



PROVINCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Seventy-second Meeting

Wednesday, March 13, 2019

HANSARD

Speaker: Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

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

MR. SPEAKER (Trimper): Well, good evening.

I'd like to welcome the Members of the Management Commission to our meeting on the 13th day of March, 2019. Also, I'd like to welcome those viewing at home.

First of all, my name is Perry Trimper, I am the Speaker of the House of Assembly and I am the Chair of the Management Commission.

I will turn to my left and ask each of the Members to introduce themselves and the district they represent.

MR. DINN: Thank you.

Paul Dinn, I'm the MHA for the Topsail - Paradise District.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Keith Hutchings, MHA, Ferryland.

MS. MICHAEL: Lorraine Michael, MHA, St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

MR. BROWNE: Mark Browne, MHA, Placentia West - Bellevue.

MR. A. PARSONS: Andrew Parsons, Burgeo - La Poile.

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

MR. SPEAKER: And to the support team here at the Table.

MS. RUSSELL: Bobbi Russell, Policy & Communications Officer.

CLERK (Barnes): Sandra Barnes, Clerk.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you everyone.

Now that I've introduced everyone, welcomed everyone, I am going to read some previous decisions from in camera meetings into the record, if I may, so please bear with me. These were held prior to this meeting today.

As required by the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, I am reporting decisions made at in camera meetings held on January 23 and February 20. The decisions from the in camera meeting held on January 23 were as follows: Number one, the Commission approved reimbursement of legal expenses only incurred up to November 6, 2018 as a result of the Members' participation in the reviews of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards under the Code of Conduct for Members as follows: the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, the sum of \$12,502.80; the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, a sum of \$2,219.51; for the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's the sum of \$14,559 and, finally, the Member for Mount Scio the sum of \$26,277.50.

The Commission directed that this decision will not be considered by the Commission to be a precedent in similar matters and that the future policy direction of the Management Commission on reimbursement of legal fees will not be constrained by the Commission's decision in this matter.

The Commission directed that the Member for Humber - Bay of Islands has to submit details of his legal expenses by January 31, 2019 in order to be considered for reimbursement by the Management Commission, and the Commission directed that the two-day waiting period to give effect to these Commission decisions be waived.

Number two: The Commission approved the creation of Professional Services as a sub-object of the Members' Resources activity and the following transfer of funds: from subdivision 1.1.04.09, Members' Resources - Allowances and Assistance the sum of \$56,000 to subdivision 1.1.04.02, Members' Resources - Professional Services that same amount of \$56,000.

At the in camera meeting held on February 20, the Commission made the following decision: The Commission approved the 2019-2020 estimates to be forwarded to the Minister of Finance for inclusion in the 2019 Estimates and voted on in the Legislature.

Number two: The Commission approved a pre-commitment of funds of fiscal year 2020 to 2021 for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

related to estimated subsidies for the 2019 general election.

Number three: The Commission approved a pre-commitment of funds for fiscal year 2020-2021 for the purpose of hosting the 2020 Canadian Association of Parliamentary Administration Conference.

That concludes the previous decisions read into the record.

MR. A. PARSONS: (Inaudible) word brought up there: illegal.

MR. SPEAKER: Which word did I mispronounce?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think instead of legal, you said illegal expenses.

MR. SPEAKER: Oh, let's correct that.

MR. A. PARSONS: That rings in my ears, so I just wanted to make sure –

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps a drink of water is in order (inaudible).

Okay, let the record show it was legal expenses.

Thank you.

Over to Tab 2, this is the approval of the minutes for December 19, 2018 and January 23, 2019.

So I need a motion to approve those minutes.

The Members have been provided.

It was moved by Mr. Browne.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Seconded.

MR. SPEAKER: Seconded by Mr. Hutchings.

All in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: No contra-minded?

The minutes are approved.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

MR. SPEAKER: Turning to Tab 3, the Speaker's report. There are two reports of yours truly included. One related to the rulings on allowance use and other related to an approval under the delegated authority of the Speaker respecting urgent financial matters. They are provided for your information under Tab 3. There is no decision required.

Over to Tab 4, Financial Reports. For those who have been with the Commission – and Mr. Dinn this is your first time, and by the way, I should say welcome to the Management Commission, formally – we do provide these on a regular basis.

The *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* states that the Commission must regularly, and at least quarterly, review the financial performance of the House of Assembly as well as the actual expenditures of Members compared with approved allocations. So that's what's provided there. They are for reporting purposes only. There is no decision required.

Also, I want to note to all of you that the report for the Office of the Auditor General has been updated. There were two footnotes that were missing. It was interesting – the document was provided to us; my keen eyes did spot that the two footnotes did not print for some reason, so we've just provided that there was no errors other than a printing glitch of some kind. So, the correct version you've just been provided.

Over to Tab 5, this relates to amendment to Caucus Operational Funding Grants Policy. We've provided some background information for you. I'll just read a little bit into the record so those watching can understand what we're dealing with: In accordance with the Caucus Operational Funding Grants Policy, each caucus in this House is entitled to a fixed amount per month for each Member of that caucus, with a minimum of \$800, to fund miscellaneous operational purchases. The Speaker and independent Members are also entitled to the same amount each per month.

These funds are paid to each caucus monthly by deposit into a bank account. It's administered

and overseen by the caucus. The accountability measures of the policy require monthly bank reconciliations and reporting documentation that has to be submitted to this Management Commission with an annual report detailing those expenditures.

If the grant for each month is not expended, especially for the larger caucuses, it typically results in funds accumulating over the General Assembly.

We encountered, upon the dissolution of the 47th General Assembly, prior to the 2015 General Election, each caucus was required to return accumulated funds to the House of Assembly. While the Caucus Operational Funding Grants Policy did not address return of funds upon dissolution, each caucus was required to do so following the advice of the Auditor General when consulted on the matter by House officials.

In anticipation of the dissolution of this 48th General Assembly, and to make the policy consistent with past practice, House officials are recommending an amendment to the Caucus Operational Funding Grants Policy as outlined in BN 2019-003.

I open the floor to any discussion.

People, do they understand what we're dealing with here?

Ms. Michael.

MS. MICHAEL: Just to say, Mr. Chair, I think it's good to have it put into the policy because it came as a bit of a surprise the last time. So now it's in the policy and I think that's the way it should be.

If anybody has extra money, though, we'd be happy to have it.

MR. SPEAKER: I think that's how everyone felt, yeah.

MS. MICHAEL: Well, us a little bit more.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, okay.

Any further discussion to this?

Okay, I have a recommended motion. I'll read it into the record and I'll ask someone to support that: Pursuant to subparagraph 20(6)(b)(ii) of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, the Commission approves the following amendment to the Caucus Operational Funding Grants Policy:

The policy is amended by adding immediately after section 7.0, the following: 8.0 Return of Accumulated Funds at Dissolution of General Assembly

Following the dissolution of a General Assembly, all caucuses must return to the House of Assembly, all accumulated funds that were paid in accordance with this policy.

The annual report required under section 7.0, detailing expenditures from the start of the fiscal year up to dissolution, must also be submitted upon return of the funds.

So I need a mover and a seconder for that.

Moved by Ms. Michael; seconded by Mr. Dinn.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Motion is carried; no dissenting votes.

One final item is a budget transfer request. And we've added this since we added the briefing materials. I'll just explain what this is. The Transfer of Funds Policy requires Management Commission approval to transfer funds to or from the Grants and Subsidies main object of expenditure.

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer requires funding due to the unbudgeted cost of the Windsor Lake by-election.

So we're looking for a transfer of funds of \$17,400 that is required for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer to be placed under Grants and Subsidies to provide the additional funding for the candidate and auditor subsidies.

Do I have any discussion on this matter?

Seeing no discussion, I will read into the record the recommended motion: The Commission approves the following transfer of funds from Subdivision 1.1.04.09 Members' Resources – Allowances and Assistance, the sum of \$17,400, to Subdivision 3.1.01.10 Office of the Chief Electoral Officer – Grants and Subsidies, the amount of \$17,400.

Do I have a mover and a seconder?

Moved by Mr. Browne; seconded by Mr. Hutchings.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

The motion is carried.

Looking for any further discussion from Management Commission Members.

Seeing none, I seek a move to adjourn.

Moved by Mr. Parsons; seconded by Mr. Hutchings.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: No contra-minded.

Thank you very much, and thank you very much for tuning in to the meeting of the Management Commission.

On motion, meeting adjourned.