



PROVINCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Sixty-third Meeting

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

The Management Commission met at 5:30 p.m. in the House of Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): I'd like to welcome everyone to the December meeting of the Management Commission. My name is Perry Trimper, I'm the Speaker of the House of Assembly and I'm the Chair of the Management Commission.

I'm just going to go around those gathered to introduce themselves, please.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Keith Hutchings, Member for the District of Ferryland.

MR. P. DAVIS: Paul Davis, Member for Topsail – Paradise.

MS. MICHAEL: Lorraine Michael, Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

MR. BROWNE: Mark Browne, MHA for Placentia West – Bellevue.

MR. A. PARSONS: Andrew Parsons, MHA for Burgeo – La Poile.

MS. COADY: Siobhan Coady, MHA for St. John's West.

MR. WARR: Brian Warr, MHA for Baie Verte – Green Bay.

CLERK (Barnes): Sandra Barnes, Clerk.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, all.

I'd like to, next on the agenda, introduce some reporting decisions. I did not receive a note – just standby. I'm just going to read into the record. We've had an in camera meeting just now and I need to report on those decisions.

The first one is that the Commission concurs with the Lieutenant Governor in Council's recommendation that Ms. Julia Mullaley, upon appointment as Auditor General, be compensated at her existing level which is point scale 2676 (EP-01) step 25 with any general economic increases to apply. So that motion was approved.

The second motion is that the Commission approves the proposed organizational structure for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner to give effect to the above.

I thank the Commission for their participation on that.

Now I'll go to our agenda, under Tab 2. I'll ask all Members to refer to Tab 2. I need an approval of the minutes for our previous meeting on November 8, 2017.

Moved by MHA Browne; seconded by MHA Michael.

Any discussion on the minutes arising? I've gone through them myself; I didn't see anything wrong with them.

All those in favour of the minutes of the previous meeting?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Against?

The motion is carried. The minutes are approved.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

MR. SPEAKER: The Clerk's report. This is a decision, it's not required. It's the report on authorizations for furniture and equipment expenditures. That's reported for your information. Any discussion? No.

I'll move on to Tab 3; these are the financial reports for the House of Assembly. This is also for our information only, no decisions here, but there are very detailed financial statements provided for various aspects. Any discussion?

I will move on to Tab 4. Tab 4 refers to an item we had discussed at our previous meeting around the severance policy. We had deferred one aspect of it, so we now have it before us. The motion before us is to approve the consolidated – I'm sorry, there are two items here. One is that various aspects have been discussed in the past and agreed upon. So I need a motion to approve their consolidation.

I also want to draw to Members' attention; we had some discussion at a previous meeting as to what would be that transition period. It's been proposed that the Member may select a transition period upon cessation of their employment with the House of Assembly of not less than three months and not greater than 12 months. Do I have any discussion on this?

Yes, MHA Michael.

MS. MICHAEL: A question with regard to the transition period. What information was used to come up with that thing of the transition period not less than three months and not greater than 12? I'm just curious.

CLERK: I think they went back to the severance policy that's in place now for the pre-November 30, 2015 Members.

MS. MICHAEL: Right.

CLERK: And that's based on a minimum of three months and a maximum of 12 months. Now, the only thing is we can't pay that out on a monthly basis because under that policy that's the maximum severance that a Member can get is 12 months, right?

MS. MICHAEL: Right.

CLERK: So, basically, you're electing that a Member would be able to elect based on their years of service in that period. Now, if somebody decides they want to be paid out in three months, but they got five years, that's fine, too.

MS. MICHAEL: Great.

CLERK: But that's where they went back to, is the current policy on the books, essentially.

MS. MICHAEL: Okay, thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: So any further questions or discussion?

The motion is: "Pursuant to subparagraph 20(6)(b)(ii) of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, the Commission approves the Consolidated Severance Policy for Members of the House of

Assembly and defines the transition period as follows: The Member may select a transition period that is not less than 3 months, and not greater than 12 months."

I need a mover and a seconder of that motion.

Moved by MHA Michael and seconded by MHA Hutchings.

No further discussion – a show of hands to support?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Against?

This motion is carried.

I ask everyone to turn to Tab 5 – and it's interesting about the fate of timing and so on – this is seeking approval for a transfer of funds to Hansard and the Broadcast Centre regarding the replacement of our audio system. For those who were watching the proceedings less than 24 hours ago, they will recall that we had some issues here last night. For over the last year or so, actually the last few years, we've been having issues that are becoming increasingly frequent.

Last night, folks, we were on bandages as we were operating. The control system was down and we actually had to manually identify through the video who was speaking and try to play catch up. So it really has become a very serious issue – urgent is an understatement.

What we've done, the total cost to purchase and install the equipment – we've had a quote – is looking at an estimation of \$105,000.

CLERK: That is an estimate.

MR. SPEAKER: It's an estimate, okay.

So we do need to go out and seek –

CLERK: Well, we have done some – if I may ...?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, please.

CLERK: This is an ongoing matter we've been working on. We have to consult with the experts, but as of today it looks like that dollar figure will be more in the \$118 range.

MR. SPEAKER: \$118,000?

CLERK: \$118,000, yes, sorry.

We're still estimating at this point, but it's more solid now.

MR. SPEAKER: So, Clerk, does that require us then – I'm getting ahead to where we are with this discussion – the area of requiring an additional transfer of funds?

CLERK: What we will do is look within the House of Assembly administrative accounts and make sure that we can find money from there. It might be putting off some planned purchases. We'll just defer those and take the money from that.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

Now, I am jumping ahead to exactly what I mean by that question. We are looking at identifying savings of approximately \$51,000 within our current House of Assembly Hansard and Broadcast Centre, but we do need to move money around, so we're seeking approval to transfer an amount of \$54,000 to the Broadcast Centre.

The actual recommended motion would be that in accordance with the Transfer of Funds Policy, the Commission would approve the following transfer of funds from our Subdivision 1.1.04.09, Members' Resources, Allowances and Assistance we would move \$54,000 from that to Subdivision 1.1.03.02, the Hansard and Broadcast Centre – Property, Furnishings and Equipment.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, MHA Hutchings.

MR. HUTCHINGS: I have some questions.

Outside of the request for the additional \$54,000, the other funds were budgeted and part

of a line item in the 2017 budget for the House of Assembly. Am I correct?

CLERK: There is absolutely no budget for this.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Okay.

CLERK: We do have some savings because we had to go to tender on the satellite. The new tender has come in at a lower cost than the original. So we have some savings in the satellite budget. That's where we're getting money to put towards the –

MR. HUTCHINGS: Okay, I just want to be clear. You indicated the projected cost now could be \$118,000.

CLERK: \$118,000, yes.

MR. HUTCHINGS: We're asking here to transfer \$54,000.

CLERK: That's right.

MR. HUTCHINGS: So outside of that \$54,000, where is the additional dollars coming for the \$118,000?

CLERK: It'll come from the House of Assembly administrative support account and the House of Assembly Hansard and Broadcast.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Okay, yes, so that was my first question. So the amount of money has been budgeted in the 2017 budget?

CLERK: There are funds there. It's wasn't budgeted for this purpose.

MR. HUTCHINGS: No, I recognize that.

CLERK: Okay.

MR. HUTCHINGS: But the funding envelope is there within –

MR. SPEAKER: It falls within that –

CLERK: We'll just defer other purchases and we do have some savings.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Yes, that's fine. I'm sure making sure that it was there.

Okay.

CLERK: Okay.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Any further discussion on this motion?

MHA Michael.

MS. MICHAEL: I guess I'm doing this more for the sake of anybody who's watching, and there are people who watch and they may not have the document in front of us.

I think this really is urgent, as the Speaker has indicated. I think the third bullet in our briefing note which points out that "without the sound system, there would not be any audio for live or archived broadcasts, webcast, or for Hansard transcription. The record of proceedings would be limited to the Journal only. Members would not have microphones or speakers to transmit or receive audio at their desks; and Members and those in the public gallery would only be able to hear the proceedings as spoken from the Chamber floor."

In the whole spirit of, number one, being able to be open and transparent and everything we're doing available to the public, I think this is absolutely urgent. I like the way in which you've proposed how the money will be found within the existing funds. So I just wanted to make that point.

MR. SPEAKER: Right on. It's good to have it into the record.

Thank you.

If there's no further discussion, I look for a mover and a seconder.

Mover, MHA Davis; and the seconder, MHA Parsons.

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Against?

The motion is carried.

Thank you very much. All those listening, thank you very much.

Moving us on, please, to Tab 6, this is a request from the Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands who has sent a letter to us. He's seeking us to consider providing a split-screen shot for our broadcast.

Essentially, this would mean that currently our Legislature, consistent with other legislatures in the country, shows a single image at a time. It shows only the speaker that's been identified or whoever is addressing the debate. There's no alternative corner screen or split-screen that is associated with what is broadcast.

We've certainly had a very good look at this; we've looked at what we can do. We could do it. It would require us to acquire additional equipment in the vicinity of \$13,000.

So there are a couple of things for us to consider; one is what the rest of the country is doing which, frankly, is the single screen. If we felt that we wanted to be different, we need to realize that we need to go looking for additional funds.

Do I have any discussion on either of these points?

MHA Parsons.

MR. A. PARSONS: I'm not supportive for multiple reasons, one being that it would be going outside of what's been done in other legislatures. I think it has impacts on other Standing Orders that we have that may need to be discussed.

Perhaps my biggest reason is I think that the cost that we just approved here is a necessary cost. Without that one, the additional one, we have a failure of our ability to communicate what's going on here. I think that has bigger implications.

In this case, I don't think that given there are cost issues to everything that we want to do, I don't agree with the expenditure of those funds for that reason. When he suggested this, he said

it had no cost, so that's not the same. He actually said that in the end of his first point. Let me see – it can be literally done with the click of a mouse at no additional cost.

That's not the case. So I'm not supportive of spending money on this.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, and thank you for that comment.

If I may just elaborate, I did discuss a little bit of this with him. On that point, you're both right. It can be provided with current equipment, but the image is very low resolution. So it wasn't acceptable for a broadcast perspective; therefore, the additional expenditure was required. If you're going to do it, you want to be at least able to see what you're trying to portray, and that wasn't possible without additional costs. So good point.

Any further discussion?

MHA Michael.

MS. MICHAEL: Just a question. I'm not sure it will change my mind, but I'm just curious. Was there a jurisdictional scan done outside of Canada in other parliaments?

CLERK: No, we typically – for something like this, we would look to our Canadian sisters and brothers.

MS. MICHAEL: Right.

CLERK: However, I know that in – I think some of the Australian parliaments may do reaction shots. I could actually check that out, but there are some Commonwealth parliaments, but they're the exception, not the rule.

MS. MICHAEL: Right.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm looking for a motion as to how one might respond with – okay, I'm sorry.

MHA Michael.

MS. MICHAEL: I was going to ask, where would the \$13,000 come from? Would we just have to –?

MR. SPEAKER: Well, right now we've identified only that would be the cost.

MS. MICHAEL: Okay.

MR. SPEAKER: We had not taken that additional step. We thought we needed to bring it here first –

MS. MICHAEL: Sure.

MR. SPEAKER: – to see whether the Commission was willing to proceed before we started to try to find out how that might (inaudible).

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you.

MR. A. PARSONS: I don't know if it's appropriate, I don't know if there's more conversation, but I'm willing to move a motion that we not approve the amendment to the Broadcast guidelines.

MR. SPEAKER: Do I have a seconder for that motion?

MR. BROWNE: Seconded.

MR. SPEAKER: Seconded by MHA Browne.

Any further discussion on that motion?

I'm looking for a show of hands then to support the motion to not comply with the request.

Okay, and those against?

The motion is carried.

We will respond back to MHA Lane with some explanation as to what the discussion entailed here.

Thank you very much for that.

Our final item is under Tab 7, and it relates to our meeting schedule. Consistent with recommendation 52, that we do attempt to – based on certain points in the calendar – forecast

out our next Management Commission meetings. We have a briefing note there. I wanted to move right to the – I'm sorry.

Mr. Parsons, please.

MR. A. PARSONS: I was looking through the note and I see the dates. The last two dates coincide with dates that we're here in the House, so we know that we're here. I think everybody plans on being here, but for something happening. The January 17 date, we're not scheduled to be –

CLERK: That would be our budget meeting. We haven't had a – we would need a meeting in early to mid-January to finalize the budget for the Legislature to go forward to Finance. Then usually around mid-March we need one in case there's anything impacting the 31st and then –

MR. A. PARSONS: I was going to say, I don't mind the (inaudible). I don't know about other Members, but I mean we're here in the House anyway. The January one, it's even hard to confirm right now for me. I understand the need to have one and maybe we can – I'm sure we can all figure it out, but I don't even know what the schedule looks like in mid-January yet. We all know we need to get together. That's my only concern with setting that particular one.

MR. SPEAKER: MHA Michael.

MS. MICHAEL: Are you opposed to January, in general? No.

MR. A. PARSONS: I'm not opposed to January in general.

MS. MICHAEL: No, that's what I'm asking.

MR. A. PARSONS: We have to have the time to (inaudible). It's just putting that date on now, it's over a month away and my fear is that – I don't know if I'm being out of line by suggesting that maybe just after New Year's we send out an email and say: all right, guys, what's our schedule for January? Can we all figure out something that we can all do or –

MR. SPEAKER: MHA Davis.

MR. P. DAVIS: No, I can tell you right now, Mr. Speaker, January 17 is not a good date for me.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

Can I suggest that we identify a date some two weeks in advance that we would send out a notice to all concerned? How about the first business day after the Christmas, New Year's break? We'll send out a notice from this office seeking to find a date in January that would allow us to comply with the budget process.

MR. A. PARSONS: (Inaudible) you're going to say this, but we all know the importance now. This is not a normal – it's a budget one. We know it's got to be mid- to end January, send it out to all of us and hopefully if we all look through our schedules we'll come up with something that fits everybody.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. I know –

MR. P. DAVIS: The early to mid-January, just to be clear.

CLERK: We want to be in a position to respond to budgeting when they need their numbers. So they have given us a January 20th date of submission to them. I think as long as we're in that time frame. The work on the Legislature for them is quite different than the work on the departments.

MR. P. DAVIS: That's fine with me, the first business day in January, if we can set a date within the next couple of weeks.

CLERK: We wanted to be able to publish the planned dates for the Management Commission. So we can say January to be confirmed, and then put the other two dates in, if it's okay with everyone.

I will point out there may be a need to have other meetings. We will just schedule those like we do currently. We'll put out a request, right, but these will be the scheduled ones.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. So I'll attempt to read the motion.

The Commission approves the following meeting schedule for winter/spring 2018: January to be confirmed with a notice gone out on the first business day in January. The other two dates of March 14 and April 18, we're proposing to work with them.

I'm looking for a mover.

MHA Parsons; seconded by MHA Davis.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

The motion is passed.

We have no further items on our agenda.

I thank – oh, sorry.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: Looking for a motion to adjourn.

MHA Parsons; seconded by MHA Davis.

Thank you all very much for your participation, and thanks to everyone who's watching.

On motion, meeting adjourned.