

(Translation)

Minutes of the 1st Special Meeting of Tsuen Wan District Council

Date: 18 February 2020

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Venue: 1/F, Tsuen Wan Multi-storey Carpark Building

Present:

Mr CHAN Yuen-sum, Sumly (Chairman)

Mr LI Hung-por (Vice Chairman)

Mr MAN Yu-ming, MH

Mr NG Hin-lung, Norris

Mr SHUM Lester

Mr YAU Kam-ping, BBS, MH

Mr YICK Shing-chung, Angus

Mr LAM Sek-tim

Mr CHAN Sung-ip, MH

Ms CHAN Kim-kam

Mr LUK Ling-chung, Antonio

Mr WONG Ka-wa

Mr KOT Siu-yuen

Mr CHIU Yan-loy

Mr LAU Chi-hung

Mr LAU Cheuk-yu

Mr PUN Long-chung, Roy

Mr LAU Jackson

Mr LAI Man-fai

Mr TSE Man-chak

Mr TAM Hoi-pong

Action

I Opening Remarks and Introduction

The Chairman welcomed Members to the 1st special meeting of Tsuen Wan District Council (TWDC).

2. The Chairman asked Members to speak as concise as possible. In addition, unless otherwise agreed by the Chairman, Members could speak once for each agenda item at the meeting and each Member could speak up to three minutes. Members could also speak once for each motion and each Member could speak up to one minute.

II Item 1: The Impact on the Community of Tsuen Wan brought by the Pneumonia Epidemic Situation in Wuhan
(TWDC Paper No. 23/2020)

3. The Chairman stated that the Vice Chairman, Mr WONG Ka-wa, Mr TAM Hoi-pong, Mr CHIU Yan-loy, Mr LUK Ling-chung, Antonio and Mr LAU Jackson submitted the paper. Besides, the joint written reply of the Food and Health Bureau (FHB), Department of Health (DH) and Hospital Authority (HA) and the written replies of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), Highways Department, Tsuen Wan District Office (TWDO), Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), Buildings Department, Environmental Protection Department and Housing Department (HD) were submitted prior to the meeting.

4. Mr CHAN Sung-ip enquired whether the meeting would be audio-recorded with minutes taken.

5. The Chairman stated that the meeting would be audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder at the venue. The Secretariat would draft the minutes based on his audio-recording as far as possible.

6. The Vice Chairman, Mr WONG Ka-wa, Mr CHIU Yan-loy, Mr LAU Jackson, Mr TAM Hoi-pong and Mr LUK Ling-chung, Antonio introduced the paper.

7. Mr LAU Cheuk-yu said that he had made a request to the LCSD by phone for visiting the relevant recreation camps under its management and inspecting the interiors of the camps. However, the LCSD turned down his request on the grounds that these recreation camps had already been put into operation. In his opinion, it reflected the Government's indifference to the requests of the elected Members. He pointed out that while there was no epidemic outbreak back then, the general public would be relieved if Members could pay a visit to the recreation camps concerned (e.g. Po Leung Kuk Jockey Club Pak Tam Chung Holiday Camp) and learn more about the accommodation for the public. Although the epidemic situation was not yet serious at the moment, he advised the Government to duly carry out the relevant work as soon as possible. Noting that some manufacturers had set up mask production facilities in the district, he sought assistance from the TWDO in writing. He learnt that the said matter was handled by the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) and Hong Kong Productivity Council. Hence, he proposed that the Government should formulate relevant policy and designate officials to handle the matter, and accord priority to considering the pressing needs of the public.

8. Mr YAU Kam-ping said that regarding the designation of the General Out-patient Clinic near Lei Muk Shue Estate as a clinic for treatment of COVID-19, the residents might have supported the proposal with peace of mind had the Government sent officials to visit the housing estates in the constituency area to explain to the residents the situation and preventive measures against the epidemic prior to the designation. Unfortunately, the Government was now stubbornly taking forth the measure concerned without conducting consultation, leaving the residents clueless about the actual situation.

9. The Chairman stated that Mrs Wu York Yu General Out-patient Clinic was in close proximity to Lei Muk Shue Estate and there were many village houses nearby. It was unsatisfactory that the Government failed to conduct consultation on the timetable for setting up quarantine facilities.

10. Mr MAN Yu-ming said that there was room for improvement for the Government's anti-epidemic work. Since the Government neither conducted consultation nor provided detailed information on the measures concerned, it was difficult to put the residents' mind at ease. He opined that Members were rational. The dissenting voices might not have emerged had the Government conducted consultation and given an explanation in advance. Mrs Wu York Yu General Out-patient Clinic was close to Lei Muk Shue Estate and villages. As the total population of the area was sizeable, any cross infection arising from the clinic might bring about an immense impact on the population. Also, the Government failed to give a detailed account of the conversion of Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centre into an isolation and quarantine centre for COVID-19. As regards the two incendiary bomb attacks targeted at the said clinic, he appealed to the public to keep calm and refrain from doing radical acts so as not to disturb medical workers and patients. He also opined that the problem would be solved if the public exercised restraint, stayed rational and fought the virus together with the TWDC.

11. Mr LAI Man-fai expressed anger at the Government's failure to conduct consultation on the establishment of clinics and quarantine centres for COVID-19. He opined that the Government's refusal to close the border was a policy blunder. Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centre was devoid of private bathrooms and the toilets and central air-conditioning system therein were communal facilities to be shared by all occupants. Hence, he was worried about the possibility of mass infection. Besides, Mrs Wu York Yu General Out-patient Clinic was close to residential premises such as Lei Muk Shue Estate and village houses. The designation of the clinic as one for the treatment of COVID-19 would also pose threats to the users of the Maternal and Child Health Centre situated above. Therefore, Mrs Wu York Yu General Out-patient Clinic was not fit for the said purpose. Moreover, he strongly condemned the TWDO for refusing to loan out the TWDO's conference room. He said he would not rule out the possibility of lodging a complaint with the Office of the Ombudsman and reporting the matter to the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

12. Mr NG Hin-lung, Norris suspected that the admission of patients to the quarantine centre might pose risks and threats to the residents nearby. He therefore understood the psychological stress of the residents. He suggested constructing at large and spacious sites temporary structures resembling camps for emergency and disaster relief for use as quarantine facilities, rather than making use of existing facilities for quarantine purposes. Besides, in view of the recent cases of spread of the virus due to the leakage of vent pipes, he opined that the Government should review the existing public sewerage systems of public housing estates and private buildings and handle those obsolete pipes which posed a high risk of spreading the virus. He also proposed that it should expedite the redevelopment of public housing estates or modify the designs of newer buildings when necessary. In addition, many

members of the public found it difficult to purchase masks during the epidemic. He said that while the Government had been relying on the external supplies of energy, water and food, other jurisdictions might impose export restrictions in case of an epidemic outbreak. He thus proposed that the Government should foster local production of supplies so as to ensure that Hong Kong people's daily needs were met.

13. Mr LAM Sek-tim said the department concerned indicated in the written reply that starting from 8 February 2020, the Government required that all inbound travellers from the Mainland should be subject to 14-day home quarantine and non-Hong Kong residents should be subject to quarantine at the hotels arranged by the Government. Moreover, according to the LCSD, Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centre had already been converted into a quarantine centre; and according to the HA, patients in severe cases would be directly admitted to public hospitals for treatment. He expressed anger over the aforesaid replies and opined that the departments concerned should directly inform Members of the matters in relation to the quarantine centre by phone. As there had been cases where people under quarantine breached the quarantine order and left the place of isolation, he was not confident that the Government would be capable of tackling the problem. Besides, he was worried that the patients in severe cases would have to wait for a long time after being admitted to public hospitals. In addition, he doubted whether the security staff stationed at the quarantine centre around the clock possessed substantive power and effective equipment. Citing the confirmed cases in Tsing Yi as examples, he pointed out that there was an unreasonable disproportion in the personal protective equipment allocated to the police officers and medical workers. He also proposed that sufficient equipment should be provided for the security staff.

14. Mr PUN Long-chung, Roy said that although the impact of COVID-19 on the district was being discussed at this meeting, the departments concerned failed to assign representatives to attend the meeting. Also, the TWDO refused to loan the conference room to Members on the grounds of avoidance of cross infection. As such, he commented that the Government showed a poor attitude towards anti-epidemic work, and failed to show respect for Members and the public. Moreover, he said that upon learning of the news that Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centre would serve as an isolation and quarantine centre for COVID-19, some Members immediately headed to the centre to learn about the details. According to the police officers at the spot, only Hong Kong residents would be voluntarily admitted to this quarantine centre. The departments concerned including the TWDO and DH had not given any reply about the identity and number of people admitted to the quarantine centre so far. He enquired whether non-Hong Kong residents had been admitted to it. Also, he questioned whether the people concerned would exercise self-discipline and stay at the quarantine camp instead of wandering off to the urban area. He advised that the Government should consider the distance between the quarantine camps and residential premises when selecting sites. He opined that since the Government had refused to close the border and chosen to designate facilities near residential premises as quarantine camps instead, the Government should be urged to address Members' and the public's worries about the choice of quarantine sites.

15. Ms CHAN Kim-kam said that as there was an epidemic outbreak at Cheung Hong Estate recently, the residents of Tsuen Wan district were worried that some old public housing estates with piping designs identical to that of Cheung Hong Estate might pose an additional risk of epidemic outbreak in the community. She pointed out the serious incident of pipe burst at the rear lane at 188 Sha Tsui Road on the fourth day of Lunar New Year. Upon the receipt of the complaints about the incident, she had contacted different departments and called 1823 Citizen's Easy Link of the Government to seek assistance. However, she did not succeed in solving the problem. She regretted that the government departments such as the FEHD and Drainage Services Department had failed to send representatives to attend the meeting. In addition, she pointed out that according to the FEHD, it would assure that the cleansing workers engaged by the cleansing contractors were provided with personal protective equipment. However, some Members found that many cleansing workers were not provided with masks for replacement daily. She thus enquired whether the cleansing workers engaged by the cleansing contractors could refuse to work at the buildings in which suspected cases were identified.

16. Mr YICK Shing-chung, Angus opined that the Government reacted slowly and made blunders in the anti-epidemic work. He also suspected that the Government had passed the buck to the residents so that they would rely on themselves for protection. He commented that the quarantine centres should be set up at sites far away from residential premises. Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centre was therefore unsuitable for use as a quarantine centre. He proposed that other suitable locations in the district such as the Hong Kong Disneyland (the "Disneyland") Phase 2 site should be chosen instead. Moreover, in view of the suspected mass infection at Hong Mei House, Cheung Hong Estate, some Members had requested that a comprehensive check should be conducted for the aged public housing estates with the same exhaust facilities in Tsuen Wan district, including Fuk Loi Estate and Shek Wai Kok Estate. He expressed regret, anger and disappointment over the attitude of the representatives of government departments and opined that they turned a blind eye to the residents' safety. Also, he enquired about the reasons for the HD's failure to give a response.

17. Mr SHUM Lester said that even though some medical experts had advised earlier that the border should be closed to reduce the possibility of a community outbreak, the Hong Kong Government still refused to do so and the spread of the virus was left unchecked in Hong Kong. During the initial stage of the epidemic, the Government stated that it was not necessary for the public to wear masks. He opined that such remarks, not even backed by common scientific knowledge, should have been made out of the Government's intention to water down the impact of its appeal against the judgement on the judicial review of the Prohibition on Face Covering Regulation. Recently, people were buying daily necessities or emergency supplies in a panic. There was a shortage of masks, hand sanitiser, bleach and daily necessities such as toilet paper and staple food. It reflected the Government's failure to cater for the public's daily needs. Besides, he pointed out that the Government pressed ahead with the establishment of quarantine camps at sites near residential premises. Also, the equipment of medical workers responsible for anti-epidemic and ambulance work on the front line was obviously inadequate. All this demonstrated that the Government was incapable of protecting the public and sustaining essential services.

He opined that in the light of the difficulty to contain the epidemic within a short period of time and the developments of the epidemic in China, the supply of daily necessities and commodities such as vegetables, fruits and pork to Hong Kong would be affected. He thus proposed that the Government should put forth preventive measures to address the aforesaid situation.

18. Mr TSE Man-chak said that different public concerns were set out in the captioned paper and hoped that all government officials would learn more about the concerns. In his opinion, the Government had never learnt from the lesson of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003. It had neither drawn up a contingency mechanism for major epidemic and taken responsive actions nor paid attention and attached importance to the development of the epidemic at an earlier time before the Chinese New Year. The Government was slow in response. Only after medical workers had gone on strike was the Government impelled to gradually close the boundary control points to prevent the entry of high-risk travellers from the Mainland. Besides, during the epidemic, residents could only rely on Members and enthusiastic people to source anti-epidemic supplies for daily use through different channels around the world.

19. Mr KOT Siu-yuen said that as the representatives of departments were unable to attend the meeting, he proposed that Members' views should be consolidated and then conveyed to various departments for follow-up. Regarding the arrangement for quarantine centres, he opined that the Government had failed to conduct consultation and he therefore objected to the establishment of quarantine facilities at Lei Muk Shue Estate and Tso Kung Tam. He also suggested that the Government should promptly identify sites suitable for quarantine purposes in rural areas. Moreover, the TWDC had earlier allocated a provision of \$980,000 to the Caritas Community Centre - Tsuen Wan for the purchase of disinfectant packs. Given the shortage of masks at present, he suggested that the said measure should be implemented as soon as possible to benefit the people in the district. In addition, the development of Tsuen Wan commenced 60 years ago and there were many elderly residents in the district. Therefore, he was concerned about the demand for masks from the senior citizens and advised that the Government should optimise the Health Care Voucher Scheme for early distribution of masks to the senior citizens with a view to addressing the present situation of the epidemic and solving the problem promptly.

20. The Chairman stated that he had been maintaining close liaison with the Caritas Community Centre - Tsuen Wan, and would arrange for the distribution of disinfectant packs as soon as possible.

21. Mr LAU Chi-hung said that while there were home isolation cases in the housing estates in the district, the relevant information was not shown on the DH's webpage. He thus requested that the departments concerned should consolidate the information and ensure transparency so that the public could learn about the situation of the housing estates concerned. Moreover, some residents of the district who were engaged by the cleansing contractors of the Government said that they were not provided with adequate masks. That was different from what the FEHD stated in its written reply. Hence, he suspected that the Government had failed to fully consider the needs of frontline staff. Besides, he was concerned about the allocation of

resources by the Government as well as inter-departmental negotiation and collaboration. He was dissatisfied that the TWDO failed to provide support for this meeting. In addition, he learnt that a local resident fell sick and approached the Social Welfare Department for assistance in applying for the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA). However, the resident failed to make an application for the CSSA because the responsible staff worked from home. He advised that the Government should endeavour to safeguard public interest during the epidemic.

(Note: Mr CHAN Sung-ip left the meeting at 3:34 p.m.)

22. Mr WONG Ka-wa said that the outbreak of SARS at Amoy Gardens 17 years ago and the recent cases of COVID-19 at Hong Mei House, Cheung Hong Estate, Tsing Yi were both related to soil pipes. Many public housing estates in the district were over 40 years old, including Lei Muk Shue Estate, Fuk Loi Estate and Cheung Shan Estate. Hence, he proposed that the HD should inspect the soil pipes of all the flats and study the option of installing soil pipes outside the flats with a view to preventing the spread of the virus and allaying residents' worries. He also said that currently, the public could only learn of the housing estates with completed 14-day home isolation cases through the media and this was unsatisfactory. He further pointed out that if the confinees were diagnosed with COVID-19 during the isolation period, it would be unfair to nearby residents. He thus suggested that sites far away from residential premises should be selected for isolation purposes. Where home isolation was necessary, the management companies of the respective housing estates should be notified accordingly so that residents who saw a need to evacuate could leave the housing estates immediately and people confined to their flats would definitely not leave their homes. Moreover, according to a news report, some people who had been tested negative for the virus were however tested positive subsequently. He thus proposed that the Government should make an announcement on such cases in full and fight the virus together with the public.

(Note: Mr YAU Kam-ping left the meeting at 3:38 p.m.)

23. Mr LUK Ling-chung, Antonio said that the Government was panic, confused and slow in response to the epidemic. The public had to rely on themselves for protection. Their lives would be at stake in case of an epidemic outbreak. He was angry that the suspected cases in private housing estates in the district were only announced when the patients almost completed the isolation period. Also, he opined that as the wristbands worn by people under quarantine and home isolation lacked the function of location tracking through the Global Positioning System, it was difficult for the authorities to trace their locations. Regarding the conversion of Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centre into an isolation and quarantine centre, he queried the written replies of the departments concerned and urged them to give direct responses.

24. The Chairman stated that regarding the establishment of quarantine centres at a clinic in the district and in Tso Kung Tam, Members were dissatisfied that the Government had failed to conduct consultation, and objected to the establishment of the quarantine centres because the aforesaid locations were in close proximity to residential premises. Regarding the burst and blockage of pipes as well as the hygiene problems, including the disposal of a large amount of refuse and used masks

on the street, he proposed that the departments concerned should conduct large-scale cleansing at the streets in urban areas or villages, in particular the streets and buildings in public housing estates under the management of the HD, so that the public could live a life of ease.

25. The Chairman said that he had received three impromptu motions.

26. Mr CHIU Yan-loy moved an impromptu motion that “we strongly object to using Mrs Wu York Yu General Out-patient Clinic as a designated clinic for COVID-19 and using Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centre as an isolation and quarantine centre for COVID-19 unless further information was available, major enhancement works were carried out to provide negative pressure isolation wards for communicable diseases, and an effort was made to isolate the general out-patient services”. The impromptu motion was seconded by Mr WONG Ka-wa.

27. The Chairman asked Members to vote on the impromptu motion. The impromptu motion was unanimously endorsed with a vote of 18 in favour, 0 against and 0 abstention.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat conveyed the motion to the FHB, DH, LCSD, Centre for Health Protection (CHP) and HA in writing on 25 February 2020.)

28. Mr LUK Ling-chung, Antonio moved an impromptu motion that “the Government should be requested to disburse a payout of \$10,000 to all Hong Kong residents aged 18 or above to tide them over the hard times brought about by the COVID-19 epidemic”. The impromptu was seconded by Mr LAU Jackson.

29. Mr TAM Hoi-pong said that as cash payout might not be of maximum assistance to the people most in need, he did not strongly recommend this measure in the past. However, he held that as there were problems in the use and allocation of public funds by the Government over the past few years, the middle class had not benefitted from the allocation of resources. Also, some sub-tenants without individual meters could not benefit from the various measures of electricity charges relief. Therefore, he supported the aforesaid impromptu motion whereby the public could decide how to use the cash payout on their own.

30. Mr NG Hin-lung, Norris said that the impromptu motion was related to direct cash payout. He believed that Members would not raise objection against it. He opined that as the largest institution in our society, the Government should allocate the tax revenue to public affairs beneficial to the people, for example, provision of masks which the public desperately needed at the moment. The allocation of resources would only become random if cash was given out from time to time. Therefore, he would abstain from voting for this impromptu motion. He suggested that the Government should make effective use of resources to meet the urgent needs of the public.

31. Mr LAM Sek-tim opined that the measure concerned was in line with the Hong Kong Government's appeal to the public to go out less often. Hence, he supported the motion on cash payout so as to cope with urgent needs.

32. Mr WONG Ka-wa supported the impromptu motion concerned. He learnt that a local resident had to quit his job as a driver due to the epidemic and opined that there might be similar instances in other industries. He hoped that conscientious employers would fight the virus together with their staff, consider their hardship and avoid resorting to dismissal for cost-saving.

33. Mr NG Hin-lung, Norris moved an amended motion that "the Hong Kong Government should provide timely assistance for people affected by the COVID-19 epidemic". The amended motion was seconded by Mr MAN Yu-ming.

34. Ms CHAN Kim-kam agreed that the Government should provide timely assistance for people in need. She opined that prudent consideration should be given to the criteria for deciding whether a person was affected by the COVID-19 epidemic. Currently, the Government's subsidy only benefitted small and medium enterprises. It might fail to cover people who were directly affected by the epidemic. Besides, she commented that apart from rendering financial assistance, the Government should consider providing substantive support. For example, in view of the current speculation in masks, it should take measures to control prices and ensure the supply of necessities.

35. Mr TAM Hoi-pong said that according to past practice for TWDC meetings, Members would not vote on the original motion if the amended motion was endorsed. In his opinion, the original motion was relatively specific while the amended motion was less precise. Nevertheless, he supported both motions and hoped that Members would cast their votes wisely.

36. Mr WONG Ka-wa opined that the amended motion was narrower in scope than the original motion. Also, it was difficult to determine whether the aforementioned driver was affected by the COVID-19 epidemic. He therefore supported the original motion.

37. Mr LAI Man-fai said he agreed to the amended motion in principle. He opined that the Government should provide appropriate assistance for people affected by the epidemic. However, he questioned the Government's power of judgement given its performance in policy implementation over the past few years. He therefore supported the original motion.

38. The Chairman opined that many industries such as catering, tourism and retail were hit hard by the COVID-19 epidemic. Since employees in these industries were at risk of unemployment and the Government had made policy blunders, he had reservation over the amended motion. Besides, he reminded Members that the original motion would not be endorsed if the amended motion gained support from the majority of Members.

39. Mr TAM Hoi-pong enquired about the way of handling a scenario in which after deduction of abstentions, the number of votes in favour exceeded the number of votes against but did not amount to a majority.

40. The Chairman stated that a motion would be endorsed upon receiving a simple majority vote.

41. The Chairman asked Members to vote on the amended motion. The voting result was 3 in favour, 5 against and 9 abstentions. The amended motion was not endorsed.

42. Mr LAU Chi-hung moved another amended motion that “the Government should be requested to disburse a payout of \$10,000 to all Hong Kong residents aged 18 or above to tide them over the hard times brought about by the COVID-19 epidemic, and disbursement should be completed within one month”. The amended motion was seconded by Mr LAU Cheuk-yu.

43. Mr TAM Hoi-pong agreed to the amended motion put forth by the Member and would vote in favour of it. He opined that the Government should endeavour to announce the implementation details within a month and complete the cash payout process within this year.

44. Mr NG Hin-lung, Norris supported the amended motion put forth by the Member in principle. He proposed that the Government should make effective use of resources and provide the public with anti-epidemic supplies.

45. The Chairman asked Members to vote on the second amended motion. The second amended motion was unanimously endorsed with a vote of 18 in favour, 0 against and 0 abstention.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat relayed the motion to the Financial Secretary’s Office in writing on 25 February 2020.)

46. Mr TAM Hoi-pong said that apart from Tsuen Wan town centre and Ma Wan, Sunny Bay and some sites of the Disneyland were also under the purview of the TWDC. He thus proposed that the quarantine facilities should be set up at those sites of the Disneyland because they were far from residential premises. Also, he proposed that besides taking into account the views of residents in the district, the TWDO, DH, CHP and other departments should show respect for the TWDC as a consultative body, and submit consultation papers on relevant arrangements. Therefore, he moved an impromptu motion that “as the proposed quarantine facility adjoining the Disneyland was situated in an area under the purview of the TWDC, the Government should show respect for the TWDC as a local consultative body, and send representatives to the TWDC to formally consult all Members of the Council on the details, arrangements and works schedule of the aforesaid quarantine facility”. The impromptu motion was seconded by Mr YICK Shing-chung, Angus.

47. The Chairman asked Members to vote on the impromptu motion. The impromptu motion was unanimously endorsed with a vote of 18 in favour, 0 against and 0 abstention.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat conveyed the motion to the FHB, CEDB and Lands Department in writing on 5 March 2020.)

48. The Chairman thanked Members, media workers and observers for attending the meeting. He stated that Members would make every effort to serve the residents of Tsuen Wan district and request the Government to carry out its anti-epidemic work properly.

III Item 2: Any Other Business

49. The Chairman stated that there was no other business for discussion at this meeting.

IV Adjournment of Meeting

50. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

Tsuen Wan District Council Secretariat
April 2020