

立法會
Legislative Council

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(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

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Finance Committee of the Legislative Council

**Minutes of the 15th meeting
held at the Legislative Council Chamber
on Friday, 8 June 2001, at 2:30 pm**

Members present:

Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong (Chairman)
Hon NG Leung-sing (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, JP
Hon David CHU Yu-lin
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP
Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, JP
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, JP
Prof Hon NG Ching-fai
Hon Margaret NG
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon HUI Cheung-ching
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
Hon CHAN Yuen-han
Hon Bernard CHAN
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon SIN Chung-kai
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP

Hon WONG Yung-kan
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, JP
Hon Howard YOUNG, JP
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum
Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah
Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP
Hon Ambrose LAU Hon-chuen, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon CHOY So-yuk
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon SZETO Wah
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, SBS, JP
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
Dr Hon LO Wing-lok
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee
Hon IP Kwok-him, JP
Hon LAU Ping-cheung
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP

Members absent:

Hon CHAN Kam-lam
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBS, JP
Hon LI Fung-ying, JP

Public officers attending:

Miss Denise YUE, JP
Mr Stanley YING, JP
Mr Alan K M CHU
Mr T K LAI
Ms Helen CHAN

Secretary for the Treasury
Deputy Secretary for the Treasury
Principal Assistant Secretary for Security
Deputy Director of Immigration
Assistant Principal Immigration Officer
of Immigration Department

Mr Alfred C W NG	Assistant Director of Information Technology Services
Mr David LITTLE, JP	Law Officer (International Law)
Mr Peter H K CHEUNG, JP	Director of Administration and Development
Mr Patrick LI	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower
Mrs Betty IP	Assistant Director of Education
Ms Doris CHEUNG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport
Mr Peter LUK	Assistant Commissioner for Transport
Mr H C FAN	Project Manager of Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Pauline NG	Assistant Secretary General 1
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Staff in attendance:

Miss Polly YEUNG	Chief Assistant Secretary (1)3
Mrs Eleanor CHOW	Senior Assistant Secretary (1)4

Matters arising from the last meeting

The Chairman referred to the letter tabled at the last meeting (recirculated vide LC Paper FC116/00-01) and invited Mr Fred LI to elaborate on his suggestion of setting up a subcommittee under the Finance Committee (FC) to review the existing arrangements relating to ex-gratia payments.

2. Mr Fred LI said that from time to time, FC was asked to approve ex-gratia payments for various purposes. As he understood from the Finance Bureau, the purpose and scope of ex-gratia payments might vary considerably. As such, he considered it appropriate to review the subject in its entirety, including the underlying principles, the criteria and rates of payment etc. In order not to affect the work of FC in scrutinizing financial proposals, he suggested that a subcommittee should be set up under FC to enable interested members to look into the matter and report back to FC in due course.

3. Mr NG Leung-sing echoed the need for members to acquire a general understanding on the existing mechanism governing ex-gratia payments and suggested that a briefing by the Administration should be arranged for this purpose. After the briefing, members could then decide on the way forward.

4. Mr TAM Yiu-chung also found it more appropriate to hold a briefing at this stage. He suggested that the Administration should provide a paper on the subject for discussion. He expressed reservation on setting up a subcommittee at this time of the year when so many committee meetings were in progress.

5. In reply to the Chairman, the Deputy Secretary for the Treasury (DS(Tsy)) confirmed that if members so wished, the Administration would brief members and provide the necessary information.

6. Mr Fred LI said that he would have no objection to holding a briefing, but stated his view that a subcommittee should be formed to follow up the matter.

7. Summing up, the Chairman suggested that a briefing would be held in due course to invite the Administration to brief FC on issues relating to ex-gratia payments. FC would then decide on the way forward. Members agreed.

Item No. 1 - FCR(2001-02)11

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 23 MAY 2001

8. At members' request to consider and vote on EC(2001-02)5 and EC(2001-02)7 separately, the Chairman put FCR(2001-02)11, except EC(2001-02)5 and EC(2001-02)7, to the vote. The Committee approved the proposal.

EC(2001-02)5

Proposed creation of two supernumerary posts of one Deputy Director of Immigration (GDS(C)3) and one Chief Systems Manager (D1) in the Immigration Department for the period up to 31 October 2003 and an increase in the establishment ceiling in 2001-02 from \$1,666,747,000 by \$21,110,370 to \$1,687,857,370 to facilitate the creation of 42 non-directorate posts for implementing the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Identity Card Project

9. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that when the present proposal was discussed at the meeting of the Establishment Subcommittee (ESC) on 23 May 2001, he had queried the justification for creating the post of Deputy Director (ID Card Project) (DD(ID)) at D3 level, as its scope of responsibility was much less than that for the Deputy Director of Immigration (Administration and Operations) who had to oversee six Assistant Directors at D2 level. Although the Administration had explained its position, Mr CHEUNG maintained his

view that the proposed rank was disproportionate to the scope of duties. He said that Members of the Democratic Party (DP) would oppose the proposal. Mr James TO added that he was disappointed at the decision of the Finance Bureau to support the ranking of the post at D3 level.

10. Miss Emily LAU shared their view and expressed grave reservation on the ID Card Project (the Project). She said that she would not support the present proposal. Mr Henry WU said that he would abstain from voting as he considered that the post should more appropriately be ranked at the D2 level.

11. Mr Howard YOUNG said that Members of the Liberal Party supported the implementation of the Project. While appreciating the concerns of some members, he pointed out that in the private sector, the ranking of a senior post would take into account not only the number of subordinate staff, but also the importance and complexity of the work involved. He considered that the Administration should provide more information in this respect to alleviate members' concerns.

12. In response, the Principal Assistant Secretary for Security said that the Project required a commitment of \$3.1 billion for the replacement of ID cards for 6.8 million residents. In view of the magnitude, complexity and tight schedule of the Project under which the existing ID card system had to be replaced by end 2002/early 2003, the Administration considered that there was a functional need to have the continued service of a dedicated officer at DD level to steer and monitor implementation of the project which was independent from other aspects of immigration work. In addition, in the preparation and execution of the Project, the postholder had to chair inter-departmental meetings, and sort out cross-cutting issues requiring co-ordination among bureaux and departments at a sufficiently senior level. In this connection, the ranking of the proposed DD(ID) post at D3 level was necessary.

13. DS(Tsy) advised that when an application for the creation of posts was received, the Finance Bureau and the Civil Service Bureau, being the two resource bureaux, would jointly examine the justification for, as well as the ranking, of the post. For the present case, both bureaux agreed that the ranking for the proposed DD(ID) post was justified.

14. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah and Dr LUI Ming-wah supported the present proposal in view of the scale and importance of the Project. They pointed out that the Government and the public could not afford any slippage or oversight in the preparation for and execution of the Project. Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung said that Members of the Democratic Alliance for Betterment of Hong Kong also supported the present proposal.

15. The Chairman put the item to vote. 27 members voted for the item, 17 voted against and 1 abstained -

For:

Mr Kenneth TING Woo-shou	Mr James TIEN Pei-chun
Dr Raymond HO Chung-tai	Mr Eric LI Ka-cheung
Dr LUI Ming-wah	Mr NG Leung-sing
Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-yee	Mr HUI Cheung-ching
Mr CHAN Kwok-keung	Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun
Mr Andrew WONG Wang-fat	Mr WONG Yung-kan
Mr Jasper TSANG Yok-sing	Mr Howard YOUNG
Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung	Mr LAU Kong-wah
Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-yee	Mr Ambrose LAU Hon-chuen
Miss CHOY So-yuk	Mr TAM Yiu-chung
Dr TANG Siu-tong	Mr Abraham SHEK Lai-him
Mr Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan	Mr LEUNG Fu-wah
Dr LO Wing-lok	Mr IP Kwok-him
Mr LAU Ping-cheung	
(27 members)	

Against:

Mr Albert HO Chun-yan	Mr Martin LEE Chu-ming
Mr Fred LI Wah-ming	Miss Margaret NG
Mr James TO Kun-sun	Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong
Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung	Mr SIN Chung-kai
Dr YEUNG Sum	Miss Emily LAU Wai-hing
Mr Andrew CHENG Kar-foo	Mr SZETO Wah
Mr LAW Chi-kwong	Mr Michael MAK Kwok-fung
Mr Albert CHAN Wai-yip	Mr WONG Sing-chi
Ms Audrey EU Yuet-mee	
(17 members)	

Absention:

Mr Henry WU King-cheong
(1 member)

16. The Committee approved the item.

EC(2001-02)7 **Proposed creation of one supernumerary post of Assistant Director of Housing (D2) in the Housing Department for three years to head the Independent Checking Unit in building regulatory functions**

17. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that when the present proposal was discussed at the meeting of the ESC on 23 May 2001, he had queried the justification for creating the supernumerary post of Assistant Director of Housing in the Housing Department to head the Independent Checking Unit (ICU) for a term of three years. Having considered the rationale put forward by the Administration, he had then counter-proposed to create the post for a period of 18 months, subject to review. Mr CHEUNG said that as the Administration had not accepted his suggestion, Members of DP would not support the present proposal.

18. Mr IP Kwok-him declared interest as a member of the Building Committee of the Housing Authority. He advised that the initiative to strengthen third-party checking was one of the 50 recommendations to enhance housing quality in the "Quality Housing-Partnering for Change" consultative document, which was endorsed by the Housing Authority on 13 April 2000. Given the importance and magnitude of the project, he considered it necessary for the ICU to be headed by the proposed directorate post for a period of three years.

19. The Committee approved the item.

Item No. 2 - FCR(2001-02)12

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PUBLIC WORKS
SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 16 MAY 2001**

20. The Committee approved the proposal.

Item No. 3 - FCR(2001-02)8

HEAD 92 - DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

♦ **Subhead 002 Allowances**

HEAD 46 - GENERAL EXPENSES OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

♦ **Subhead 013 Personal allowances**

21. Members noted that the present proposal was deferred from the FC meeting on 25 May 2001 and it had been discussed by the Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services at its meeting on 15 May 2001.

Admin

22. At the request of Miss Margaret NG, the Law Officer (International Law) undertook to provide a report to the Panel in due course on the result of the posting of a Government Counsel to the Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law in the Hague, the Netherlands.

Admin

23. Mr James TO suggested that the existing mechanism for approving the rates of Special Posting Allowance and Rent Allowance for officers posted to representational posts overseas should be reviewed and streamlined in view of the small amount of funding involved in the present proposal. DS(Tsy) responded that the existing mechanism was approved by FC on 18 January 1991 (vide FCR(90-91)145). The Administration was now conducting a review and any proposed changes would be submitted to FC for consideration.

24. The Committee approved the proposal.

Item No. 4 - FCR(2001-02)13

HEAD 40 - EDUCATION DEPARTMENT **♦ Subhead 700 General other non-recurrent** **New Item "Parent education"**

25. Members noted that the present proposal had been discussed by the Panel on Education at its meeting on 23 April 2001.

26. Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung considered that the Administration's commitment of \$50 million for strengthening parent education was belated and insufficient and he urged the Administration to increase the funding. His views were supported by some other members.

27. Miss Emily LAU said that some parents were very irresponsible. She enquired if parent education should also be extended to prospective couples so as to ensure that couples were well prepared for parental responsibilities before deciding to raise children after marriage.

28. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that Members of DP supported parent education. However, he objected to the setting of any conditions for the raising of children as it would be totally undemocratic to do so. Mr SIN Chung-kai shared a similar view. Mr James TIEN concurred and said that having children was a matter of right for parents.

29. In this regard, the Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (PAS(EM)) informed members that leaflets would be distributed at various Marriage Registries to promote parent education and make prospective parents aware of their future responsibilities.

30. Mr James TIEN asked whether the proposed commitment of \$50 million would be used for developing programmes for parents or for training of programme organizers. PAS(EM) explained that as the training of programme organizers would help to strengthen parent education, about \$2.5 million would be spent for that purpose. However, the bulk of the funding would be for running parent education programmes, including promotion and publicity campaigns.

31. The Assistant Director of Education (AD of E) advised that at present, materials for parent education programmes were largely adapted from overseas materials. Although the Government and non-government organizations (NGOs) had produced some local reference materials on individual topics, there was no comprehensive package which set out the needs of local children and the corresponding parenting skills required. Under the present proposal, a comprehensive package of reference materials would be developed to cater for the physical, psychological and intellectual needs of Hong Kong children at different stages of development. In addition, to increase the supply of trained individuals for the delivery of parent education programmes, the Administration would commission NGOs and tertiary institutions to organize training courses for social workers, teachers and parents to build up a larger pool of parent education programme organisers.

32. Noting that the commitment for parent education programmes was proposed to be spent in two years starting from 2001-02, Mr Andrew CHENG enquired why \$3.6 million had been earmarked for 2003-04. In reply, AD of E explained that parent education programmes were planned according to the school year which ran from September of the current year to August of the following year. As such, the programmes for the 2002-03 school year would incur expenditure in the financial year 2003-04.

33. On programme evaluation, AD of E said that the programmes would be under constant review during implementation and at the end of the 2002-03 school year, an evaluation on the overall effectiveness of the programmes would be conducted. The evaluation would involve quantitative as well as qualitative analysis in terms of feedback from parents on the impact of the programmes on their parenting skills and development of parent-child relationship.

34. Mr NG Leung-sing said that given the limited resources available, it was important that parent education programmes were delivered to persons who had direct influence on child development. To this end, he asked the Administration whether it would consider extending the programme to child care takers such as maids and grandparents. In reply, AD of E noted Mr NG's concern and said that for the time being, the bulk of resources would be targeted at parents as it was important for parents to understand their role and responsibilities in their children's development and education.

35. Mr Henry WU said that according to his experience as a member of a concern group, it was most difficult to motivate apathetic parents to participate in parent education programmes. He asked whether the Administration had any proposed measures to overcome this problem.

36. In response, PAS(EM) and AD of E explained that the Administration would adopt a multi-pronged approach. A publicity programme on parent education would be launched through the media. To add impetus to the development of parent education and to create impact on the parents community, territory-wide programmes that focused on raising parents' general awareness of their role in their children's development and education would be organized. Grants would be provided to NGOs, schools and parent teachers' associations for running outreach programmes to proactively reach out to parents.

37. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan pointed out that given the difficulty in dealing with apathetic parents, the \$7.5 million earmarked for outreach programmes would be insufficient. In response, AD of E assured members that apart from outreach programmes, other measures would also be taken to strengthen parent education. These included close liaison between parents and schools, experience sharing and information dissemination among parents, grooming experienced parents to take a more active role in the delivery of parent education, etc.

Admin

38. Mrs Miriam LAU considered that effort should be stepped up to proactively reach out to parents whose children were at risk, such as young persons who had committed minor offences and been cautioned by a Police Superintendent. She pointed out that providing timely parent education to these parents would help prevent the youth problem from worsening. AD of E agreed to convey her concern to the representative of the Social Welfare Department on the Steering Committee on Parent Education.

39. On obtaining employers' support to conduct outreach programmes for parents in the workplace, AD of E advised that assistance from the Labour Department would be sought in promoting the programmes to employers through their regular meetings or communications with major employers and trade associations where appropriate. With the support of employers, talks on parent education would be given to parents at their workplace, usually during lunch time or late afternoons.

40. The Committee approved the proposal.

Item No. 5 - FCR(2001-02)14

**CAPITAL WORKS RESERVE FUND
HEAD 708 - CAPITAL SUBVENTIONS AND MAJOR SYSTEMS AND
EQUIPMENT**

Transport Department

**♦ New Subhead "Replacement of traffic control and surveillance system
in Lion Rock Tunnel"**

41. Members noted that the present proposal had been discussed by the Panel on Transport at its meeting on 30 March 2001. At members' request, the Administration had issued a paper to the Panel (issued by the Panel Clerk vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1330/00-01 dated 24 May 2001) providing supplementary information on the proposal and the outcome of the consultation with the Traffic and Transport Committee (TTC) of the Sha Tin District Council (STDC) for the Panel's reference at the meeting on 25 May 2001.

42. Mr Andrew CHENG enquired about the timetable for developing the computerized traffic plans that would minimize the lead-time for future implementation of tidal flow in the Lion Rock Tunnel (LRT). He considered that such plans should be developed as early as possible. In reply, the Project Manager, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (PM, EMSD) advised that development of the computerized traffic plans was included under the tasks of "Traffic & Civil Engineering Study" and "System Engineering Study" for the project.

43. Mr Andrew CHENG stressed the importance of installing the Full Variable Messages Signs (FVMS) and the Limited Variable Message Signs (LVMS) at the most appropriate locations. He suggested that the Panel on Transport should be consulted on the finalized locations of the FVMS and LVMS. Mr CHENG also enquired on the feasibility of incorporating the information displayed by the LVMS into that of the FVMS.

44. In response, the Assistant Commissioner for Transport (AC for T) advised that at the request of the Panel on Transport, the Transport Department had consulted the TTC of STDC on the proposed locations of the FVMS and LVMS. The TTC was agreeable to the proposed locations and upon its request, the Department would install an additional sign at Sha Tin Wai. The exact locations of the Message Signs however could only be determined after the detailed traffic study.

45. On the different display functions of the FVMS and the LVMS, AC for T advised that the former were large and bright signs erected on gantries at strategic locations of the main approach roads capable of displaying real-time messages. However, at other locations where it was not feasible to erect FVMS, LVMS would be installed to display certain critical traffic information

which would also be helpful for motorists.

46. Referring to the item of "barriers" under traffic control facilities, Mr Andrew CHENG asked whether the installation of barriers would be automated in future. In reply, AC for T and PM, EMSD advised that the installation of barriers could be done automatically or manually, depending on circumstances. The exact locations and design of the barriers would be examined in the consultancy study.

47. The Committee approved the proposal.

48. The Committee was adjourned at 3:32 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat

29 October 2001