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Thimphu Thromde

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Third Thromde Council



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Tenth Thromde Tshogde

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Venue: Thromde Conference Hall

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Date: 5th January 2024

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10th Thromde Tshogde

5th January 2024
Conference Hall

Members Present

| Sl/No | Name | Designation |
|-------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | Ugyen Dorji | Thrompon |
| 2 | Karma Namgyel | Executive Secretary |
| 3 | Ugyen | Taba-Dechencholing Thuemi |
| 4 | Ugyen Penjore | Jungzhin-Pamtsho Thuemi |
| 5 | Rinzin Dorji | Changangkha Motithang Thuemi |
| 6 | Phub Tshering | Norzin Thuemi |
| 7 | Sonam Tshering | Changbangdu-Olakha Thuemi |
| 8 | Dorji Gyeltshen | Babesa Thuemi |
| 9 | Pema Yangzom | Motithang Thuemi |

Invitees

| Sl/No | Name | Designation |
|-------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Thinley Norbu | Chief, UPD |
| 2 | Norbu Dhendup | Chief Finance Officer |
| 3 | Kinzang Dendup | Chief TEO |
| 4 | Sonam Tobgay | Chief, LRSD |
| 5 | Yeshe Wangdi | Chief Engineer |
| 6 | Tashi Phuntsho | Chief, CoED |
| 7 | Tashi Dorji | Officiating Chief, O&M Division |
| 8 | Zangmo | Principal Thromde Health Officer |
| 9 | Sonam Namgay | Dy. Executive Engineer |
| 10 | Ugyen | O&M Division |
| 11 | Karma Dorji | Sr. Planning Officer |

Opening remarks

The Chair welcomed all the members to the 10th sitting of the Thromde Tshogde. After adopting the agenda, without further ado, the Chair right away directed to begin with the 1st agenda.

Agenda 10.01 -Issues and challenges with monthly water bill payment

The Changbangdu-Olakha Thuemi raised concerns about issues with water meter readings. Specifically, consumers are being billed for outstanding charges even when the previous units consumed are included in the second meter reading. The Thuemi emphasized that there should be no outstanding charges if the units consumed are considered in the calculation during the second reading. Jungzhina Thuemi supported this viewpoint, stressing the need to address such hiccups promptly.



Furthermore, the Thuemi highlighted persistent issues in Sementokha and Babesa, where certain areas still lack water meters. Despite decisions made in previous Tshogde meetings, the problem persists. In response, the Operations and Maintenance Division (O&MD) reported that water meters were procured in the last week and assured that installation would take place soon.

Decision

The Tshogde issued a directive to ICT services to promptly resolve all the mentioned issues, ensuring that consumers are billed accurately for their actual consumption. Additionally, the Tshogde instructed the O&MD to complete the installation of water meters by January 2024.

Action – ICT**Agenda 10.02 -Reinstatement of road cutting and streetlights takes longer time**

The Changbangdu-Olakha Thuemi submitted that reinstatement of Thromde infrastructures like road cutting and street lights take longer time. The fines or security deposits are being collected as soon as the infrastructures are damaged but reinstatement of these structures does not happen immediately.

Discussion

The O&MD reported that while Thromde has immediate reports for certain activities, the identification of defaulters can be time-consuming sometimes. The Officiating Chief of O&MD acknowledged the issues raised and submitted that one of the hindrances is the lack of manpower. However, efforts are being made to address these issues promptly. The Jungzhina Thuemi mentioned that reporting illegal activities can be challenging due to potential retaliation, emphasizing the need for a collaborative approach involving the Thuemis. The member secretary emphasized the necessity of developing a clear format for addressing such issues, involving all relevant divisions, units, and Tshogpas. Norzin and Taba Thuemis also suggested that coordinated service delivery could effectively resolve such concerns.

Decision

1. Tshogde instructed the Infra and O&M Divisions to devise a format for road cuttings and related activities that can be verified by the area Thuemi and Chief O&M. Once the form is developed, there will be no need for a separate application from the client.
2. Tshogde also directed the Management to outline a clear way-forward for enhancing internal coordination and collaboration.



3. Tshogde further directed the concerned Divisions to take note of issues raised by Thuemis regarding the use of streetlight poles as support for various cables and address these concerns in the stakeholder coordination meeting.
4. Road cutting and streetlights must be reinstated immediately on an emergency basis.

Action – O&MD

Agenda 10.03 -Need to carry out monitoring of labor camps

There are cases in some Thromde labor camps where there are people who are not Thromde employees. Since Thromde is not able to provide housing to Thromde employees, those who are not Thromde employees must be evicted.

Discussion and Decision

The Chair stated that the Asset Manager has been directed to carry out intensive inventory development of all labor camps and submit to the Management. Once the inventory has been developed, such issues will be cleared out.

Action – Asset Manager

Agenda 10.04 -Need for proper design of the basement parking spaces under lower Changzamtog vegetable shed

The basement parking at the vegetable shed is underutilized. Since there is a huge parking space outside, the basement could be used for some other economic purposes. He suggested that it could be developed as a vegetable shed or it could be given to vegetable wholesale dealers.

Discussion

Norzin Thuemi supported the idea that the area could be allocated to vegetable dealers who were displaced from CFM parking areas. However, the member secretary proposed maintaining it as a parking space, considering the persistent issue of limited parking within Thromde, which is expected to grow. Additionally, he noted the uniqueness of the junction in that area, making it challenging for wholesale dealers. The Chair acknowledged that concerns related to vegetable wholesalers would be deliberated and addressed in stakeholder consultation meetings as well.

Taba Thuemi added that these matters would arise during Dzongkhag Tshogdu, and Thromde should provide clarity on possible actions. The Chair clarified that if 10-15 actual villagers visit the area at least twice a week, Thromde would offer support. However, the member secretary cautioned that roles and mandates must be clearly defined. It remains uncertain whether managing



vegetable wholesalers falls under Thromde's mandate, or if it is the responsibility of Trade or the Ministry of Agriculture.

Decision

Tshogde directed the Asset Manager to study the parking usage for one week and submit the report to the Management and then it can be decided what can be done.

Action – Asset Manager

Agenda 10.05 -Requirement of public toilets at Semtokha main road junction

The Changangdu-Olakha Thuemi conveyed public complaints about individuals openly defecating in and around the main Semtokha roundabout. As it serves as a primary pick and drop point for taxis and city buses, the absence of a public toilet in the vicinity leads people to utilize open spaces and drains for relief. He suggested that the construction of a public toilet in the area would benefit all.

Decision

Tshogde directed the ID in collaboration with UPD to study the feasibility of construction of public toilets and propose in the coming Fiscal Year.

Action – Infra Division

Agenda 10.06 -Issues with the operation of community vegetable sheds by the vendors

Taba Thuemi raised concerns about the management of community vegetable sheds, noting that there have been no updates on the issue in any of the previous sessions. He observed significant management lapses in these sheds and highlighted that the matter had been reported in previous sittings but no action has been taken. Specifically, in the Taba vegetable shed, some vendors have not paid rents for months, and certain stalls remain closed for extended periods. He emphasized the need for a thorough study and the formulation of clear decisions by the Management to address these issues.

Discussion

The Chair acknowledged the concerns and emphasized the necessity of implementing strict measures. He assured that immediate action would be taken across all vegetable sheds, and directed every Thuemi to render full support to the Asset Manager in this initiative. The Asset Manager has been directed to develop a comprehensive inventory of all Thromde assets, including low-income housing units.



Jungzhina Thuemi reported of having raised this issue previously without any resolution in support of Taba-Dechenchong Thuemi. He pointed out a lapse on Thromde's part, indicating that the revenue section has not verified whether all vendors in the vegetable sheds have paid their rents. He emphasized the importance of adhering to the agreement between Thromde and the vendors signed during the assigning of the stalls to them. Not only in vegetable sheds but all revenue sources must be verified and ensure efficient collection of the revenue. He called for the development of a comprehensive revenue-enhancing strategy. Changangkha and Taba-Dechencholing Thuemi supported this, adding that the revenue updates should be presented during every Tshogde meeting. The Chief Finance Officer reported that the division is currently revamping the ARMS system, expressing hope that these issues can be resolved.

In line with this, Norzin Thuemi also recommended the identification of proper locations for vegetable and fruit wholesale dealers, preventing a return to selling from CFM areas.

The Chief of LRSD reported that, regarding the collection of revenue from land-related services, there are no records within the division indicating non-collection or nonpayment of fees/charges or lease rates. There are three types of collection, namely land tax, property transfer tax, and lease rates. Land tax will now be collected centrally. The Chief stated that the eSAKOR system handles property transfer tax, and lease rates are maintained in a simple Google form, with systematic checks on lease rate collections. The LRSD Chief also assured support to the Asset Manager in developing an inventory or mapping of all assets.

The Thuemis also highlighted the lack of respect for Thromde Tshogde and the Chair. They emphasized that Tshogde, being the highest decision-making body, deserves significant respect and reverence. Members pointed out that individuals casually entering and exiting the hall disrupt discussions and looks disrespectful. Therefore, they suggested that all Division Chiefs, at the very least, must be present throughout Tshogde sessions, which just convene once every three months. Members also stressed that regardless of the Chair's approachability with subordinates, essential for efficient task completion, subordinates must demonstrate respect for the Chair. Members emphasized that having received Dakyen from His Majesty, the Chair must be respected.

The Chair responded that for him, it doesn't really matter if he is being respected or not. His way of doing business is different because he wants things to move personally rather moving papers. While he values being down-to-earth with subordinates, he cautioned against interpreting this as



an invitation for irrational behavior. The Chair asserted that if someone takes advantage of his leniency, they should consider themselves commoners and incapable.

Decision

1. Tshogde decided that all vegetable sheds will be inspected and verified as a team led by Asset manager and area Tshogpa along with relevant Officials.
2. Tshogde also directed the Asset Manager to develop comprehensive inventory of all assets of Thromde including the labor camps and low-income housing units.
3. Budget and revenue status have to be presented to every Tshogde sitting.
4. Tshogde also directed all Division Heads and relevant Officials to attend Thromde Tshogde throughout without fail. The Executive Secretary to issue Office order.

Action - Asset manager and the team and area tshogpas/ Division Chiefs

Agenda 10.07 -Endorsement of purchase of water meters: Total amount Nu 2,833,570 from internal revenue

The Operations and Maintenance (O&M) division has put forth a proposal for the procurement of water meters. These meters are acquired and subsequently sold to the public, and the revenue generated from the sale of the meters are deposited back into the revenue pool. Therefore, the Division proposed the procurement of water meters using internal revenue. The total amount required for the procurement is Nu 2,833,570. The decision was approved by the Management and is forwarded to Tshogde for endorsement.

Decision

Tshogde endorsed the procurement of water meters and the use of Nu 2,833,570 from internal revenue. Tshogde also directed the O&M to report to the next Tshogde sitting. The report must contain how much has been procured, how much has been sold and to whom.

Action – O&MD

Agenda 10.8 - Levying of penalty for the stilt conversion for those structures without the access road provision

Some buildings have received approval for parking in the basement due to the absence of access. For these structures where stilt floors are converted because of the non-existence of an approach road, the Management has suggested imposing the full fine for the first instance and applying only the use-based penalty from subsequent years (i.e. without the deviation penalty of Nu.20,000). This proposal is submitted to Tshogde for endorsement.



Decision

The Management endorsed the proposal of the Management.

Action – CoED

Agenda 10.09 - Pay increment for the special category Thromde Workforce

For the specialized category of workforce previously receiving a lump sum of Nu 500 per day, the Management has proposed to align their wage with the highest wage rate within the workforce category and shall be effective retroactively from the effective date of the national workforce wage rate revision issued by the Ministry of Finance. This decision aims to streamline the workforce category in accordance with the Thromde workforce rules and regulations.

Discussion

Taba Thuemi submitted that individuals in this group receive higher pay due to the distinct nature of their work and some have been recognized for their dedicated service to Thromde. Given the challenging and unsanitary working conditions they face, it is justified for them to receive slightly higher pay than other members of the workforce. Other Thuemis also expressed support for this standpoint. The Chair clarified that the Management's decision to align their pay with the highest wage scale mainly to streamlining the workforce categories, so that it will be not an issue even if Thromde recruits new workforces in this category in future.

Decision

The Tshogde endorsed the proposal of the Management and shall be effective retroactively from the date of national workforce wage rate revision issued by Ministry of Finance.

Action – Divisions concerned and Finance Division

Agenda 10.10 – 3 times free sewer tanker services, an appraisal to Tshogde

Once Thromde has announced for free sewer tanker services to those areas where there is no sewer network connections, Thromde received overwhelming applications for the sewer tanker services and some even applied 5-6 times a year. This has put so much pressure of services and therefore, the Management decided to provide 3 times free sewer tanker services to those building where there is no sewer network coverage and they will be charged beyond 3 times. This is put to tshogde for appraisal.

Discussion

Several members expressed support for the Management's decision, but a few argued that there should be a distinction in sewer tanker charges beyond three times. They contended that it is unfair



for them to be charged the same rate for tanker services as they also pay sewer charges along with water. The Chair clarified that the management arrived at this decision because the one-time sewer tanker charges are as high as, or even exceed, the sewer charges they currently pay.

Decision

The Tshogde endorsed the decision of the Management to provide 3 times free sewer tanker services to those areas where there is no sewer coverage.

Action – O&MD

Agenda 10.11 -Additional budget requirement for Changzamtog MSS and Sherabgatshel PS

The Project Engineer overseeing the construction of Changzamtog MSS and Sherabgatshel PS at Danringa has proposed for an additional fund requirement. Although the construction works have been completed, the final bills could not be settled due to a shortage of funds. Both projects were initially approved under SDP funding with a budget of Nu 50M each. However, as the contract amount exceeded the SDP-approved budget, it had to be supplemented with RGoB funds. The Project Engineer explained that the additional structures such as the lift system, retaining walls, and other site development works, along with price adjustments, contributed to the increased cost. These additional structures were crucial for the commencement of the schools. The total additional funds required for the settlements of final bill for both the schools amount to Nu 34M.

Discussion

Some members suggested that certain structures, such as walls in few locations, lift systems, and the use of costly materials, could have been omitted to adhere to the budget. The Chief TEO clarified that these structures and facilities will be fully utilized. He further explained that in the 2024 admission, over 40 students with various forms of disabilities have been identified, and Changangkha alone cannot accommodate them. Consequently, other schools like Dangrina, Changzamtog, and Losselling have been designated as schools for special needs for the time being. The Chief Finance Officer added that the budget balance can only be ascertained after the Mid-Year budget review.

Decision

1. Tshogde directed the focal engineer, Chief Engineer, Chief Finance Officer and Chief TEO to sit together and find out the total savings from current FY and re-current and the balance budget is approved to be arranged from Internal Revenue.



2. Moving forward, the budget requirement for any kind of works must be forecasted beforehand and put to Tshogde if required.

Action – Project Engineer, Chief Engineer, CFO and Chief TEO

Agenda 10.12 -Endorsement of reprioritized activities and use of internal revenue

The Chief Finance Officer presented to the Tshogde the following reprioritized activities for endorsement.

| Sl No. | Activity | Amount in Million Nu. | Remarks |
|--------|--|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | Maintenance of Office Building at Lungtenzampa MSS | 2.100 | Apportioned from Revenue |
| 2 | Fire victim's essentials items | 0.202 | Paid from the current savings of 2022-2023 |
| 3 | a) 116 National Day Expenditure for street lights replacement | 1.623 | Paid from the current savings of 2022-2023 |
| | b) 116 National Day Expenditure for fairy lights | 0.044 | Paid from the current savings of 2022-2023 |
| | c) 116 National Day Expenditure for buildup program | 0.111 | Paid from the current savings of 2022-2023 |
| | d) 116 National Day Expenditure for paintings | 0.785 | Paid from the current savings of 2022-2023 |
| | e) 116 National Day Expenditure for miscellaneous expenditure | 0.438 | Paid from the current savings of 2022-2023 |
| | f) 116 National Day Expenditure for resurfacing works | 6.376 | Paid from the current savings of 2022-2023 |
| 4 | Supplementary budget incorporation for Pay and Allowances for Thromde Employees with 6 th Pay Commission Notification | 41.655 | From Revenue |
| 5 | Workforce supplementary budget incorporation | 42.627 | From Revenue |
| 6 | Construction of Borewell at Babesa | 8.700 | Re-prioritized from the Street Light replacement budget. |
| 7 | Pre-financing of EBA Projects | 20.000 | From Revenue |
| 8 | Top-up on EBA Project – Affordable Housing Construction | 3.300 | Re-appropriation from Emergency restoration works |
| 9 | Construction of steel staircase at Lungtenzampa | 1.600 | Apportionment from Capital Grant |
| 10 | Golden Jubilee Celebration at Lungtenzampa | 0.249 | Apportioned from capital grant |
| 11 | Contribution to Dema Lhakhang | 5.000 | To be apportioned from Revenue |
| 12 | Blacktopping of Kuensel Office access road | 0.28 | 50% of the total budget to be paid from the current savings of 2022-2023 |
| | Total | 135.09 | |

The total budget details for the above reprioritized activities are as follow:

1. From Revenue - Nu.111.382 million
2. From current savings from FY 2022-2023 Nu.9.859 million
3. From Capital Grant Nu.1.849 million
4. Re-appropriations from the approved activity Nu.12.000 million

This was submitted for endorsement.

Decision

Tshogde endorsed the reprioritized activities and the budget details as presented above by the Finance Division.

Action – Finance Division

Agenda 10.13 - Cash compensation for NPPF's land

The Chief of LRSD reported that the road (Gongdzin Lam) in front of the Thromde Office, starting from 8-eleven connecting to Chorten Lam above Lungten Zam BOD junction, belongs to NPPF. Although parking fees are collected by NPPF, they do not impose any charges for the road used by the public. The total land area is 24.2 decimals. As land substitution within the city was found impractical, NPPF has requested Thromde for land compensation. In response, LRSD has explored various options for land acquisition for the public's benefit. The Chief LRSD presented the following options:

Proposal

1. OPTION 1 : Cash Compensation

| Area occupied by Road (sq.ft) | Precinct | PAVA 2017 | PAVA 2023 | Remarks |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---|
| 11310 | Urban Core – Sub precinct II | Nu. 2,740.09 @ Sq.ft | Nu. 5668.91 @ Sq.ft | Considering that the Road Construction was agreed in 2018 |

Total Compensation as per PAVA 2017: **Nu 30,990,418**

Total Compensation as per PAVA 2023: **Nu. 64,115,372**

2. OPTION 2 : Long-term Lease

| Area occupied by Road (sq.ft) | Social | Commercial | Average | Remarks |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 11310 | (Nu. 1 @ sq.ft per annum) | (Nu. 20 @ sq.ft per annum) | (Nu. 10 @ sq.ft per annum) | NPPF may continue to collect the parking fees. |
| | Nu. 11,310 per annum | Nu. 226,200 per annum | Nu. 113,100 per annum | |

3. OPTION 3 : TDR (Transfer of Developmental Rights)

| Sending district | Receiving District |
|--|---|
| Precinct: <i>UC Sub precinct II</i> Total Affected area: 11,310 sq.ft Developable area (65%): 7351.15 sq.ft No. of allowable floor: 6 floors Total developable area: 44,109 sq.ft Precinct difference ratio: 0.9145 TDR: 40,339 sq.ft | Assuming that the receiving district is the vacant land of NPPF head office (CORE-044) in core area (<i>UC Sub precinct I</i>) Vacant area: 24,000 sq.ft Developable area (65%): 15,600 sq.ft No of additional floor upon TDR: 2.6 floors |

The Management has decided to acquire the whole of land, 24.2 decimals at PAVA rate 2017. The decision is submitted to Tshogde for endorsement.

Decision

Without further deliberation, Tshogde supported the decision of the Management and directed the Management to process to immediately acquire the land as proposed.

Action – LRSD

Agenda 10.14 - Recruitment of 1 survey engineer

Since there is an approved post for one survey engineer and the LRSD has proposed for recruitment, the Management has decided to recruit one survey engineer on a 3 years contractual basis. This is submitted to Tshogde for endorsement.

Decision

The Tshogde endorsed decision to recruit one survey engineer on a 3-year contract term.

Action – LRSD/HRS

Agenda 10.15 - Piloting priority bus lane

The Management has proposed for piloting the priority bus lane from Babesa zero point to flyover bus stop from 18th of January 2024. The public shall be informed through various media platform starting 11th January 2024. This is put to tshogde for endorsement.

Decision

Tshogde endorsed the proposal of the Management to start the bus priority lane as proposed.

Action – Division concerned

Agenda 10.16 - Way forward for AIN 15051-Compliance audit report on building and land management services of the Thimphu Thromde - Jan 2014-December 2016

The Audit focal Officials submitted to the Management the case of long-standing audit memo. He stated that as per the decision of 3rd Thromde Tshogde meeting, the relevant officials with the help of internal auditor conducted the internal review but were not able to reconcile Nu.165,013.75 for basement regularization and Nu.136,654.90 for attic regularization and hence, RAA has not dropped this memo. When the official concerned (B.I Sonam Dhendup, now transferred to Thimphu Dzongkhag) approached the RAA to drop the memo, he is being asked to put it up to the Management and then to the Tshogde to waive-off the above amount as it has become extremely difficult to trace the receipts and reconcile the amount. In the event, if the present management



and Tshogde decides to waive off the amount, then the TT should also give commitment stating that such lapses shall be avoided in the future.

The Management has proposed to waive off the amount since there was no proper system developed earlier and the fees and charges were collected manually and hence there have been such lapses. Now that a proper system has been developed and it is systematically managed, Thromde commits that no such lapses will be observed henceforth. The same is forwarded to Tshogde for endorsement.

Decision

Despite the completion of an internal review by an internal auditor, as per Tshogde directives, the lapse could not be identified. While the development of the ARMS system may prevent such issues in the future, Tshogde has directed the Management to exercise additional caution and ensure the prevention of similar lapses. Furthermore, Tshogde instructed the Audit focal to correspond with the Royal Audit Authority, requesting to drop the memo based on the commitments and assurances made by the management and the directives issued by Tshogde to ensure compliance.

Action – Audit Focal Official

Agenda 10.17 - Appraisal on issues with the implementation of LG ACT

The Chair informed that the Executive Secretary has been asked by the MoIT to coordinate with all other Thromdes and come up with certain issues and confusions with regard to the implementation of LG Act. These issues will then be submitted to MoIT and the Ministry will further take up with relevant agencies. The Management has directed all Divisions and Sections to submit issues and challenges if any pertaining to the implementation of the Act. The Chair stated that even Thumemis can submit opinions if there are any to the Executive Secretary.

Discussion

Some members raised questions about why the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MoIT) is spearheading this initiative when the ownership of the LG Act lies with the Department of Local Governance and Disaster Management. The Chair clarified that MoIT is coordinating to compile issues related to the implementation of the Act and submitting them to relevant agencies for discussion. Members emphasized that Thromde Tshogde has been operating in accordance with the LG Act of 2009, and there haven't been any issues regarding the Act.



Decision

Tshogde deliberated and decided that Thromde Tshogde has been functioning as per the LG Act and therefore, there are no issues to be submitted pertaining to LG Act implementation.

Action – Management

Conclusion

The 10th Tshogde concluded at 2:00 PM. The Chair expressed gratitude to all council members and invitees for their time and active participation in discussions, contributing to fruitful deliberations. He urged everyone to maintain the same spirit in future sessions.

Rapporteur – Karma Dorji, Sr. Planning Officer

