

Legal Aid Services Council
Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 20 February 2024
at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Office

PRESENT

Prof. William LEUNG, GBS, JP	Chairman
Mr Bosco CHENG	Member
Mr Robin EGERTON	“
Mr Tom FU	“
Ms Serena LAU, MH, JP	“
Mr Ronald SUM, JP	“
Miss Iris WAN	“
Mr Chris CHONG, JP	Director of Legal Aid
Mr Patrick WONG	Secretary

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Steve WONG	Deputy Director of Legal Aid (Policy & Administration)
Mr Henry CHAN	EO/LASC
Mr Bryan CHEUNG	EO/LASC (Des)

ABSENT WITH APOLOGIES

Ms Rosita LEE	Member
Ms Yvonne YEUNG	“



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(I) INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed Members and Mr Steve WONG of the Legal Aid Department (LAD) to the meeting. Besides, the Chairman also introduced Mr Bryan CHEUNG who would soon take over from Mr Henry CHAN as Executive Officer of the Council Secretariat.

(II) CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2023

2. The minutes were confirmed without amendment.

(III) PAPERS FOR INFORMATION/COMMENT

(A) Speeches at the Ceremonial Opening of the Legal Year 2024 - Paper No. LASC I/P 01/24

3.1 The Chairman said that the Ceremonial Opening of the Legal Year 2024 was held on 22 January 2024. Copies of the speeches delivered at the ceremony were attached to the Paper No. LASC I/P 01/24 for Members' reference. No specific matter concerning legal aid was raised in the speeches.

3.2 Members noted the speeches.

(F) Quarterly Report of Income and Expenditure of LASC for the Third Quarter of Financial Year 2023-24 - Paper No. LASC I/P 06/24

8.1 The Chairman said that the Quarterly Report summarised the income and expenditure of the Council in the third quarter of financial year 2023-24 from 1 October to 31 December 2023. The overall spending position as at the end of December arrived at 69% of the approved budget which was well controlled.

8.2 The Chairman mentioned that the expenditure on some items were less than 50%, for instance, the office stationery, the depreciation of fixed assets and transportation fee, but these were only minor items. Besides, the annual procurement exercise was just carried out by the Secretariat in the third quarter and hence relevant expenditure would only be reflected later in this financial year. As regards the expenditure

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on contract staff, the position of contract clerk had been vacant for a while and the Secretariat continued to identify a suitable replacement for the position.

8.3 Members took note of the Quarterly Report.

(G) Chief Secretary for Administration's Office's Paper on "Annual Reviews of Financial Eligibility Limits of Legal Aid Applicants and Director of Legal Aid's First Charge" - Paper No. LASC I/P 07/24

9.1 The Chairman said that the paper was the submission of the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office on the same matter to the Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services of Legislative Council on 18 December 2023. Upon completion of the latest round of annual reviews, the Government proposed to adjust the fees upwards by 1.8% to reflect the accumulated change in Consumer Price Index (C) recorded for the period from July 2022 to July 2023.

9.2 Members noted the paper without any questions and LAD did not have any further information to supplement on this item.

(IV) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m. The next Council Meeting would be held on Tuesday, 21 May 2024.

LASC Secretariat
March 2024