



LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES OFFICE

House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

An Overview of the Committees Office

May 2017

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES OFFICE

Legislative committees are appointed by the Nova Scotia House of Assembly and are comprised of Members of the Legislative Assembly. The committee system allows for detailed examination of matters in a manner which would not be possible in the larger House and also allows members of the public to observe the proceedings during public meetings.

The Legislative Committees Office, under the direction of the Speaker, is responsible for providing administrative support for the majority of the standing committees and select committees of the Legislature. This office compiles the interim and annual reports of these committees.

The Legislative Committees Office administers the following Standing Committees:

Economic Development
Human Resources
Veterans Affairs

Public Accounts
Community Services
Resources

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FUNCTIONS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

The functions of the Standing Committees are detailed within the ***Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly, Rule 60(2)*** at the following Legislature Web page: <http://nslegislature.ca/legc/~rules.htm>

The mandates of the Standing Committees can be found at the following Legislature Web page: http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/standing_committees/

MEETING SCHEDULES

The committees hold their meetings at regular intervals, using the same day of the week and time. With a number of meetings being scheduled both during and after the session, it is necessary to maintain a pattern to avoid conflicts.

Currently, the majority of committees meet monthly with the exception of Public Accounts which meets on a weekly basis.

For an up to date schedule of committee meetings, please go to:

<http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/calendar/>

The Human Resources Committee is mandated to meet monthly to deal with Appointments to Agencies, Boards and Commissions – ***Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly, Rule 60(2)(c)(iv)(9.)***

The committees are under no obligation to adhere to these dates and times and these may be changed according to the consensus of individual committees. Standing Committees can set the frequency of their meetings to weekly, monthly or bi-weekly, whether or not the House is in session.

ROLE OF THE CHAIR

Chairs preside over committee meetings and oversee committee work. They recognize the members and witnesses who wish to speak at these meetings. They are responsible for maintaining order and decorum in committee proceedings, and rule on any procedural matter that arises, subject to an appeal to the committee. The Chair does not move motions. The Chair has the power to call the first meeting.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Official notice of meetings can be found on the Legislature Web site at:

<http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/calendar/>

ORGANIZATIONAL / AGENDA SETTING MEETING

The purpose of this meeting is to set a schedule of witnesses to appear before the committee. Prior to the meeting, members of each party are asked to prepare a list of suggested witnesses and forward it to the clerk of the committee. Copies of these lists are distributed to each member at the meeting. A number of witnesses are approved and the clerk contacts the witnesses.

REQUEST TO APPEAR

If an organization or group wishes to appear before a committee, the organization shall submit a written request to the Legislative Committees Office addressed to the Chair of the Committee. After the request is received, it will be discussed at a future committee meeting.

IN CAMERA MEETINGS

The majority of meetings are open to the public unless deemed in camera (not public). This may be done for the purpose of hearing sensitive issues, deliberating reports, etc. During a meeting, it is possible to go in camera with the consensus of the committee. At this time, the media and other persons will be asked to leave the room.

VOTING IN COMMITTEES

Rule 61(1) - Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly:

All Questions before Committees shall be decided by a majority of voices, including the voice of the Chairman, and whenever the voices are equal the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

COMMITTEE RECORDS

The Legislative Committees Office is responsible for maintaining all committee records. All correspondence regarding committee business is prepared in the Legislative Committees Office.

TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts of all committee meetings can be found on the Legislative Committees Web site at: <http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/>

ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual Reports can be found on the Legislative Committees Web site at:
http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/standing_committees/