

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. AS 439/00-01
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : AM12/01/19 (Pt 4)

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

**Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 26 June 2001
at 2:30 pm in Conference Room B of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members Present** : Hon NG Leung-sing, JP (Chairman)
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Howard YOUNG, JP
Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung, BBS
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
- Member Absent** : Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
- Public Officers Attending** : Mr Andrew WONG, JP
Director of Administration
- Ms Miranda CHIU
Deputy Director of Administration
- Mr David LEUNG
Assistant Director of Administration
- Clerk in Attendance** : Mrs Anna LO
Principal Assistant Secretary (Administration)
- Staff in Attendance** : Mr Joseph KWONG
Accountant

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I. Meeting with the Administration on the proposed alternative mechanism for annual adjustments to the “accountable expenses reimbursement for office operation”

(LC Paper No. AS 369/00-01(01))

(LC Paper No. AS 383/00-01)

The Chairman briefed the meeting on the results of the survey on Members’ preferred annual adjustment mechanism for Office Operation Expenses Reimbursement (OOER) as at 26 June 2001: out of the 50 responses received, 15 preferred the existing wholly-variable mechanism, 16 preferred a partly-fixed mechanism, and 19 held other views. Members holding other views mainly suggested that the OOER should be split into several components, which should be adjusted annually with the relevant indexes concerned. The Chairman also reminded the meeting that, in order to implement the Administration's suggested changes in October 2001, Finance Committee’s approval at its last meeting in this session on 6 July 2001 would be necessary. He hoped the Subcommittee could reach a consensus on the adjustment mechanism and submit its report in time for the House Committee meeting to be held on 29 June 2001.

2. In view of the preference shown by a number of Members for splitting the OOER into several differently adjusted components, Miss Emily Lau asked if the Administration would consider these Members’ counter-proposals. She added that those suggestions for linking a portion of the OOER to the civil service pay adjustment was probably a reflection of the wish of the Members’ staff. The Director of Administration (D of Adm) replied that given the different modes of Members’ operation and the resulting diverse expenditure patterns, it might not be feasible to determine each component to cater for individual Members’ needs. He pointed out that as an example, the number of staff employed by individual Members varied significantly from one to over ten, with salaries ranging from a few thousand dollars to over thirty or forty thousand dollars per month. Similarly, some Members had no district offices, but some had as many as five. D of Adm also stressed that the proposal to link different portions of the OOER to different indexes could not address Member’s primary concern about the downward adjustment of OOER in times of deflation.

3. The meeting noted from the survey results that most Members having other suggestions would prefer to fall back on the existing adjustment mechanism if their suggestions were not accepted.

4. Mr Yeung Yiu-chung asked if it was possible for individual Members to determine the size of their own fixed component according to their own expenditure pattern. D of Adm said that it might give rise to 60 different amounts of OOER.

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5. Referring to the Democratic Party (DP) Members' response to the survey, Mr Howard Young asked Mr Andrew Cheng why they preferred the existing adjustment mechanism instead of the partly-fixed mechanism when their proposal for a three-part adjustment mechanism was not accepted. Mr Andrew Cheng replied that their proposal for three differently adjusted components was a reflection of most directly-elected DP Members' expenditure pattern. As it was difficult to accept fixing a portion of the OOER for four years, they would rather preserve the status quo. Had there been more time to consider the issue before the Finance Committee meeting on 6 July 2001, they would have insisted on a more appropriate adjustment method. Nevertheless, Mr Cheng expected that discussion about the adjustment method would be re-opened. In response, D of Adm reiterated that expenditure patterns for different Members were too diverse.

6. Miss Cyd Ho asked if the Administration would consult Members' assistants on the adjustment mechanism, having regard to their growing number; and their wastage would adversely affect the efficiency of Members as well as the development of the legislature. D of Adm replied that Members' assistants were the employees of individual Members, with whom the Administration had no interface. Miss Ho further enquired whether the Administration would meet with the assistants if they so requested. He responded that the Administration did not find it necessary to meet Members' assistants. However, the Administration would listen to all views put forward.

7. Miss Emily Lau expected the paper for the Finance Committee meeting on 6 July 2001 would not cover the review mechanism for the next term as Members had not yet been consulted. D of Adm confirmed Miss Lau's understanding. He added that the Independent Commission on Remuneration for the Members of the Executive Council and the Legislature of the HKSAR would review the present remuneration and reimbursement package for Legislative Council Members for the next term nearer the time and determine whether any part of it should be revised.

8. In view of the fact that 18 Members would prefer to maintain the existing adjustment mechanism if their suggestions for other adjustment methods were not accepted, the Chairman concluded that a total of 33 Members preferred the current adjustment mechanism to the proposed partly-fixed mechanism. He added that as it was always possible to re-open the discussion for a more appropriate adjustment method, the House Committee should meanwhile be recommended to accept the Administration's proposals and leave the adjustment mechanism for the time being. Members agreed.

Secretariat

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(Post-meeting note: On 27 June 2001, LC paper no. AS 389/00-01 setting out the recommendation of the Subcommittee was issued to all Members.)

Adjournment

9. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
August 2001