

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1) 750/00-01
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/SS/1/00/1

Subcommittee on Waterworks (Amendment) Regulation 2000

Minutes of first meeting
held on Monday, 15 January 2001, at 5:30 pm
in Conference Room B of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, JP (Chairman)
Hon HUI Cheung-ching
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung

Members absent : Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Hon CHAN Kam-lam
Hon SIN Chung-kai

Public officers attending : **Works Bureau**

Mr LAU Kwok-choi
Principal Assistant Secretary (Policy & Development)

Water Supplies Department

Mr CHAU Chi-wai, David
Chief Engineer/Regional Administration

Mrs Lily TSANG
Business Manager

Clerk in attendance : Miss Odelia LEUNG, Chief Assistant Secretary (1)1

Staff in attendance : Ms Bernice WONG, Assistant Legal Adviser 1
Miss Becky YU, Senior Assistant Secretary (1)3

I Election of Chairman

Nominated by Mr HUI Cheung-ching and seconded by Mr CHAN Kwok-keung, Mr James TIEN Pei-chun was elected Chairman of the Subcommittee.

II Meeting with the Administration

(Legislative Council Brief (Ref: WB(CR)200/01), LC Paper Nos. LS 43/00-01, Appendices III, IV and V to LC Paper No. CB(1) 455/00-01)

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Principal Assistant Secretary for Works (Policy & Development) (PAS for W (P&D)) briefed members on the Waterworks (Amendment) Regulation 2000 which proposed to increase the fees and charges for the following services:

- (a) making a connection to the main and installing the part of a fire service or inside service on land held by the Government;
- (b) providing and installing a meter; and
- (c) testing a meter or a private check meter.

3. On connection of water pipes to a main and provision and/or installation of a water meter, PAS for W (P&D) advised that these services only confined to new developments. As the relevant fees were borne by property developers, the proposed fee revision would not have impact on the livelihood of the general public. The Chairman and Mr HUI Cheung-ching expressed concern that property developers might transfer the cost to customers, particularly in a booming property market. Given the small adjustment of the fees in absolute dollar terms and the insignificant amount as opposed to the total construction cost of a development, the Business Manager (BM) remarked that the impact of the proposed fee revision on property developers was immaterial and there should be no bearing on property prices. BM clarified that re-connection of water pipes after transfer of ownership fell into the category of “re-connecting a fire service or inside service” and no proposal for fee revision had been made on this occasion.

4. The Chairman asked whether Water Supplies Department (WSD) needed to perform checking if property developers undertook the installation of water meters in new developments. BM responded that as WSD had the ultimate responsibility to ensure that all meters were properly installed and connected, and recorded against the correct consumers’ address, checking by WSD was still required. Instead of calculating the fees for providing and/or installing water meters on a per meter basis, the Chairman asked if the Administration would consider pegging the fees to a certain percentage of the construction cost as in the case of the fees for approving building plans. As the prevailing fees were set to reflect the actual cost incurred, BM considered it not desirable to change the calculation basis. In reply to

Mr CHAN Kwok-keung's question, the Chief Engineer/Regional Administration confirmed that no fees would be charged for replacement of broken cover of water meters.

5. On testing of water meters, PAS for W (P&D) explained that this would be carried out upon request of registered consumers who had doubt on their water bills. Mr HUI Cheung-ching enquired about the estimated number of applications for such service. PAS for W (P&D) advised that for meters of water pipes of size up to and including 80 millimetres (mm) in diameter, the number of caseload was around 2,000 per year. For meters of water pipes of larger diameters, the number of caseload was around 30 per year. He added that if the water meter in question was found to be faulty, no charge would be payable by the consumer.

6. Members noted with concern that all fees under the Amendment Regulation were adjusted upward. In reply, PAS for W (P&D) stressed that these fees were non-livelihood related and were last revised in July 1996. He assured members that in parallel with the proposed fee revision, WSD would continue to push ahead with the Enhanced Productivity Programme and other efficiency improvement measures to contain the costs and alleviate the pressure for fee increases. Besides, there were various types of fees and charges which had not been revised under the Amendment Regulation. These included the charge for the supply of fresh water, fishing licence, plumber's licence and charges for examination of water samples etc. To facilitate members' understanding, the Administration undertook to provide a list of fees and charges for which no proposal for revision was made in the Amendment Regulation.

(Post-meeting note: The list was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1) 484/00-01 on 17 January 2001.)

7. The Chairman remarked that the Subcommittee had considered all aspects of the Amendment Regulation. It would be for individual Members to decide whether or not to support the proposed fee revision. A report on the deliberations of the Subcommittee would be submitted for consideration by the House Committee at its meeting on 19 January 2001. The deadline for members to give notice to amend the Amendment Regulation was 31 January 2001.

8. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:55 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
5 March 2001