

**Minutes of the 52nd Meeting of
RTHK Board of Advisors
held at 11:25 am, 17 January 2020
at Conference Room 7, G/F, West Wing, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong**

Present

Dr Eugene CHAN Kin-keung, BBS, JP (Chairman)
Ms Dilys CHAU Suet-fung
Ms Linda CHOY Siu-min
Mr Mohan DATWANI
Ms Helen KWAN Po-jen
Ms Shirley LOO Marie Therese, BBS, MH, JP
Dr TIK Chi-yuen, SBS, JP
Ms Eva WONG Ching-hung
Mr Augustine WONG Ho-ming, JP
Professor WONG Kam-fai, MH
Ms Elaine WU Siu-ling
Mr LEUNG Ka-wing, Director of Broadcasting

In Attendance from RTHK

Mr Eugene FUNG, Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Review)
Ms CHAN Man-kuen, Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Programmes)
Mr Albert CHEUNG, Assistant Director (Radio & Corporate Programming)
Ms Jace AU, Assistant Director (TV & Corporate Businesses)
Mr Brian CHOW, Controller (Radio)
Ms Amen NG, Head/Corporate Communications & Standards
Ms Dawn TSANG, Head/Radio Administration, Development and Programming
(Agenda Item 6)
Mr Ricky LEE, Head/Educational Television (Agenda Item 6)
Ms Mayella CHEUNG (Board Secretariat)
Ms Sara FONG (Board Secretariat)

Absent with Apologies

Mr Walter CHAN Kar-lok, SBS, JP
Professor Anthony FUNG Ying-him

Secretary

Ms Yvonne WU (Board Secretariat)

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. Mr Walter CHAN Kar-lok and Professor Anthony FUNG Ying-him sent their apologies for not being able to join this meeting.
2. The Chairman said that as Members had raised some comments on the draft minutes of the 27 September 2019 meeting in the last meeting, the revised draft minutes of meeting were circulated to Members for perusal afterwards. No comments were received. The minutes of the 27 September 2019 meeting were confirmed.
3. Also, the Chairman said that the Secretariat had circulated the draft minutes of the last meeting held on 29 November 2019 to Members for perusal and no comments were received. The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

4. Members had not raised any item for discussion.

Agenda Item 3: Updates on the Role of RTHK regarding Recent Hong Kong Public Events

5. The Chairman said that he had received feedback on the work of RTHK during the recent incidents as follows and asked the management to provide more information regarding the incidents concerned –
 - (i) The former Board Chairman, Mr Lester G. HUANG, commented that the main morning news programme which covered the events at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in the segment between 7:30 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. on 30 November 2019 was not balanced, as it did not mention the legal consequences the protesters should face;
 - (ii) A Member commended that the programme “Talk About” on 2 December 2019 had provided a balanced view by inviting the Legislative Council Member, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan, to express her viewpoints on the protest in Whampoa;
 - (iii) A Member considered that the news segment between 12 noon and 12:02 p.m. on 18 December 2019 was biased as it glorified people who helped the protesters to escape from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University;
 - (iv) A complaint letter sent by the Police Public Relations Branch (“PPRB”) of the Hong Kong Police Force to the Director of Broadcasting on 23 December

- 2019 accusing RTHK of misleading listeners by using an incorrect wording in its coverage of the events at Edinburgh Place on 22 December 2019; and
- (v) Comments made by the general public regarding the engagement of a commentator for the programme “Open Line, Open View”.
6. Regarding the comment made by the former Board Chairman, Mr Lester G. HUANG, Mr LEUNG Ka-wing responded that the RTHK management would listen to the recording of the concerned news programme and follow-up as appropriate.
 7. For the complaint letter sent by the PPRB, Ms Amen NG said that RTHK had responded to PPRB and expressed regret about its allegation. She pointed out that the concerned piece of news was a factual description of what happened at Edinburgh Place on 22 December 2019. A Member remarked that the PPRB and RTHK had their own version of the story and the Board, as an outsider of the incident, was unable to ascertain the truth. The Member expected that RTHK could provide more information about the allegations to facilitate the Board to provide appropriate advice to RTHK.
 8. In response to the choice of commentators for the programme “Open Line, Open View”, RTHK explained that in general, commentators of the public and current affairs programmes would be changed from time to time, and the commentators were identified from a wide spectrum with diverse background. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing added that the commentators of the programme “Open Line, Open View” since 1 January 2020 were Dr Edwin CHENG Shing-lung, Ms Yolanda NG Yuen-ting, Dr Derek YUEN Mi-chang and Mr Eric LAI Yan-ho, and these commentators were being rotated every six months. Ms CHAN Man-kuen explained that the programme was an open platform for people with diverse political background to express their opinion from different perspectives, reflecting the openness of Hong Kong society. Besides the commentators, a RTHK presenter would serve as a moderator by providing the viewpoints of the opposite stance. The commentators were all being well-briefed that they were not allowed to promote their political stance in the programme.
 9. A Member opined that although the engagement of commentators with various political background was aimed to demonstrate the openness of Hong Kong society, the audience might associate the opinion of the commentators with the stance of RTHK. The Member suggested that RTHK should invite people with a more neutral political stance to be the commentators and not those with strong bias. A Member pointed out that RTHK should ensure that all commentators would support the public mission as stipulated in the Charter of RTHK in promoting the concept of

“One Country, Two Systems” and the sense of citizenship and national identity. The Member considered that it was inappropriate to engage those persons who were not in support of the abovementioned public mission to be the commentators.

10. Ms CHAN Man-kuen thanked the Board for the advice. She said that in preparation of the RTHK annual plan, RTHK had incorporated the Board’s suggestions of promoting social cohesiveness in the community and delivering positive messages through the programmes. RTHK would also endeavour to cover different perspectives of the society in its programmes, including the minorities. RTHK had provided guidelines for the commentators and continuous efforts would be made to strengthen the guidelines.
11. Ms Jace AU explained the practice of radio phone-in programmes in the selection of commentators. She said that generally three parties would be involved in hosting a public and current affairs programme, namely the presenter, commentator and contributor. The presenters of the programmes were the staff of RTHK who were required to strictly adhere to the RTHK Producers’ Guidelines (“Guidelines”). Commentators for programmes such as “Open Line, Open View” would be changed every six months in order to maintain a balanced representation of different perspectives in the society. The contributor would provide counter argument or additional information if only one side of view was delivered in the programme. Though the commentators and contributors were not the staff of RTHK, they were required to follow the Guidelines. The production team would provide clear briefing to every guest speaker before the live programmes.
12. The Chairman noted that RTHK had handled the selection of commentators in a professional manner in accordance with the Guidelines. He reminded that RTHK should take into account the public perception as an essential consideration since the public might associate the image of the commentators, even unrelated to the programme, with the image of RTHK. A Member wished to understand more about the mechanism of RTHK in selecting and briefing the commentators. Another member suggested that RTHK should review the mechanism for selecting commentators taking into account different public feedback and provide more pre-emptive briefings to the Board so that the Board could provide advice on the mechanism as appropriate.
13. A Member considered that the current social situation and public sentiment might have adverse impact on the staff of RTHK and some of them might react in a way not in full compliance with the Guidelines. The Member believed that the responsibility was not only rested with the staff but also the management of RTHK,

and suggested that the management should help the staff to maintain their professionalism so as to minimize the potential negative impact to RTHK. With regard to the handling of complaints and fake news, another Member suggested that RTHK should enhance the communication with the Board through the Secretariat, so that the Board could help RTHK clarifying or defending the cases.

Agenda Item 4: RTHK Board of Advisors Working Groups

14. The Chairman indicated that, in accordance with clause 13 of the Charter of RTHK, the Board had the function of advising the Director of Broadcasting on all matters pertaining to editorial principles, programming standards and quality of RTHK programming; and receiving reports on complaints against editorial principles, programming standards and quality of RTHK programming. He expressed that the Board was committed to discharge its function effectively and there were more and more issues of greater complexity for the Board to discuss at its meetings. It might not be practical to increase the number of Board meetings given that the Members had already been meeting bi-monthly and there was difficulty in identifying timeslots convenient to majority of the Members for additional meetings. Hence, as an alternative, it was proposed that two working groups, namely “Working Group on Editorial Principles, Programming Standards and Quality of RTHK Programming” and “Working Group on Complaints against Editorial Principles, Programming Standards and Quality of RTHK Programming”, comprising the Chairman and at least two Members be formed voluntarily for more focused discussions in a more flexible manner on selected issues. The Director of Broadcasting would be notified of the discussion topics and could suggest relevant RTHK staff to attend the working groups as appropriate. The summary of the discussions would be reported at the regular Board of Advisors Meeting. The Chairman sought secretariat support from RTHK.
15. Members supported the proposal and remarked that the working groups would enable the Board to render more timely advice to the Director of Broadcasting on those issues when required.
16. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing had no comment on the formation of the working groups. He pointed out the importance of transparency of the operation of the working groups and agreed that RTHK would provide secretarial support to the working groups. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing also expressed his views on the role of Director of Broadcasting in the Board and said that he acted as a bridge to reflect the views of the Board to RTHK colleagues.

17. The Chairman stressed that the working groups would not be involved in the day-to-day operation of RTHK, which were to be dealt with by the RTHK management. The working groups would only give advice with no executive power.

Agenda Item 5: RTHK Annual Plan for 2020-21

18. Ms CHAN Man-kuen briefly introduced that the theme of the RTHK Annual Plan for 2020-21 was reconciliation.
19. In view of the time constraint, the Chairman, in consultation with Members, decided that this item would be discussed at a future meeting.

Agenda Item 6: Programmes on Culture and Heritage

20. In view of the time constraint, the Chairman, in consultation with Members, decided that this item would be discussed at a future meeting.

Agenda Item 7: Updates on RTHK's Response to Audit Commission's Report

21. In view of the time constraint, the Chairman, in consultation with Members, decided that this item would be discussed at a future meeting.

Agenda Item 8(a): Updates on Programmes (BOA Paper 1/2020)

22. In view of the time constraint, the Chairman, in consultation with Members, decided that this item would be discussed at a future meeting.

Agenda Item 8(b): Updates on Complaints (BOA Paper 2/2020)

23. In view of the time constraint, the Chairman, in consultation with Members, decided that this item would be discussed at a future meeting.

Agenda Item 9: Any Other Business

24. A letter from RTHK Programme Staff Union was sent to the Chairman on 16 January 2020 raising concerns about late publishing of the minutes of the meeting of 27 September 2019, the setting up of working groups, and the frequent discussion of the role of RTHK regarding the recent public events. The Chairman explained the justifications of the arrangements and said he was always in the support of RTHK.

He asked the Secretariat to prepare a draft reply accordingly. *[Post-meeting note: The reply from the Chairman, on behalf of the Board, was sent to the RTHK Programme Staff Union on 12 March 2020.]*

25. Ms Amen NG invited the Board to join the “Lunar New Year Gathering” to be held on 31 January 2019 at 5:30 p.m. in the Television House of RTHK. *[Post-meeting note: The “Lunar New Year Gathering” was cancelled as a result of the outbreak of novel coronavirus.]*
26. Mr Brian CHOW introduced that the final competition of “The Speaker 2020” would be held on 16 February 2020 at 3 p.m. at the Studio 1, Broadcasting House of RTHK. He invited Members to attend. *[Post-meeting note: “The Speaker 2020” was cancelled as a result of the outbreak of novel coronavirus.]*

Agenda Item 10: Date of Next Meeting

27. The next meeting was scheduled for 27 March 2020.
28. The Chairman said he might fix a date after the Lunar New Year to continue the discussion of the outstanding items of this meeting. *[Post-meeting note: The second part of the meeting was scheduled for 13 March 2020.]*
29. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Secretariat

RTHK Board of Advisors

Radio Television Hong Kong: Provision of Programmes
Progress in Implementing the Audit's and Public Accounts Committee's Recommendations
(as at 17.1.2020)

Para. No.	Audit's Recommendations	Progress
Part 2: Production of Programmes		
2.10	<u>Planning and Budgetary Control</u> Audit has recommended that the Director of Broadcasting (DB) should –	
	take into account information for performance evaluation of individual radio and TV programmes, in order to facilitate the making of more meaningful planning decision for the programmes.	The new Annual Plan cycle will be executed in April 2020. The annual planning exercises will take into account information for performance evaluation of individual radio and TV programmes.
2.54	<u>Community Involvement Broadcasting Service (CIBS)</u> Audit has recommended that the DB should –	
	(c) regularly conduct focus group studies to assess the cost-effectiveness of the projects funded by the Community Involvement Broadcasting Fund (CIBF);	The focus group study (with a total of six focus group sessions involving 50 people from successful applicants, unsuccessful applicants, and audiences regardless of whether they have listened to CIBS programmes before) was successfully conducted from October to November 2019. The full report will be ready in early 2020.
Part 3: Broadcasting of Programmes and New Media Services		
3.6	<u>Management of TV Broadcasting Hours</u> Audit has recommended that the DB should endeavour to enrich the TV programmes, including –	
	explore ways to enrich the miscellaneous contents of TV 31 and TV 32 with a view to enhancing the channels' attractiveness.	For TV 31, programmes were scheduled round-the-clock (i.e. 24-hour a day) according to programming strategy from 1 April 2019. Miscellaneous content was no longer broadcast on TV 31.

		For TV 32, there would be more programme varieties, such as live coverage of local sports events, live relay of important Mainland and overseas events and short interview videos on various topics.
Part 4: Evaluation of Programmes and Other Administrative Issues		
4.33	<u><i>Evaluation of TV Programmes</i></u> Audit has recommended that the DB should –	
	(d) ascertain the reasons for low ratings of RTHK’s programmes and take measures to enhance the popularity of its TV programmes, especially for those which are intended to be popular programmes; and	A working group has been set up to take forward the “Digital Terrestrial Television Penetration Survey” (DTT Penetration Survey), which has commenced in January 2020, to collect information and data on the penetration/take-up pattern of the DTT channels, viewing habits and preference of the audience. Results of the DTT Penetration Survey are expected to be available in the first quarter of 2020.
	(e) take measures to address the issue of lower TV ratings of RTHK TV programmes broadcast on RTHK channels than the ratings of the same programmes broadcast on a commercial channel.	
4.44	<u><i>Evaluation of Radio Programmes</i></u> Audit has recommended that the DB should –	
	(a) keep in view the number of listeners for each of the seven radio channels and take appropriate action to boost the number of listeners for radio channels with decreasing number of listeners; and	The Radio Audience Survey will be conducted annually. Information on the appreciation index of selected radio programmes by sampling will also be collected so as to monitor the quality of radio programmes.
	(b) take measures to improve the appreciation index and awareness level of RTHK’s radio channels.	