

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. AS 265/02-03

Ref : AM 12/01/19 (Pt 5)

**Subcommittee on Members' Remuneration and
Operating Expenses Reimbursement**

**Minutes of meeting
held on Thursday, 29 May 2003
at 4:00 pm in Conference Room B of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members Present** : Hon NG Leung-sing, JP (Chairman)
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP
Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung, BBS
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
- Member Absent** : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
- Member Attending** : Dr Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP
- Clerk in Attendance** : Mrs Anna LO
Principal Assistant Secretary (Administration) (PAS(A))
- Staff in Attendance** : Mr Ricky FUNG, JP
Secretary General (SG)
- Mr LAW Kam-sang, JP
Deputy Secretary General (DSG)
- Mr Joseph KWONG
Accountant (ACCT)

The Chairman stated that the purpose of the meeting was in preparation of the meeting scheduled on 2 June 2003 with the Independent Commission on Remuneration for Members of the Executive Council and the Legislature of the HKSAR (the Independent Commission). He then drew the attention of the meeting to the captioned paper prepared by the Secretariat setting out the background and development on issues previously raised with the Independent Commission.

I. Views to be presented to the Independent Commission
(*LC Paper No. AS 222/02-03*)

2. Ms Emily Lau asked whether procedurally the Subcommittee should seek the endorsement of the House Committee on issues to be raised before meeting the Independent Commission. SG replied that, unless there were new proposals, the outstanding proposals had been endorsed by the House Committee and forwarded to the Independent Commission. The Chairman said that the forthcoming meeting with the Independent Commission was for exchange of views, not for consideration of any concrete proposals. Therefore, a consensus among LegCo Members might not be necessary. Members attending the meeting might express their individual views. Mr Andrew Cheng observed that there would not be sufficient time to gather Members' new proposals and have them endorsed by the House Committee before the meeting. The Chairman undertook to draw the Independent Commission's attention to issues which were of general concern to Members.

Conditions for claiming Information Technology and Communication Equipment Expenses Reimbursement (ITCEER)

3. Ms Emily Lau supported the observations noted in paragraph 11 of the paper, particularly the possible reason for the small number of claims for ITCEER. She suggested that the condition to exhaust the Setting Up Expenses Reimbursement before claiming ITCEER should be reviewed. Members shared Ms Lau's view and agreed that the Independent Commission should be invited to reconsider the reimbursement condition for ITCEER.

Retirement benefits for LegCo Members

4. Mr Andrew Cheng suggested to enquire the progress on the proposal of a retirement benefits scheme for LegCo Members. Mr Leung Yiu-chung added that a timetable for the proposed scheme should also be sought. In supporting these suggestions, Mr Yeung Yiu-chung said that the remuneration package should be determined and publicized before the election for the third term of the Legislative Council. Mr Howard Young suggested that the source of funding for “employer’s” contributions to a retirement benefits scheme, if any, might also be discussed. Such contributions might be reimbursed from the existing Office Operation Expenses Reimbursement, or provided from a new source of funding.

5. The Chairman urged members to voice their views at the meeting with the Independent Commission.

II. Any other business

Submission of bills in excess of reimbursable limit

6. Ms Emily Lau enquired whether the submission of payment documents in excess of the ceiling for reimbursement to the Accounts Office for verification would unduly increase its workload. She believed that having those ‘over-ceiling’ expenses verified and recorded would be useful evidence to prove the inadequacy of the existing financial support for some Members, even though she realised that the figure so obtained might not reflect the true level of financial resources required because some Members might not be able to shoulder these non-reimbursable expenses. ACCT replied that since the monthly limits had been merged into yearly limits, all monthly claims meeting the reimbursement criteria were fully reimbursed until the yearly limit was reached. Handling of ‘over-ceiling’ bills would probably occur around September of each year, when the accounting year for reimbursement of expenses came to an end. He was concerned about the possibility that the ‘over-ceiling’ bills so accumulated might not be able to completely reflect the actual expenditure borne by individual Members if, for one reason or another, they did not forward all such bills to the Accounts Office. He also pointed out that verification and certification of these non-reimbursable bills might slightly delay the reimbursement of Members’ normal bills.

Action

7. Mr Yeung Yiu-chung opined that most Members would try to work within the reimbursable limit. He did not expect the inclusion of those 'over-ceiling' bills would present a drastically different picture. Mr Howard Young remarked that the timing of Members' expenses reaching the ceiling could possibly be used to project the total resources required for a whole year. The Chairman commented that the number of Members who had reached the ceiling could already demonstrate the inadequacy of the existing reimbursable expenses.

8. SG agreed to consider Ms Emily Lau's proposal. Secretariat

Adjournment

9. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:30 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
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