

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)540/11-12
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

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Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Minutes of special meeting
held on Friday, 21 October 2011, at 9:00 am
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

- Members present** : Hon WONG Yuk-man (Chairman)
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yeet, GBS, JP
- Member attending** : Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
- Members absent** : Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
- Public officers attending** : Agenda item I
Miss Elizabeth TSE, JP
Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic
Development (Communications and Technology)

Mr Aaron LIU
Principal Assistant Secretary for Commerce and
Economic Development (Communications and
Technology)A

Mrs Ingrid YEUNG, JP
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 1

Mr Roy TANG, JP
Director of Broadcasting
Radio Television Hong Kong

**Attendance by
invitation** : Agenda Item I

Ms Janet MAK Lai-ching
Chairperson
RTHK Programme Staff Union

Clerk in attendance : Ms YUE Tin-po
Chief Council Secretary (1)3

Staff in attendance : Mr Joey LO
Senior Council Secretary (1)3

Ms May LEUNG
Legislative Assistant (1)3

Action

- I. Issues relating to the appointment of the Director of Broadcasting**
(LC Paper No. CB(1)77/11-12(01) -- Administration's paper on
recruitment of Director of
Broadcasting
- LC Paper No. CB(1)77/11-12(02) -- Paper on new initiatives of
Radio Television Hong
Kong and issues relating to
the appointment of the
Director of Broadcasting
prepared by the Legislative
Council Secretariat

(updated background brief)

LC Paper No. CB(1)121/11-12(01) -- Submissions from RTHK
(*Chinese version only*) Programme Staff Union
dated 20 October and 15
September 2011)

Presentation by the Chairperson, Radio Television Hong Kong Programme Staff Union

At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms Janet MAK Lai-ching, the Chairperson of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) Programme Staff Union ("the Union"), briefed members on the findings of the opinion survey on the appointment of the Director of Broadcasting conducted by the Union, including the Union's demands in the light of the findings. She pointed out that 88% of the respondents were against the appointment of an Administrative Officer (AO), Mr Roy TANG, as the Director of Broadcasting (D of B). While urging the Administration to explain the rationale behind the appointment of an AO as the D of B and to state clearly the tenure of office of the incumbent D of B, the Union demanded that the Administration should immediately activate the promotion exercise of RTHK for the post of D of B. Details of the briefing were set out in the Union's submission (LC Paper No. CB(1)121/11-12(01)).

Presentation by the Administration

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology) (PSCED(CT)) briefed members on the outcome of the open-cum-in-service recruitment exercise conducted for the post of D of B between late 2010 and mid-2011. In response to the Union's enquiry, she advised that if a suitable candidate from within RTHK could be identified for promotion as D of B, the Administration would activate the promotion exercise for the post. However, there was no such plan for the time being as there was no eligible candidate within RTHK for appointment as D of B. As Mr Roy TANG's appointment as the D of B was a substantive one and he was still new in the post, the Administration could not commit at this stage on the duration of his posting or the arrangements for succession. For protection of personal privacy, the Administration was barred from disclosing details beyond the administrative procedures involved in the D of B recruitment exercise. Details of the D of B recruitment exercise were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)77/11-12(01)).

Discussion

Tenure of office of Mr Roy TANG

3. Noting the Union's strong opposition against the appointment of Mr Roy TANG as D of B, Mr LEE Wing-tat enquired about the anticipated tenure of office of Mr Roy TANG as D of B. In this connection, he urged the Administration to set a time-limit for Mr TANG's tenure of office as D of B so that the post could be filled by the promotion of a senior officer from within RTHK.

4. PSCED(CT) advised that Mr Roy TANG's task as the D of B was to lead RTHK to meet the challenges ahead arising from the enhancement of its operation and services in the coming few years. As Mr TANG was still new in the post and there were no other suitable candidates for the time being, there was no prescribed date when his tenure of office would end. She stressed that Mr TANG's tenure of office was not a factor in determining whether the post would be filled by internal promotion.

Succession planning

5. Mr LEE Wing-tat queried why the Administration had taken so long to realize the need to put in place suitable succession planning arrangements for RTHK. He was concerned whether it was the Government's hidden agenda to gradually deplete the resources of RTHK. Sharing a similar view, Ms Emily LAU considered that a succession plan would ensure that candidates with suitable experience would be selected to fill the vacancies concerned.

6. PSCED(CT) advised that during the period from 2006 to 2009, the internal promotion mechanism of RTHK was frozen pending the review of the way forward for RTHK. Subsequently, the Administration announced in end 2010 that the internal promotion and open recruitment of RTHK would be resumed as soon as possible. From March to mid-October 2011, open recruitment exercises for 10 work types had been launched and employment letters had been issued for two of the work types. 23 promotion boards had been convened for about 45 non-directorate positions and one directorate position. With the approval of the Civil Service Bureau, a new arrangement to facilitate succession had been put in place whereby officers at both the ranks of Chief Programme Officer and Directorate 1 (D1) officers were allowed to be considered for promotion to D2. RTHK would convene promotion boards to identify suitable departmental officers to fill vacancies at directorate levels. The promotion board for the Deputy Director of Broadcasting (D3) rank had been convened recently. As regards the ranks

of Assistant Director of Broadcasting (D2) and Controller (Broadcasting Services) (D1), the promotion board would also be convened soon.

7. PSCED(CT) further advised that financial commitments amounting to over \$200 million had been committed to allow RTHK to embark on various new development initiatives over the coming few years, including the launch of digital audio broadcasting (DAB) and digital terrestrial television (DTT) services, the setting up of the media asset management system, the facilitation of community involvement in broadcasting, and re-provisioning of the Broadcasting House to Tseung Kwan O.

Effect of the posting arrangement on staff morale

8. In response to Ms Emily LAU's concern that staff morale had been low since the appointment of Mr Roy TANG as the D of B, D of B advised that the morale problem of RTHK staff did not emerge overnight. The main concern of the staff was the uncertainty about the future of RTHK. However, such uncertainty had been largely dissipated following the Administration's announcement of the way forward of RTHK in 2009.

9. Mr LAU Kong-wah noted that the posting of an AO to serve as the Director could create mistrust between the staff and the management of RTHK and have a dampening effect on staff morale. In this regard, he urged the D of B to build up mutual trust with RTHK staff as a matter of urgency.

10. D of B advised that since coming into office, he had reached out to RTHK colleagues of all levels, and had hour-long, one-on-one sessions with colleagues at the management level to gauge their views and aspirations. He had given assurance to the RTHK staff that in performing his duties as D of B, he would adhere strictly to the RTHK Charter and uphold the status of RTHK as a public service broadcaster. He added that a working group led by Mr TAI Keen-man, Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Programmes) would be set up to collect the Union's views on how to streamline the workflow and cut red-tapes.

11. Mr LEE Wing-tat opined that RTHK staff was still very concerned about the future of RTHK. He urged D of B to step up communication with the RTHK staff to allay their concerns in this regard.

12. In response to Mr LAU Kong-wah's enquiry, PSCED(CT) advised that the option of posting an officer from another Government department to head RTHK had not been considered until it had become clear that the open-cum-in-service recruitment exercise had failed to find a suitable

candidate. The Administration had sought the advice of the Public Service Commission (PSC) throughout the whole process leading to the appointment of the D of B. Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 1 (DSCS 1) supplemented that the Administration had consulted the PSC which agreed that posting an AO to serve as D of B was a feasible option.

13. DSCS 1 supplemented that there had been many precedent cases of posting of AOs as Head of Department as a temporary measure to cope with the absence of a suitable candidate for promotion from within the Government departments concerned. Examples of such departments included the Immigration Department, the Buildings Department and the Hongkong Post. Nevertheless, the Civil Service Bureau would try its best to ensure that the departments concerned could roll out a smooth succession programme.

Editorial independence of RTHK

14. Ms Cyd HO opined that the uniqueness of RTHK made it undesirable for an AO with no relevant professional experience to serve as its Department Head. She urged D of B to delegate his responsibility as the Editor-in-Chief to his professional subordinates. In this regard, Ms Emily LAU noted the Union's concern that political interest would override public interest with the appointment of an AO as the D of B. Programmes which had political satire contents might be filtered or censored. Ms Janet MAK Lai-ching, the Chairperson of RTHK Programme Staff Union also opined that apart from being a professional in broadcasting matters, the D of B should have the professional knowledge required to uphold the editorial independence of RTHK against pressure from both inside and outside RTHK.

15. D of B advised that he would maintain impartiality in accordance with the Charter of RTHK as the Editor-in-Chief in editorial matters. On the other hand, he was duty-bound to give his views as the Editor-in-Chief at the editorial and programme meetings which he chaired. With a total production of some 51 000 programme hours per year, it would be impossible for the Editor-in-Chief to view or listen to each and every programme before broadcast. He stressed that programme staff had full autonomy in producing programmes at RTHK.

16. In reply to Ms Audrey EU, Ms Janet MAK Lai-ching, the Chairperson of RTHK Programme Staff Union, advised that RTHK should perform the role of monitoring the Government and speak out for the general public as a public broadcaster. The Editor-in-Chief would require the kind of experience gained from working his way up in RTHK in order to know how to deal with pressure from outside. There was an inherent conflict of

interest for an AO who had the duty to defend Government policy and stance. In response, D of B advised that the professional training of an AO was such that he or she would examine issues critically and objectively and make recommendations or decisions in the public interest. There was no question of any AO following instructions unquestioningly.

17. Mr WONG Ting-kwong opined that apart from upholding the editorial independence of RTHK, management capability and ability to implement the rules, regulations, systems and initiatives were also vital requirements for the post of D of B. Ms Janet MAK Lai-ching, the Chairperson of RTHK Programme Staff Union opined that the administrative and management responsibilities of D of B were already undertaken by his subordinates.

Community Broadcasting Involvement Fund

18. Ms Cyd HO was concerned whether there would be fair allocation of the Community Broadcasting Involvement Fund. D of B advised that RTHK would conduct public consultation by the end of 2011 with a view to drawing up concrete proposals for consideration of the RTHK Board of Advisors by mid-2012. Programme direction, programme content and selection criteria of the beneficiaries would be covered in the consultation.

II. Any other business

19. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:52 am.