

# The Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry

## MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### HELD ON MARCH 30, 2024

01. A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry was held on March 30, 2024, at 01:30 p.m. in Sheikh Muhammad Shafi Hall of the Sialkot Chamber.

02. Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry presided over the meeting.

03. The proceedings of the meeting commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran.

04. The following members attended the meeting:

- Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik President
- Mr. Wahub Jahangir S. Vice President
- Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh Vice President
- Mr. Ahmed Imtiaz Khan -Member-
- Mr. Awais Ahmed -do-
- Ms. Lubna Tubsim -do-
- Mr. Matloob Ahmed Qureshi -do-
- Mr. Mian Fiaz Ahmed -do-
- Mr. Muhammad Shahbaz -do-
- Ms. Gulzaib Waqas Awan -do-

05. **Leave of Absence.**

- Mr. Adnan Yousaf Member
- Mr. Afzaal Bhatti Member
- Choudhry Jahangir Rashid Member
- Mr. Jawad Hussain Member
- Mr. Naeem Yousaf Member
- Mr. Peeter John Member
- Mr. Saleem Akhtar Bhutta Member
- Mr. Toheed Nasir Member

06. **Members who could not Attend**

- Mian Imran Akbar Member
- Mr. Saqib Ashfaq Member
- Mr. Shoaib Imtiaz Member
- Mr. Zain ul Abideen Member

<b>07. Point discussed.</b>	Approval of Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee held on February 26, 2024.
<b><u>Discussion:</u></b>	<p>Mr. Ahmed Imtiaz Khan referred to the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on February 26, 2024, wherein the house had unanimously approved to take security deposit from delegates and a one-year ban on those delegates withdrawing at the last moment without solid reason.</p> <p>He said that no proper justification was demanded from the delegates who withdrew from the UK delegation including him before the imposition of the one-year ban. He said that he could not participate in the UK Delegation due to the illness of his mother. Mr. Khan also rebutted the claim that the delegates could not participate due to financial constraints and being under the assumption of a 100% subsidy.</p> <p>Mr. Ahmed Imtiaz Khan also requested that the word 'ban' should be replaced from the minutes.</p> <p>No decision on the proposal was made.</p>
<b>Participants</b>	Mr. Ahmed Imtiaz Khan
<b>Approval</b>	Approved

<b>08. Point discussed.</b>	Approval of Statement of Accounts for the month of February 2024
<b>Approval</b>	Approved

<b>09. Point discussed.</b>	Approval of Minutes of Meeting of Department Committee on Education held on March 05, 2024.
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**Discussion:**

Dr. Khurram Anwar Khawaja, Chairman Committee, briefed the house on the initiative of Free Cost Tuition services to the students of Government Schools in collaboration with Government College Women University Sialkot and the Govt. Murray College Sialkot. He said that the initiative was taken as a result of an MOU signed between the aforementioned stakeholders including the Sialkot Chamber and CO Education to provide free-of-cost high-class tuition services to the students so that the parents could be relieved of the hefty tuition fees after school.

He gave a presentation on the project that encompassed the objectives, implementation plan, and achievements of the project thus far. The Chairman Committee shared with the house that the tuition services were being offered within the schools after hours by the volunteers (students of the university). He also informed that an honorarium was being given to such volunteers shortlisted after scrutiny.

The Chairman further said that the project's ultimate goal was to uplift the education level of Government Schools to the extent that the concept of tuition post-school could be eliminated from the city. He said that the project was being supervised by the Advisory Council. He also explained that a proper curriculum was being developed coupled with training of the volunteers along with a proper evaluation mechanism.

Dr. Khurram Anwar Khawaja shared that the new session would commence after the Eid Holidays under which 10 schools had been shortlisted wherein over 1000 students of District Sialkot would benefit from the initiative. The Chairman Committee also shared that under the initiative, the uplifting of various schools and classrooms was also underway.

Sharing the holistic overview of the program, the Chairman also briefed the house that several other activities were also being carried out including the provision of free-of-cost uniforms, sweaters shawls, and shoes to over 2000 students, along with medical facilities to students and families, and imparting essential skills.

He informed that to run the project as per desired objectives an estimated budget of PKR 10(M) would be required. Dr. Khawaja shared that Sialkot International Airport had pledged to donate PKR 1 (M) for the cause and requested the Executive Committee of Sialkot Chamber to sanction funds to the tune of PKR 1 to 2 million for the project. He said that the project could also be financed from Zakat/Charity funds.

Ms. Lubna Tubsim appreciated the project and the role of Dr. Khurram Anwar Khawaja in its execution. After careful examination of the previous minutes of the meeting of the Departmental Committee on Education, the EC Member highlighted that students of the level of MPhil and BS were availing the scholarship benefits from the Chamber. She was of the view that such students should be encouraged to join part-time jobs to fund their education rather than applying for scholarships. She said that the funds should be utilized maximum for the most underprivileged students, particularly young girls.

Dr. Khurram Anwar Khawaja shared that the scholarships were given upon recommendations and also to the employees of the Chamber pursuing Masters' Degrees. He invited Ms. Lubna Tubsim to participate in the next meeting of the Education Committee to further review her suggestions and fine-tune the criteria for Scholarships. Dr. Khawaja shared that the baseline method for offering scholarships was to facilitate the students getting an education from Government Universities with an exception to such cases enrolled in the private sector but could not afford the fee due to genuine financial constraints. He said that Higher Education had become a distant dream for the Middleclass henceforth the preference.

Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh recommended that scholarships should be awarded to students with active bank accounts to ensure transparency. In response, Dr Khurram Anwar Khawaja said that students would often not have bank accounts but he welcomed the suggestion.

He invited the Vice President to participate in the upcoming meeting to further refine the process of disbursement.

Ms. Gulzaib Waqas Awan appreciated the projects of the Education Committee and recommended that the facilities should be offered to students of merit regardless of gender or program of enrolment. She also recommended that Nawaz Sharif College on Pasrur Road should also be taken into the ambit of the program.

Mr. Wahub Jahangir appreciated the work of Dr. Khurram Anwar Khawaja and said that for the stakeholders, the original objective of nation-building through education should matter regardless of programs of enrolment or the orientation of the educational institution. He said that if the scrutiny process was being done optimally then every deserving student should be accommodated.

<b>Participants</b>	Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Mr. Wahub Jahangir, Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh, Dr. Khurram Anwar Khawaja, Ms. Lubna Tubsim, and Ms. Gulzaib Waqas Awan.
<b>Approval</b>	Approved

<b>10. Point discussed.</b>	Approval of Minutes of 02 Meetings of the Departmental Committee on Fairs and Exhibitions/Delegations held on March 11, 2024 and March 18, 2024.
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**Discussion:**

Mr. Qaiser Baig provided an update on the trade delegation to the USA, noting that the finalized list had been shared with the Pakistan Mission in Houston. He also informed the group that the 'Note Verbales' for Phase II of the Australia Delegation had been received, along with the submission of Visa Applications. The Chairman confirmed the departure date for May 19, 2024, as per the Consulate's confirmation in Houston.

Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik commended the success of Delegation to Australia Phase-I and expressed satisfaction with the feedback received from delegates.

Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh raised a concern regarding the participation of a delegate in multiple delegations within a year, citing a recent instance involving the UK and Australia delegations. He suggested a policy change to prevent such occurrences.

In response, Mr. Qaiser Baig clarified that the policy restricts company repetition, not individual participation, particularly in subsidized delegations by TDAP. He explained that the individual in question applied from a different company, adhering to the rules. He also highlighted that there are no such restrictions for Self-Financed Delegations of the Sialkot Chamber.

The Chairman announced confirmation for a trade delegation to Jordan departing on June 01, 2024, with plans for another delegation to Morocco. Additionally, he revealed plans for a Women Specific Delegation in the near future.

Mr. Qaiser Baig shared with the house that it was a norm of the Chamber to share its work with the members through social media. In continuation of the same, a video message had been circulated depicting the performance of the Departmental Committee on Fairs and Exhibitions which received positive feedback from the community and was also shared by a local media Youtube Channel "Sialkotupdateofficial". He, however, expressed his concern that Mr. Saleem Akhtar Bhutta, EC Member had posted a negative comment targeting the selection criteria of the Chamber and alleging the Chairman Committee was obliging his 'related concerns' in the delegation. Mr. Baig said that it was a matter of great concern as the comment was posted on a public platform and coming from an Executive Member was uncalled for. He said that the selection of the delegates was being done under strict scrutiny and observation of the office bearers and the Executive Committee.

He said that the passing of such a comment was an effort to malign the whole selection process. The Chairman recorded his protest and requested the house to take any appropriate action to avoid any such situation in the future. The Chairman briefed the house that the committee was performing beyond its capacities as this was the first time that 6 delegations had been subsidized by TDAP a rarity never heard of in the past. He said that after all the hard work receiving such feedback from a member of the level of the Executive Member was extremely discouraging.

Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik expressed his grave concerns about the act of the EC Member. He assured that strict action would be taken with the approval of the Executive Committee.

The Chairman Committee also invited the attention of the house to the proposition that a dedicated staff member from the Research & Development Department should accompany the delegates for better coordination and support. He said that in high-profile delegations interactive meetings with Chambers and Organizations of the host countries were a norm for which the designated staff could provide necessary coordination and support to the Leader of the Delegation. Moreover, the staff member could draft and present a comprehensive report on the market analysis for the future benefit of the members.

The House unanimously approved that a staff member from the Research & Development Department should be a part of the high-profile delegations of the Sialkot Chamber.

Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh recommended that the policy for re-participation should be changed and that the person should not participate in a second delegation within the same year regardless of the company.

Mr. Qaiser Baig said that the policy could be revised in future subsidies approved by TDAP.

<b>Participants</b>	Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh, Mr. Qaiser Baig
<b>Approval</b>	Approved

<b>11. Point discussed.</b>	Approval of Minutes of Meeting of the Departmental Committee on FBR, Customs, Sales Tax, Federal Taxation, and Provincial Taxation held on March 18, 2024.
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**Discussion:**

Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, directed Mr. Jamshed Murtaza Badar, Deputy Secretary to brief the house on the budget proposals recommended by the Committee. The same proposals were to be sent to the Government after EC's approval.

Mr. Jamshed Murtaza Badar gave a briefing on the proposals including but not limited to Limit the enhancement of Tax on Profit on Debt, Exclusion of Hereditary Assets from levy of Tax on Deemed Income, Calculation of Wealth Statement on the formula as defined for Tax Return, Under Section 153, Minimum Tax on Individuals and AOPs should be considered as Adjustable or Final Tax, Amendment in Section 161 to Any withholding tax should have a limitation of 6 years to open cases, Under 236Y, Reduction in Advance Tax on Persons Remitting abroad through Credit/Debit Cards or Prepaid Cards from 5% to 1%.

<b>Participants</b>	Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Mr. Jamshed Murtaza Badar
<b>Approval</b>	Approved

<b>12. Point discussed.</b>	Approval of Report of Meeting on Visit of Civil Officers of 39 <sup>th</sup> Mid-Career Management Course from National Institute of Management Islamabad held on February 20, 2024.
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<b>Approval</b>	Approved
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<b>13. Point discussed.</b>	Approval of Report of Minutes of Meeting on visit of H.E. Mr. Tapas Adhikari, Ambassador of Nepal to Pakistan held on February 23, 2024.
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<b>Approval</b>	Approved
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<b>14. Point discussed.</b>	Approval of Report of meeting with UK-Pakistan inward Trade Mission held on March 02, 2024.
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<b>Approval</b>	Approved
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<b>15. Point discussed.</b>	Approval of Minutes of Meeting of the Departmental Committee on Post Office/Telecommunication held on March 04, 2024.
<b>Discussion:</b>	
<p>Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh, citing the issue highlighted in Point No. 10 of this document, recorded his protest on the most negative comments passed by Mr. Saleem Akhtar Bhutta, Executive Committee Member and Chairman of the subject Committee on Post Office/Telecommunication.</p> <p>He said that Mr. Saleem Akhtar Bhutta should have realized that he is part of the Chamber's Executive Committee and such comments would result in tarnishing the image of the Chamber. He testified that the whole balloting process was extremely transparent.</p> <p>Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik recommended that Mr. Saleem Akhtar Bhutta should be removed as the Chairman of the Post Office Committee.</p> <p>Ms. Lubna Tubsim endorsed the point and stressed that appropriate action ought to be taken to avoid any such instance in the future.</p> <p>Mr. Awais Ahmed suggested that Mr. Saleem Akhtar Bhutta should be given a chance to clarify himself before taking any action.</p> <p>Ms. Lubna Tubsim said that she had also faced a similar comment from Mr. Saleem Akhtar Bhutta in the past and that limits had been crossed.</p> <p>Mr. Ahmed Imtiaz Khan condemned the incident but recommended asking for an explanation before taking any action.</p> <p>Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik said that Mr. Saleem Akhtar Bhutta had made several violations on several occasions and was given due time to correct his behavior yet he remained persistent with his attitude without any correction.</p> <p>The house approved for change of the Chairmanship of the Post Office/Telecommunication Committee in response to the act of Mr. Saleem Akhtar Bhutta.</p>	
<b>Participants</b>	Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Mr. Jamshed Murtaza Badar
<b>Approval</b>	Approved
<b>16. Point discussed.</b>	Approval of Minutes of Meeting on the visit of H.E. Mr. Durmus Bastug, Consul General of Türkiye in Lahore held on March 08, 2024.
<b>Approval</b>	Approved
<b>17. Point discussed.</b>	Approval of Minutes of Meeting on the visit of Mr. Aisam ul Haq Qureshi, President, Pakistan Tennis Federation held on March 09, 2024.
<b>Approval</b>	Approved
<b>18. Point discussed.</b>	Approval of Minutes of Meeting of the Departmental Committee on Membership/By-Laws held on March 28, 2024.
<b>Approval</b>	Approved

### 19. ANY OTHER POINT(S)

1. Mr. Wahub Jahangir informed the house that the Solar System installed at the Sialkot Chamber had started producing optimal results after the relocation of the Solar Panels. He said that in the current electricity bill, the Units went into negative, and only the taxes and meter charges were levied on the bill. He expressed his hope that the electricity bill will decrease to zero during the prevalent year.

2. Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh shared an application of Ms. Noor Fatima enrolled in BS LLB who was previously being sponsored by the Sialkot Chamber. He said that in the application, sponsorship for the fee of the 6<sup>th</sup> Semester had been solicited. He requested Ms. Lubna Tubsim to brief the house on the expenditures of the applicant.

Ms. Lubna Tubsim shared that the girl was in an extremely precarious condition as she was an orphan and her only brother was a drug addict. She said that 50% of the fee was being sponsored by the University and the Sialkot Chamber needed to support the remaining 50% as per the voucher.

The house unanimously approved the requisition.

3. Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh shared the application received from Ch. Allah Rakha, Graveyard Shaheedan Committee requesting funds for the uplift of the graveyard. The request was turned down.
4. Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh shared the President Chamber was pleased to approve PKR 150,000 as an annual donation for the Seerat Study Centre. Approval was accorded.
5. Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik shared that the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau had requested 75 mattresses. He said that 25 mattresses may be donated. The House approved the request for the provision of 25 mattresses.
6. Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh presented the Medical Expenses of Mr. Fahad Butt. The house approved as per the HR Policy of the Chamber.
7. Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik shared that an EID Bonus of 15% of Gross Salary was given to Chamber staff last year. He shared that a request had been received for the provision of the same this year. The House approved the EID Bonus of 15% of the Gross Salary of Chamber Staff.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

**Minutes approved by Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President, Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry.**