

# **HANSARD**

**NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

**COMMITTEE**

**ON**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**Tuesday, April 7, 2009**

**Committee Room 1**

**Organizational Meeting**

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## **COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Ms. Marilyn More (Chairman)  
Mr. Keith Colwell  
Hon. Mark Parent  
Hon. Len Goucher  
Mr. Jamie Muir  
Mr. Gordon Gosse  
Mr. Trevor Zinck  
Mr. Leo Glavine  
Mr. Manning MacDonald

[Hon. Jamie Muir was replaced by Mr. Keith Bain.]  
[Mr. Leo Glavine was replaced by Mr. Harold Theriault.]

In Attendance:

Ms. Kim Leadley  
Legislative Committee Clerk

**HALIFAX, TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2009**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES**

9:00 A.M.

**CHAIRMAN**  
Ms. Marilyn More

**MADAM CHAIRMAN:** I'm going to call the Standing Committee on Community Services to order. We have a quorum so others may join us as this meeting continues.

You realize that today is an organizational meeting and I guess my first question is, how many topics should we choose, keeping in mind that we're going into the Legislature at the end of this month?

**MR. GORDON GOSSE:** Which means there'll be no meeting in the month of May.

**MADAM CHAIRMAN:** We do have on record a motion that we're not going to meet during at least the Spring session, because of the budget. There's some discretion with the Fall session but the Spring, because of the budget, we've decided not to meet. I mean, we could choose a top priority from each of the caucuses, which might get us through to September or we could prioritize more.

**HON. LEONARD GOUCHER:** Well that would be fair, take one from each caucus. It's a fair approach.

**MADAM CHAIRMAN:** So, is there agreement then, we'll do that? All right, PC caucus.

**MR. GOUCHER:** Creating more licensed child care spaces, I think, would be our number one.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Okay, so we'll take the number one. And Gordie, for the NDP.

MR. GOSSE: Well, I'm the housing critic so I'm kind of leaning towards the housing aspect of it. I guess - actually the PC caucus has housing infrastructure in theirs, too, and I see we have housing, Community Services and household income limits for a provincial repair program. Any of those subjects are okay.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Well, it's your choice.

MR. GOSSE: My choice, oh boy. Okay, let's go with number three on our list there - cost recovery of overpayments in Community Services.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Okay. And Junior, what about the Liberal caucus?

MR. HAROLD THERIAULT: I would pick the revenue around gaming, the bottom one.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Okay, now I believe the three letters mentioned at the bottom came to the committee as a whole but I believe we did check and certainly the Early Intervention Association of Nova Scotia has a definite endorsement from your caucus but we can certainly go with the revenue around gaming, if that's the one you'd like to choose.

MR. THERIAULT: They didn't really pick any for me so I'm just doing this on my own.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: No, understood.

MR. GOSSE: I'll bet you can do a good job. (Laughter)

MR. THERIAULT: I would pick that revenue around gaming, I would be in favour of that.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Okay. (Interruptions) We agreed - because there's some uncertainty as to how many meetings we'll have between now and the Fall - each caucus would choose their top priority. So we've just gone through the list and I don't know if there'll be any discussion but the PC caucus chose their number one - creating more licensed child care spaces and more child care subsidies.

HON. MARK PARENT: Why do you want that one? That makes us look good. We should pick something that doesn't make us look good. (Laughter)

MR. GOUCHER: Hey, you're late. (Laughter)

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Okay, gentlemen. The NDP caucus chose number three - the cost recovery of overpayments.

MR. PARENT: Why'd you pick that one? It makes us look bad.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The Liberal caucus chose the revenue around gaming. Now just . . .

MR. PARENT: What did the Liberal caucus - there's nothing on there. Oh, revenue around gaming.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Yes, which was a referral from the Public Accounts Committee. We also need to consider that we've had four - sorry, three, after taking away the Public Accounts Committee letter to us - we've had three letters requesting to appear before the committee as well, from the Early Intervention Association, from the Brain Injury Association and the Deafness Advocacy Association. So I'm just wondering if you'd like to add those three letters after, or in whatever order. That would give us six topics. Yes, Minister Goucher.

MR. GOUCHER: BIANs is a wonderful organization and Deafness Advocacy - I mean, I come from a background where my grandmother and grandfather are both deaf. They are great organizations, I think they should be added to the list - just my comment.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: So shall we add them in the order that they arrived at the office?

MR. PARENT: So the decision is to add all three or to add those two? I'm not sure - what is the early intervention one?

MR. GOUCHER: That's the Liberal caucus one . . .

MR. PARENT: So that's already there.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Well no, actually the four letters all came to the Standing Committee on Community Services. The Liberal caucus, as I understand, especially endorsed the Early Intervention Association, but their representative here at the meeting chose the letter from Public Accounts on the revenue around gaming. We still have to deal with the Early Intervention Association as correspondence to the committee.

MR. THERIAULT: So, Madam Chairman, they will be put on the list also?

MADAM CHAIRMAN: I'm just giving you the option of adding those three topics in the order that they were sent to the committee, after the three priorities that were chosen. Gordie.

MR. GOSSE: Madam Chairman, I agree with Mr. Goucher. Let's add all three of them to the list of presenters in the order in which they arrived to the committee would be sufficient.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Do we have consensus on that?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: I wonder if we need an official motion to agree?

MR. GOSSE: I so move.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Gordie has moved. Len has seconded.

MR. GOSSE: I'd like to move a motion that we accept the letters from all three organizations that were sent to the Standing Committee on Community Services to be put on the list of presenters to the committee and that we put them on in the order in which they were received by the committee.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: And could we just add to that the three choices that were made earlier because we haven't got a motion covering those. Excellent.

Any discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

We do have to discuss when we think our next meeting will be. I also want to open it up to any other business that people want to add to the agenda. One would assume we'll be in the Legislature at the time of our next regularly scheduled meeting, the first Tuesday of May.

MR. PARENT: We agreed we would be on the election trail for the next one.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: We don't know, so I guess we'll leave it to the committee clerk to alert the witnesses.

MR. GOUCHER: Maybe she could sort of monitor the situation and advise us at some point in time, when we really know what's going on.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Right.

MR. PARENT: Can I go back to that letter on the Early Intervention Association?

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

MR. PARENT: I'm just wondering, for them to move their agenda forward, if maybe there should be a meeting first with someone else and then with us. Theirs is different than the other ones, BIANs and the other ones are just wanting to inform us of all the work they do, right? This is a direct funding problem that they have in terms of the Hay Group and funding levels for executive staff, is that not right? I'm trying to read it while I'm talking - I don't mind them coming, I just don't want to waste their time if there might be a resolution before. I don't know who they are to tell you the truth.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Well, they're an umbrella group representing the early intervention programs which are designed to support families with young children with developmental disabilities. They get some funding, as I understand it, from the Department of Community Services, but they also do considerable community and corporate fundraising.

MR. PARENT: So I've got information from the Hay Group that says that their director should be making a range of \$54,000 to \$68,000, right? So the question is, how does EINS proceed with this information?

MADAM CHAIRMAN: They obviously should be discussing this with the Department of Community Services, they should not wait until they appear before our committee. They may not understand the role of this committee, they may . . .

MR. PARENT: Yes and they're saying, how can we approach the Departments of Education, Health, Health Promotion and Protection to discuss this issue. They don't need to go through this committee to start approaching those.

[1:15 p.m.]

MADAM CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. PARENT: So maybe we should, on that one, write back and say, we encourage you to go speak to those departments, we'd be happy to meet with you and put them third so that by that time they'll have - because it may be that Health Promotion and Protection will say sure, we'll fund the additional salaries. I'm not saying that, but it is possible, in which case they're coming for very specific requests.

I would suggest we write them back and encourage them to approach those other departments right away - they don't have to wait for us to give them the okay - and say we'd love to meet with them but put them third, after the other ones, in which case the timing should work out. That's just my suggestion, for what it's worth.

MR. THERIAULT: They're looking for direction.

MR. PARENT: Yes, and I mean they can approach those groups now, then they'd have more information. Otherwise, they'd come here, we'd tell them go approach those and then they'd come back. Let's get them to approach them first and then . . .

MADAM CHAIRMAN: That might be the most efficient or effective use of their time.

MR. PARENT: Then they can come to us, if they're getting no, no, noes. At that stage, we wade in as an all-Party committee.

MR. TREVOR ZINCK: Most of the critics have - well, I know I've met with a number of them and that was the message that I gave them as well, you should be approaching the department with this issue and then come back to us.

MR. PARENT: Yes, all the departments. But their questions are very specific here - how do we approach the Department of Education?

MADAM CHAIRMAN: So what I'm not clear on, though, is where you'd like to insert them in our priority.

MR. PARENT: On the third of the three letters, wherever the three letters are.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Oh, I see.

MR. ZINCK: BIANs, the other, and then put them third.

MR. PARENT: You said originally the letters would be done in order. I don't know which one came in last.

MR. GOSSE: The order in which they were received by the committee. So instead of that, we'll move them down to third and whoever the other two were . . .

MADAM CHAIRMAN: And they are the last, so that's their . . .

MR. GOSSE: Okay, well that's perfect.

MR. GOUCHER: Ask them to ensure that part of the prerequisite before coming here is to meet with the Department of Community Services to research it.

MR. GOSSE: And the other departments too.

MR. GOUCHER: Exactly.

MR. PARENT: I think they've met with Community Services, from what I can see, it's the other departments.



MADAM CHAIRMAN: That's good advice. So perhaps we could ask the committee clerk, when she's responding to these, to just mention that in particular to that group because they're looking for funding for this coming fiscal year, so they can't wait until they're halfway through, you're right.

Okay, well we can't determine the next meeting, right, because we don't know how long we're going to be in the Legislature or doing other things. So does anyone else want to add anything to the agenda?

Okay, if not, I declare the meeting adjourned. Thank you.

[The meeting adjourned at 1:18 p.m.]