.4.2024.)

12. The Chairman expressed that he would meet the Chinese officials in Guangzhou and Shenzhen in early April and he wished to take the opportunity to share with them those unique services provided to the seafarers visiting Hong Kong ports which were not provided to the seafarers visiting Greater Bay Area ports. He asked the Secretary to prepare some background information for him before the meeting. The Secretary undertook to work with Mr Jammy NG to follow up the matter.

(Post-meeting notes: A comparison table listing out different services provided to the seafarers visiting the afore-mentioned places was sent to the Chairman for reference on 2.4.2024.)

II. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 6 September 2023

13. The Chairman informed Members that the minutes of the last meeting were circulated to Members in February 2024 and no amendment was received. The minutes were confirmed by the Committee.

III. Financial Position of the Committee as at 15 March 2024

14. Upon the Chairman’s instruction, the Secretary briefed Members on the financial position of the Committee as at 15 March 2024 as set out on the financial statement at **Appendix C** of the agenda which had been circulated to Members before the meeting –

Balance brought forward from 2022-23	\$ 28,974
Donations received in 2023-24	<u>\$120,000</u>
Balance as at 15 March 2024:	<u><u>\$ 148,974</u></u>

Members endorsed the Committee’s account unanimously.

15. The Committee also endorsed the re-appointment of the Marine Department’s Treasury Accountant / Internal Auditor as the Honorary Auditor for the Committee’s account in 2024-25.

IV. Donations Received by the Committee as at 15 March 2024

16. The Secretary reported that in response to the Committee’s appeal for donations for 2023-24, a total amount of \$120,000 had been received from 14 donors as at 15 March 2024 at **Appendix B** of the agenda. Noting a decreasing trend in the total amount of donations in recent years as shown at **Appendix C** of the agenda, the Chairman asked the Secretary to compile a list of the donors and the amount of donations received in the past ten years for Members’ reference and discussion at the next meeting.

V. Allocation of Grants to Agencies in 2023-24

17. Based on the donations received in 2023-24, the Chairman proposed and Members endorsed that the following amount of subsidies be granted to the following two seafarers’ organisations –

The Sailors Home & Mission to Seafarers	\$ 110,000
Danish Seamen's Church, Hong Kong	<u>\$ 11,000</u>
Total:	<u><u>\$ 121,000</u></u>

VI. Any Other Business

18. To facilitate a more fruitful discussion for future meetings, the Secretary advised that Members might suggest in the current meeting one to two item(s), if any, which they would like to discuss for the next meeting so that the Secretariat could help gather background information in advance.

VII. Date of Next Meeting

19. The Secretary said that the next meeting would be held in six months' time, i.e. around September 2024. Members would be informed of the date and details in due course.

20. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 3:40 p.m.

No signature on website copy

(Mr CHAO Sih-hing, Francois)
Chairman

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(Miss Alletta LAM)
Secretary

The minutes of the meeting were confirmed on 30 September 2024.

Port Welfare Committee
May 2024