



PROVINCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Ninety-Ninth Meeting

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

The Management Commission met at 9:30 a.m. via video conference.

SPEAKER (Bennett): Good morning, everyone.

I'll call the meeting to order.

First of all, we'll begin by introducing the Members of the Management Commission and the officials that are attending here today. We have hon. Lisa Dempster, Government House Leader; Barry Petten, Opposition House Leader; the hon. John Haggie, MHA for Gander; Jamie Korab, MHA for Waterford Valley; Craig Pardy, MHA for Bonavista; Kim Hawley George, Clerk of the House of Assembly and secretary to the Commission.

Also joining us we have Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Deputy Speaker; Bobbi Russell, Principal Clerk of Committees; and Gerrie Smith, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel.

Thank you, everyone, and welcome.

We'll get right into the agenda. We have seven items for our meeting this morning. The first agenda item relates to the approval of minutes for meetings held on the following dates: July 17, October 22, November 25, December 4 and December 20 of 2024, and also, February 3, 2025.

Further, as required under the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, I'm advised of decisions of in camera meetings on those dates also. The substance of that is included in the minutes.

I'll open the floor if anybody got any questions, comments, errors or omissions before we call for a motion to accept those minutes.

Seeing none, I'll call for a motion that the Commission approves the minutes of the meetings held on July 17, October 22,

November 25, December 4 and December 20 of 2024 and February 3, 2025.

Can I have a mover to that motion?

L. DEMPSTER: So moved, Speaker.

SPEAKER: Moved by Minister Dempster and seconded by MHA Pardy.

All those in favour, by raise of hand.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

SPEAKER: Next, we have several items as required to be reported to the Commission, but there's no actual decision or motion required. There are four different items that have been identified in your briefing package.

First, there is a report on rulings on allowance use of Members since the Commission last met publicly. The second one, there was a report outlining approvals of the Clerk for furniture and equipment further to delegated authority under the standard office allocation package for MHAs.

Thirdly, there were financial reports for the periods ended 30 September 2024 and 31 December 2024, which are required to be presented to the Commission at least quarterly in accordance with the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*. And lastly, under the reporting items, a report of the Audit Committee to the Commission.

Before I open the floor with questions, I don't know if either Member of the Audit Committee would like to comment on that particular item?

MHA Pardy or Dempster?

If not, I open up the floor for questions before we move to the next item. Does anyone have any questions on those four particular items?

Seeing none, we'll move on to agenda item number 3.

The next agenda item relates to the appointment of the auditor for the House of Assembly and Statutory Offices. Pursuant to 43(2) of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, the Commission must appoint an auditor of the accounts of the House of Assembly and the Statutory Offices before the end of the fiscal year, upon the recommendation of the Audit Committee.

In correspondence that we received on March 4, 2025, the Audit Committee recommended the Auditor General be appointed as auditor, pursuant to paragraph 23(7)(b) of the act. And again, the information and details are outlined in your briefing package.

Any questions to that before I call for a motion?

Seeing none, I call motion that the Commission directs, pursuant to subsection 43(2) of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, that the Auditor General of Newfoundland and Labrador be appointed to audit the accounts of the House of Assembly and Statutory Offices for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

Can I have a mover to that motion?

Minister Haggie and seconded by MHA Pardy.

All those in favour, by show of hands.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

The next agenda item relates to an invoice from the previous fiscal year which cannot be paid in the current year without approval of the Commission. Further to subsection 7(6) of the *Members' Resources and Allowances Rules*, you may recall, those that were present at that meeting of October 22, we had a very similar invoice come through.

The rules allow for payment of office accommodation expenses related to the establishment of a constituency office in an electoral district. Further to those provisions, an agreement has been entered into a lease for office accommodations for the constituency office for the Baie Verte - Green Bay area in the community of Springdale.

The House of Assembly did not receive an invoice from the landlord in a timely manner to pay the expenses in the fiscal year that's related to that particular expense. The expenses were related to the security monitoring, which every MHA office receives, and were incurred in March of 2024, but we only just recently received the invoice. These expenses are compliant with the rules and the established lease agreement.

It's a small invoice of \$34.34, again for the monitoring of that month of the security system at the office in the Baie Verte - Green Bay District.

Any questions?

Seeing none, I call for a motion that the Commission approve payment of expense in the amount of \$34.34 for leased office space accommodation expense in the District of Baie Verte - Green Bay for the 2023-24 fiscal year, with the expenses to be charged to the applicable allocation in the current fiscal year of 2024-2025.

Can I have a motion for that?

L. DEMPSTER: So moved, Speaker.

SPEAKER: Moved by Minister Dempster; seconded by Minister Haggie.

All those in favour, by show of hand.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

Item number 5 is related to the budget transfer request for the Official Opposition caucus. Transfer is required to the Official Opposition Members Caucus – Grants and Subsidies to provide operational funding for the period of April 15, 2024, to March 31, 2025, for three additional Members.

Further details are outlined in the briefing package for today's meeting. I'll open the floor for questions. I think this is pretty common when we have Members with regard to by-elections or Members moving to different political parties.

So there is an allocation, a total of \$4,300. If there are no questions, we'll call for a motion that the Commission approves the following transfer of funds: Subdivision 1.1.04.10, Members' Resources – Grants and Subsidies, \$1,700; also from Subdivision 1.1.04.09, Members' Resources – Allowances and Assistance, \$600; and thirdly, from the account of Subdivision 1.1.06.10, Government Members Caucus – Grants and Subsidies, \$2,000; and that amount of \$4,300 be transferred to 1.1.07.10 Official Opposition Members Caucus – Grants and Subsidies, again for \$4,300.

Can I have a mover for that motion?

Minister Haggie.

Seconded?

MHA Dinn.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Obviously, I think MHA Dinn you are in favour for that motion.

J. DINN: Yes.

SPEAKER: Motion carried.

Item number 6 is the disposal of House of Assembly assets. Obviously, this is in your briefing package, also. On this, the authority and process of the disposal of assets in the House of Assembly, there are a number of assets requiring disposal and the matter brought before you today for the Commission's consideration were identified when we were seeking advice and guidance from the Public Procurement Agency.

In the Legislature, the authority to dispose assets is given to the Commission, generally, under subsection 20(d) of *HOAA/AA*. Further, the Commission also established the Inventory Management Policy which provides direction on accounting and control of the inventory of moveable assets including proper acquisition, measurement, safeguarding, write-downs and disposal.

In recent discussions with the Public Procurement Agency, two matters were identified which requires the Commission's directions related to the disposals.

First, the Government Purchasing Agency Customer Manual referred to in the House of Assembly Inventory Management Policy related to disposal no longer exists.

Secondly, the process for the disposal of assets in department has been modified

that the authority to dispose of assets in Executive Branch is now delegated to the department head which is the deputy minister by operation of the *Executive Council Act*.

Further analysis of the provisions of the revised PPA process indicates that authority to dispose of assets in the Executive Branch is derived from the powers of the minister or deputy minister, with respect to the acquisition and disposal of property, under the *Executive Council Act*. However, while our Clerk of the House of Assembly is equivalent to a deputy minister, she is not competent under the act; they are the chief administrative and financial officer for the Legislative Branch.

In that context of the Legislative Branch, the Commission may wish to consider amending the Inventory Management Policy to delegate authority to the Clerk to approve disposal for the assets. This would bring us parallel to what they are currently doing in the Executive Branch.

Further details are outlined in your package. There are a number of items that we have that are no longer needed and no longer in good condition, some of which we're currently paying storage fees on items that we really don't need. So this would give the authority, if agreeable by the Commission, for the Clerk to be able to go through the proper processes, similar to what the Executive Branch does, to dispose of these assets.

Any questions?

Hearing none, if the Commission is in agreement –

L. DEMPSTER: Speaker.

SPEAKER: Yes, go ahead, Minister Dempster.

L. DEMPSTER: I just have one question. Is there an actual list of those items in the inventory?

SPEAKER: Kim, do you want to speak to that?

CLERK (Hawley George): Hello Minister.

There are many, many, many items at this point, so yes, there certainly is. I mean, in some senses it's a list and in some senses it's a room full of material that is broken or no longer required and so forth. So, for example, I have a folder here which talks about broken metal filing cabinets, various other – a headset that is broken; a digital clock that is broken. That's the kind of materials that we're talking about.

The other sort of stuff came from the Broadcast upgrade, so some of the materials coming out of that are now being stored in the former cafeteria down in the East Block, taking up space from TI and so forth. We haven't been able to dispose of those assets because of the current lack of alignment with the way that it's happening in the Executive Branch.

I do want to just give comfort to the Commission that, you know, all the assets that are purchased are entered into inventory, they're removed from inventory and that would be reflected in the records that we have here. That would be also available to any auditors that we would have and, as you know, we have various auditing groups that come in with our accountability framework. All of that would be maintained and that would certainly be accessible so there's no reduction in service there.

There's also reporting that goes for our tangible capital assets, that goes to the Office of the Comptroller General on a monthly basis for those – they call them TCAs – over \$15,000. So that's a monthly piece.

L. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Clerk, for that.

The primary reason for my question was just to ensure that anything we're disposing of is end of life and past it's stage for a good purpose somewhere else. But, yes, as Chair of the Legislative Audit Committee, I do understand first-hand the very tight protocols that are in place around that.

Thank you, you've thoroughly answered my question.

SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Dempster.

Yes, anything that can be reused, we will reuse that but generally most of this equipment, especially when you talk of Broadcast equipment, most of it is extremely outdated and probably no purpose to anyone.

If there are no other questions, we'll call for a motion that the Commission approves the following amendment to the *Inventory Management Policy*, that section 4.7 be repealed and replaced with the following: The Commission delegates authority to the Clerk of the House of Assembly to approve the disposal of items which are no longer serviceable or are considered obsolete, and these items will be removed from the inventory management system accordingly.

Can I have a mover to that motion?

MHA Korab and seconded by Minister Haggie.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

I think that concludes everything that we had on our agenda for this morning. I just want to thank everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules to join in. I'm not sure we'll be requiring another meeting before the end of the fiscal year but, if so,

we will be in contact with Members advising them of their availability should we need to meet again.

If there are no other questions, I'll call for a motion for adjournment.

L. DEMPSTER: So moved.

SPEAKER: Minister Dempster and seconded by MHA Haggie.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Motion carried.

This meeting is now adjourned until the call of the Chair.

On motion, meeting adjourned.