

# **HANSARD**

**NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

**COMMITTEE**

**ON**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**Tuesday, December 6, 2011**

**Committee Room 1**

**Dartmouth Adult Services Centre**

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## **COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Mr. Jim Morton (Chairman)  
Mr. Gary Ramey (Vice-Chairman)  
Mr. Sid Prest  
Mr. Gary Burrill  
Mr. Brian Skabar  
Hon. Karen Casey  
Ms. Kelly Regan  
Mr. Keith Bain  
Mr. Eddie Orrell

[Mr. Brian Skabar was replaced by Ms. Becky Kent.]

In Attendance:

Ms. Kim Langille  
Legislative Committee Clerk

## **WITNESSES**

### **Dartmouth Adult Services Centre**

Ms. Cathy Deagle-Gammon,  
Executive Director

Ms. Susan Ehler,  
Chair, Board of Directors

**HALIFAX, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2011**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES**

9:00 A.M.

**CHAIRMAN**  
Mr. Jim Morton

MR. CHAIRMAN: Good morning, everyone. I think we'll get started, we have a quorum. I think we are expecting a couple more people - one walked through the door.

My name is Jim Morton; I'm the chairman of the Standing Committee on Community Services. I'll allow our guests to introduce themselves in a moment but first of all I think what we should do is go around the room and introduce committee members.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

I need to do something we have not done here in this committee before but we've been reminded that it would be a good idea, given that we're on the third floor of a building that is unusual to some people, so this is my announcement. Before we begin today's meeting, I would like to give a quick safety note regarding fire evacuation procedures. Should there be a fire alarm, please leave the committee room and walk to the hall where the elevators are located - I think everybody knows where they are.

There are two exit signs, one to the left and one to the right of the elevators. Both of these exits lead to stairs, which will take you down and out of the building. Once out of the building, please proceed to Parade Square and please remain at Parade Square until further instructions are provided. Let's hope we don't need those, but when there are people in the building who aren't familiar with it, it could be an important safety precaution.

Our witnesses today are from the Dartmouth Adult Services Centre, and I will ask them to introduce themselves, but I think it is kind of a wonderful coincidence that they are here today. They've been on our list to be here for a year or more and we were planning to meet a month ago but we asked for a postponement because of some of our own scheduling problems.

What I found at my desk this morning, which wasn't here when I first arrived, is that the Community Services Minister announced today, December 6<sup>th</sup>, that the province will provide \$500,000 to the Dartmouth Adult Services Centre's capital campaign to help it improve and expand its programs. I'm absolutely delighted that has happened, but it's neat that it has happened today.

So welcome, and would you please introduce yourselves.

[The witnesses introduced themselves.]

I know you have a presentation to make, so if you will begin that and then we'll have an opportunity for our questions and discussion.

MS. CATHY DEAGLE-GAMMON: Thank you very much for the opportunity to come and speak to the committee this morning. We're very pleased that you found the time to do that with us. That story is really best said with pictures, so we have a PowerPoint presentation. If we could have brought all of DASC here today to visit with you and get to know you, we would have tried that.

DASC is the second largest vocational agency in Nova Scotia. We offer the full range of services: Prevocational, Vocational, and School-To-Work transition. These are just some images. The Prevocational program is a program for persons with an intellectual disability who might have some more challenges in their life. They may have some issues with their mobility, some life experiences supports, might need some support with personal hygiene, activities of daily living, that kind of thing.

In the Vocational program, persons there usually have some of that more under control and they are looking towards developing work skills, habits and attitudes, so that they can be more employable. Then in the School-To-Work program, we work with about six available high schools with students who are transitioning from school to community, so we try to take students in about - from six schools we work with - about nine or 10 students a year, giving them work experiences.

The image here with the gentleman with his first paycheque was a gentleman who had done School-To-Work and then came in to DASC. The other gentleman down in the side under the words there is a guy who is using the heat tunnel.

We do individualized support and we have a retirement program called the Active Lifestyles Club. One of the things that we have found is that for some people the vocational experience - we've had people who have been in the vocational agency for over 20, 25 years and so they're looking to retirement, something I'll aspire to soon, I hope. They're looking for retirement, but there are no real retirement options for persons with a disability, so in some ways we end up having to create our own. The balance that DASC has been able to achieve is that we do this, but we also partner with the Dartmouth Seniors' Services Centre on Ochterloney Street and so we have some generic services that we have the individual support so that we can partake in generic services as well.

We offer community employment. We have two job coaches on staff who work with 42 persons who are looking for employment and so their employment is either full-time paid, part-time paid, volunteer or career exploration. We have 42 people so these are three pictures here of a gentleman who is working in our restaurant, actually down in Eastern Passage; another lady who is working at the Nova Scotia Community College, the Waterfront Campus; and another lady who is working at Winners warehousing.

Our current revenue at DASC is about \$2.1 million and over the last three or four years we have seen increased departmental support. In 2009-10, there was a one-time payment; in 2010-11, there was another one-time payment; and then in 2011-12 we actually had annualized increase in our operating funding to DASC, which was amazing and all of the vocational agencies in the provinces received some form of one-time funding and then annualized increase. This year DASC was invited to submit a proposal for complex needs and actually we have just about finished up the budget and working with our central region to get that up and running, hopefully by January. So the \$2.1 million - our core of funding - is about \$1.3 million, 61 per cent; and then there's individualized support at \$321,000; and DASC generates about 23 per cent of our own revenue at \$487,000.

How do we generate our revenue? We're the largest manufacturer of promotional buttons in Atlantic and we couldn't resist the image of Peter MacKay here making a button with one of our clients, not long ago, when the federal funding was announced. There are many facets of making a button and so it's from pinning the backs to putting stickers on the back, making it on the button machine and then packaging them and sending them out.

We make communion wafers in a company that's called AB Company; AB stands for altar bread. In the first image there is a lady who - after the hosts are made, it's like a waffle iron. It comes out in a big circle and they trim the edges of the circle and it goes in the humidifier. The second image there is coming out of a cutter. About 10 or 12 years ago we had support from ACOA and we bought new equipment from Germany and so this is a host-baking cutter that we have there. The third image and below is where we're making the boxes that we use to package the communion wafers. The larger image is of a gentleman who is getting the boxes ready to be put through the shrink tunnel.

We do packaging, assembly and contract work. Here there are images of the contract work that we do. The lady with the kit bags up in the right corner - we do a contract with Tim Hortons every year. Tim Hortons does these school packs for kids, so we package all of the school packs for the Tim Hortons bags. Across from there, there are magnets that are put in on the back of note pads for a different company. The gentleman in the yellow - this is for a company in the industrial park that's called Precision BioLogic and what we do there is we put colour-coded tabs on the top of the vial caps for the laboratories.

In the next image over there, there's a company in the Burnside Business Park called Neocon and we package all kinds of different kits for them. I think they have about seven or eight different kinds of kits and there's different packages - widgets, bolts, and nuts. I really don't know what they're used for, but we package them. It's good work for us. My salesperson will be very upset with me that I didn't remember that.

We are a registered mail house with Canada Post. So here we are doing various mailings. Usually when we give a tour of DASC to people we say that if you get some flyers in your mailbox - what some people term as "junk mail," but we never say that - we're the people in the middle that make money by packaging and assembling and getting that mail out to you.

Recently we've started a new contract, both with Aliant and with EastLink, and we refurbished their remotes for testing their televisions. So we refurbish the cables, clean the cables, and test the remotes. We test the batteries, and then once they're all tested and done then they're repackaged. So that's an excellent contract for us, and one that - when we get into our new building we're hoping we're going to be able to increase our work with them. Right now the physical environment - we actually can't keep the pallets at DASC because we're too crowded. We'll be able to increase our business component when we get into our new facility.

Another thing that we started doing recently is mobile work crews. There are times that we really like getting out into the other businesses in the park. Royal Print is one of the partners where we send a work crew and they go and work for three or four days in another company in the park. Instead of them shipping it down to DASC, we'll go into that company and do the work for them. In this one we're packaging the bin liners, the small bin liners that you see in your small - I guess in your kitchens, but what's the right word? (Interruption) Yes, the green bins, thank you. So we package them.

We're one of only two work enclaves in Canada that do shredding services for the federal government, for the National Archives. We hold security clearances and we have nine people with one supervisor who work up in the National Archives shredding confidential documents. We also promote independence and a place in our community for the people that we serve. Here we have two people that we partner with the Alderney Gate Library in Dartmouth, and we use their computer labs because we don't have one at DASC, so we go over there and we use their computer labs in the library. There are many other

slides that we could have shown you about DASC in the community, but we knew that we wanted to have the best presentation we could and give you a sampling.

How we spend our money: 79.3 per cent of our budget is spent in human resources, 10.6 in facility, 7.1 in client services, and 3 per cent in admin.

This slide is about DASC in our community. DASC partners with Dalhousie Family Medicine. We sit on the committee to support Nova Scotia family physicians, and actually just yesterday we got a really nice announcement in that we had the Canadian Institute of Health Research. We partnered with the Intellectual Disability Service Needs Research Alliance, and we were just told that we got a partnership grant between Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba. It's a planning grant to develop a research agenda and team to examine community-based primary health care as a approach to reducing health inequities faced by persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This planning grant is crucial to some of the research work that we're doing to support people in the community, which is great.

We partner with the universities. With Dalhousie we take students from their fourth-year nursing program. With Mount Saint Vincent we have practicum students. The Nova Scotia Community College, we take students there on their practicum, and students from the Dartmouth high schools, as I said in transition. DASC is affiliated with the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed. One of the things that's happening in our client pool is that persons with an intellectual disability sometimes have a long-standing issue about not having a proper diagnosis. Mental health issues oftentimes go undiagnosed, so seeing a person who's having a dual diagnosis and then respecting that and giving the proper kind of service is very important.

We have a partnership with the Greater Burnside Business Association as well, and of course, one of the partners that's very important to us is our partnership with DIRECTIONS Council of Nova Scotia, which is a 29-member agency advocacy group. Of all the vocation agencies in the province, the DIRECTIONS Council has given proven leadership and the future of employment supports.

We are partnered with the Department of Community Services in the funding formula committee; we are working on standards for vocational agencies; we've been involved, and at the forefront, of an employment project since 2005; a partner in the Intellectual Disability Service Needs Research Alliance. Some of the issues that are of primary interest to DASC and all of the agencies are issues around agency stabilization. That's one of the things that the one-time funding from the department has been working to support.

We have issues around recruitment and retention. There has been a longstanding inequity in funding of vocational agencies and so some of that is manifested in the fact that

I will lose staff to other agencies that are funded at higher salary rates. So we do have some issues around recruitment and retention that we're working to resolve.

Again the biggest issue, really, of all is about the lack of capacity. There are wait lists in this province that are more significant in some areas than in others but it doesn't matter how many people are on our wait lists - one person on a wait list is still too many. There are service gaps. There are some agencies that are able to provide the full continuum of service and there are some that are not there yet. So we need to work towards that.

That brings us to DASC's challenges, really. The clients who we currently serve have changing needs. So this slide shows a difference between 2004 and 2011. There are increased needs around a person's support for mobility, for medication. If you look at those with a dual diagnosis, 17 per cent in 2004 up to about 26 per cent in 2011. Persons with disabilities are aging in Nova Scotia - we have the first generation of aging persons so that's a more unique need for service support, again. The requirement for assistance in personal care has increased, even issues of being able to have lunch to eat, issues of vision and hearing also. On our wait list the same thing is happening. We're looking at the people who are waiting for a service with us and that is changing as well.

Some of those itemized things didn't come up on the screen. Sorry about that but, again, you'll see issues - the same kinds of issues - between 2004 and 2011, people with more issues around dual diagnoses, mobility, medication and aging. This is the first generation aging population slide. That just shows that the wait list is pretty steady. If you look at the wait list, which is the blue line, most people on the wait list are under the age of 35. In the green line, the wait list, what it looked like in 2004 around aging, and in 2011 it is red.

DASC looked at our wait lists and we said, okay, so physical space we'll answer, which is one of the components of the challenges that are facing DASC currently; and then program expansion answers the second. At this moment in time if we looked at our wait list, the current service, on the wait list there are 28 people in Prevocational, on the wait list there would be 13, so that would make it 36; Vocational there are 26 people on the wait list currently serving 83, that makes it 107; Community Employment is 42, one is on the wait list that looks for Community Employment, so 43; and the same going for Broadening Day Option and Rec/Leisure. So if we were going from 164 people with a wait list of 51, it would increase to 214 persons. This slide was done when we were making our presentation. So there's a little bit of give in that, that those numbers have changed a little bit, but the wait list is still 51.

So knowing that the last time funding came about, DASC wasn't in a position to be in the queue to receive funding for expansion because we couldn't expand, we just didn't have the physical capacity to, so the challenge was given to us that we need to change that. We have an amazing board of directors but a board of directors has a responsibility to the current organization and what they need to do. We knew that we needed to get another



group of volunteers together. So very happily we were able to put this Building Competence Committee together and with pleasure we can say that not one person hesitated in saying yes when DASC approached them to say would you sit on this committee to look at building a new workroom for DASC.

Mark Gascoigne has a brother who is in our service and he is a marketing person, a business owner, he owns Trampoline Branding here in the city and he was chair of the capital campaign. Norm MacNeil is a parent and retired banker and he is the chair of the Building Confidence Committee. Don Beaton is an architect who actually works for the province and he came on stream to give us advice. Wade Keller is a director of corporate affairs for Labatt's and he is a registered lobbyist, but a volunteer for us - people don't often get paid when they come around helping DASC, it's always volunteer. Darren Ruck is with Human Resource Management and he is a past chair of the board. Myrna Gillis is a labour lawyer in Bedford who has been involved with DASC for many years. Al Ingram is in commercial real estate appraisal. Norm Andrews is a project engineer; his brother is in our service. Norm is looking at retiring and it's just about perfect because by the time we get to building, he's going to volunteer and transition to retirement by being our project manager in some ways. Simon Gillis is a retired engineer and a solid Dartmouth volunteer. Kelvin Sams is a past chair of the board, a CA and an entrepreneur; he owns two businesses in Burnside. Sue Ehler is our current chair and a physiotherapist. So we've put together a pretty good group and they've worked hard.

This is our capital campaign, the total campaign is \$4.3 million and then less HST makes it a \$3.859 million capital campaign. Construction costs are \$3.2 million; the land is \$338,000; facility costs are \$520,000; and contingency is \$320,000. This is how we are going to get this money and how to make it work.

We began with a bequest from a family member, a lady who was probably one of DASC's best critics and our best supporters all at the same time. With her we grew always and every day. She left us \$300,000 and that family bequest really began our journey, in a way, it was our seed money.

Next we went to HRM and we asked for land in Burnside, so we received land at 59 Dorey Avenue from HRM, it was unprecedented. HRM has never given land at less than market value in the industrial park before. We wanted to only pay \$1 for it, it was valued at \$338,000 and we ended up having to pay \$50,000. But that was amazing, really, and it was wonderful support from HRM.

Next we went to the federal government and the timing was great, the Enabling Accessibility Fund was announced and DASC worked diligently to make a proposal to the Enabling Accessibility Fund, which represents 75 per cent of the construction costs - \$2.07 million - but with HST, it's \$2.3 million. So if you saw the federal announcement it said \$2.3 million and that's because you have to show the HST.

From the Province of Nova Scotia, we requested \$500,000 which represents about 13 per cent of the campaign and beautifully today, we have the announcement saying the \$500,000 from the province has been awarded to us, so that's amazing, amazing support. And now that leaves us the fundraising component, so through business, foundations, corporations and the Family and Friends campaign, we hope to raise \$701,248 and we hope to do that in a year.

B.D. Stevens is our design bid builder. We're building 26,000 square feet at 59 Dorey Avenue. The design actually began this month. Construction begins, hopefully, as soon as the thaw is out of the ground in April 2012, and the completion date is November 2012.

The reasons why this is needed investment - why we need to do this - there are 25 people on our wait-list who live at home with family. There are 16 who live in care and there's one person who lives independently. Those people coming off the wait-list may help people to stay at home longer; it may reduce the need for day respite care, for day staffing costs, increase the quality of life for the entire family, as a value of the second service provider in a person's life, and hopefully to maintain independence for the people who we serve.

This facility is designed for our clients. If you've ever been in DASC now, we're in a leased facility in Burnside and our landlord is amazing and very supportive, but we have renovated warehouse space for the last 16 years and now, even he agrees - any more renovation is really just improving a site that he owns and we don't, so the best investment now is to build. The facility design supports complex needs. It's going to be barrier-free. It will have increased privacy, better washroom facilities for the clients who we need to serve, better training spaces, boardroom capacity, a lunch room, and much more. When the federal minister, Peter McKay, came to DASC he asked one of our clients what were they most excited about in the new building, and she said a lunch room with windows.

This building is designed for business expansion. One of the things that's really important to DASC is that we do generate revenue. You can't teach real work or work skills and habits without having real work, so we're really excited about the potential that we can increase our own revenue as well. Just having a shipping and receiving area that isn't constantly in flux is a good thing. Increased work space and technically-advanced meeting rooms for rent will be great.

Overall, our operating costs are not expected to increase, provided that there are no finance-carrying costs, which means we really want to build this mortgage-free, due to energy efficiencies, property tax savings, and landlord's return on investment. We have not included the depreciation in our operating costs yet, so we're working with our accountant to make sure that how we show the depreciation on a new building on our financial statements is going to be appropriately recorded.

The potential for increased business revenue is really those things about - the position that we will now hold in the business park. We are situated right between Dartmouth Crossing and the industrial park itself, so we're better positioned there - increased, better access and work spaces, rentable space, and a shipping and receiving area, so that we can actually take more work in. We hope to increase that by 22 per cent, 23 per cent of DASC generating revenue. We'd like to see that increase.

These are some quotes from some parents. When we made our federal ask for funding and some of the provincial ask, we talked to some of our parents and said, if you want to say something about our funding and DASC and what we needed, what would you like to say? So here are some things.

Donna Randell says, "Our daughter Vicki is one of 51 on DASC's waiting list . . . our son Philip's application is a work in progress and soon he will be added to that growing list as well. Parents of persons with disabilities have so many things to worry about. Knowing that there is a place for them to work would be wonderful."

Patricia Lacey says, "Families struggle trying to find viable options for their child after they leave the school system and the need for DASC is vital."

Judy Feltus is a single parent, and she says, "In the past year my son has had to go on medication for stress and frustration due to the lack of interaction and seclusion on a daily basis and is now under the care of a psychiatrist . . . Due to the limited space and the long waiting list, we do not know when my son will get into DASC, which is much needed for him and the welfare of the entire family."

There are 51 stories like that.

So we had the campaign launch, we had the sign unveiling with HRM, celebrating what they did, we had the EAF - the Enabling Accessibility Fund - announcement with a federal celebration. When I gave this presentation to Kim last week, I had a question mark by the province. I don't need to - I can take that question mark off now. We're thrilled to say that the province is part of our future - always was, in terms of programming - but this is an even better partnership again.

This is the sign unveiling that we had - last winter, actually. I can't remember what month we unveiled the sign. This is Peggy and Allan with that thing. I think one of the nicest things here is that DASC is about being in the community. Our mission statement says that in associations with the community is how we do our work, so we have the community as part of this, we have the municipality as part of this campaign, we have the federal government as part of this campaign, and now we have the province as part of this campaign. It is fortuitous, I guess, that we missed our first session and got to come here today, where we get to celebrate with you all. We're going to build a new work home for DASC and we think that's amazing. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I think we've had some people come in the room since we started. Ms. Casey, I think? Ms. Kent? Do you want to introduce yourself?

MS. BECKY KENT: Becky Kent, MLA for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage. Nice to see you both.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I've begun a speakers' list. Mr. Ramey is there first, followed by Mr. Bain.

MR. GARY RAMEY: Thanks very much and thanks for coming in. That was terrific, and congratulations on all the work you've been doing there. I think that last slide is a very significant one where it shows everybody working together for something that's really important.

I have just a couple of questions - can I ask more than one?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you may.

MR. RAMEY: I'll try to keep them short here. So you've got 51 people on the waiting list, and the new facility we think will allow you to absorb those people? Or not?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Yes.

MR. RAMEY: Okay, and how many more? I mean, if there were more than 51 you could absorb even more with the new facility?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: We could, but one of the things that is really important is that you want to get the whole range of services. In terms of program expansion, we want things like increased community employment, so in terms of the centre itself, although physically you could take more people, you want to make sure that what you're doing is giving a good balance of service, and so we would have more people out in the community, working in community employment, so we want more job coaches. There will be some people that will be in the centre as well as in the community.

DASC's other programs, for example, the Active Lifestyles Club at the Woodside Community Centre will soon be providing service out of Cole Harbour Place and we'll be having a seniors' club there. The thing is to be able to have a whole menu of programs so that when people need to pick a little bit of this and a little bit of something else, you're really making an individualized support; that is our desire. In terms of physically, can the building take more than the 51? Yes.

MR. RAMEY: The second question is, I'm really glad you got the \$500,000 - I know it helps - but are you provided with operating capital from the province as well?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Yes, we are.

MR. RAMEY: How much, roughly? It doesn't have to be the exact amount.

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: About \$1.7 million right now.

MR. RAMEY: Okay. That's annually?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Yes, it is annually and the last three years - we had one-time funding the last three years and then just the recent year, that one-time funding has turned into annualized funding, so we've had progressively increased support for the last four years.

MR. RAMEY: Super. I think everybody knows how important it is. The other thing I want to ask you - and this will be my last question because I don't want to hog all the time here. When you're going through the list of what you do - I was just quickly writing down stuff - the largest manufacturer of buttons, you've got the Communion wafers, the boxes for the Communion wafers, packaging and assembly, bulk mail; you refurbish remotes; and you've got mobile work groups going out to some businesses and shredding and all that. Who figured all that out? That's really good stuff, right?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Thank you very much.

MR. RAMEY: Who did it? Who is the marketing person? Whoever you've got selling the bill of goods there is obviously very good at what they do. Who is doing that?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Well we do have a person on staff who is our business development specialist and her name is Rana Hamodah, but a lot of what is happening at DASC is historic. I would love to take credit for it, but DASC has been in promotional button manufacturing for, I'd say, 30 years, so that's a long-standing business. The communion wafer business - I've been at DASC 16 years and so we took on the communion wafer business probably 17 years ago, something like that. Our registered mail house with Canada Post has been a long-standing thing. Probably one of DASC's best-kept secrets is Jan Jensen, who is our production manager, and he has been with DASC for 27 years. There is a lot of work that comes to DASC based on the fact that he's our production manager and he knows all of our customers well and does an amazing job.

MR. RAMEY: Well my final comment then would be that the police go back and tell this person and the other people who have been able to find the clients that they've done really quite an impressive job. I was impressed by looking at that, I really was. I'll turn it back to you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Ramey. Mr. Bain.

MR. KEITH BAIN: Thank you, that was certainly an enlightening presentation, to say the least. You mentioned the contract with Canada Post, or the working relationship, and I know in Cape Breton the Sydney Adult Service Centre does the same thing. It must be something common that Canada Post offers, or do you go looking for it? How does that happen?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: In some ways it's a complimentary service with Canada Post. Some of the services that we provide, Canada Post also provides, but there's a long-standing relationship, I think, with Canada Post and our industry sector. They're very supportive of the work that we need to do. Sometimes they'll even refer us clients as well, so it's a really good partnership that we have there.

MR. BAIN: I know, as one of the three Cape Breton PC MLAs, we do calendars on a yearly basis. The last number of years we have used the Sydney Adult Service Centre to distribute those for us. It's good for us and it's certainly good for the organization too because it's a revenue generator.

I have just a couple of questions. We talked about the new facility and your wait-list when Mr. Ramey asked the question. You say this should handle that wait-list, but in your presentation you also mentioned the problem of retention of people. How do you mould the two together? You can look after your wait-list, but will you have the staff to look after them as well?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Yes, recruitment and retention is a challenge for the vocational agencies. In metro, it's not as much a challenge, I would say, as outside of metro in some ways. Some people might debate that, but with five universities, we have quite a pool to draw from in some ways, a bigger labour pool.

One of the challenges that we have - compensation is one thing that satisfies people in their employment but a good work environment is the other thing that satisfies people. That's one of the things that DASC aspires to - we aspire to have our staff be supported. Professional development is really important to us so we try to make sure that there are professional development opportunities available to our staff. We try to make sure that we're on a leading edge, that we make sure we know what's going on in our sector and our field and make sure that we're ready for when people come into our service, that we need something else.

Our instructors are unionized so we do work with a collective agreement. We're working with the department around the management compensation piece. Under the funding formula committee, we're doing a lot of work there to figure out how we get to a place where the compensation now is going to be appropriate. It is also a measure of keeping staff, absolutely.

MR. BAIN: Just one more question. We were certainly all very pleased to hear that the province has announced \$500,000 for the facility. Maybe we should have had this meeting last month, you would have had it sooner, but anyway - I don't know if the very fact that we're sitting around this table had any influence or not, but it would be nice.

The main thing is, you've gotten what you requested and that's a fantastic thing. But, you say that you're \$1.2 million short, now you're \$700,000 and you're talking about some of the fundraising you'll have to do. Do you see any real problems in raising that \$700,000?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: I don't, now.

MR. BAIN: I guess this \$500,000 is an incentive on your fundraising side.

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: It absolutely is. I think that when you go to the community and you have all three levels of government supporting you, that is amazing leverage. When we started this, HRM said at first that this wasn't their responsibility but they ended up giving us the land. When we went to the feds they said it wasn't their responsibility, but we ended up getting the contract. We went to the province and we were able to get their support, so it does feel as though this is going to happen because it's the right thing to do. It needs to happen. We're very much energized by today.

MS. SUSAN EHLER: We made a decision as a board a few years ago that the wait-list was unacceptable. I've been involved with this board for 12 years and the wait-list really wasn't going anywhere but up and we needed to make a major decision. When the last round of funding came around and we weren't eligible because we couldn't expand, we were bursting at the seams in our renovated warehouse, and we decided at that point, as a board, we needed to make a decision to do something big. The fact that we had the initial family bequest kind of kick started us off, and then getting the federal funding was great, but we had made a decision as a board that we were probably going to have to raise a significant amount of money on our own.

The fact that we've been able to whittle it down to \$700,000, we feel pretty good about that, actually. We were looking at maybe somewhere in the range of \$2 million, trying to fundraise, and we were willing to take that on as a board. We're feeling much more confident about \$700,000 than we were with the \$2 million range, as a group of volunteers.

MR. BAIN: Congratulations and the very best to you. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms. Kent.

MS. BECKY KENT: Sue and Cathy, it's good to see you, Sue, yet again another hat that you wear that I wasn't aware of. Wow, this is exciting and I'm so, so pleased.

Cathy, we've met not that long ago and discussed your request with the province and I'm so pleased and proud of our government that they've come through on this level. I can't imagine that anyone would have an issue with this kind of expenditure. When governments say it's not our problem, I can see how they would say that wearing their fiscal hat and the lens that they're looking through sometimes. But, at the end of the day, these are all citizens of each mandated jurisdiction and you're right - I think that comment about when all three levels of government are at the table it is an easier sell to the public. I think, as well, that you have such an incredible story to tell, you have such an incredible project to share, that I have great hopes for your corporate campaign. I was pleased to hear your response which is now so positive.

I think, again, telling your story is the way to get it out there. My first question is actually around that because when you start to see this kind of project come to fruition you may, in fact, have families out there who suddenly see this as now, wow, I now have this as an option. Have you given that some thought, because your wait-list is what it is right now and that's for people who are understanding of what you currently offer and when this new facility comes online and these new programs, and we hope the whole package that you're envisioning and dreaming about providing, is there another layer of clients out there who may not be tapped into right now that could be on the cusp waiting for this kind of project?

MS. EHLER: I believe there is. I think they look at that 51 wait-list and it makes them think, what's the point of putting my name on there, but now with the new facility, I think that yes, we will see people come out. The other thing is that we've encouraged people all along to put their name on the wait-list because that has given us the motivation to push forward with the new building. When they've contacted families who contacted DASC we have always encouraged them, despite the wait-list, please put your name on it because it gives us a better sense. We know not everyone does that, I think they seem a bit daunted by the task. As one of the family members mentioned, they have so many other worries with children with disabilities that sometimes they just look at that wait-list and say, I've got too many other priorities with my family member that I'm not even going to be worried about that right now. I do think that we will start to see it, yes and be able to serve those clients.

MS. KENT: I don't mean to have you dwell on that because you've got a big challenge ahead of you right now, but there is still that other element of clients out there. To be frank, I've been familiar with DASC for a very long time. I, too, have utilized them for buttons and other types of things, but also constituents and more importantly to me, friends and family members who have used the services and benefited from it. I guess that brings me to the second question and it is related to some of what we just talked about in people who may not be accessing it. When you talk about your clients, can you give me a little better understanding of where they're coming from? What is your catchment area, generally, for the clientele that you're serving now?



MS. EHLER: DASC serves predominantly Dartmouth, so it's electoral districts one to nine, I believe. It's primarily Dartmouth, but if someone lived in Dartmouth and then for whatever reasons had to move to Halifax, Bedford or Sackville, they would still be able to stay at DASC. If somebody had to move we didn't want them to lose their work as well. Even though we say Dartmouth, you might see people coming from anywhere if they had started in Dartmouth.

MS. KENT: Mr. Bain mentioned something about in his region, there is another facility. Are there others who are doing this that are similar to DASC?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: There are 29 vocational agencies in the province and DASC is the second largest.

MS. KENT: Thank you. Do I have time for two quick ones?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Two quick ones, then.

MS. KENT: Really quick. You only have one person on your waiting list for employment. Can you give me a little snapshot of how do you get those partnerships? Do you actively seek them or are people coming to you?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Both, I guess. In terms of the persons who are in the vocational program, we have people who are working toward community employment. So do you mean finding the employers?

MS. KENT: Yes.

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: We have two job coaches on staff and one of our supervisors does double duty and supervises community employment. She actually goes and solicits job sites in the community.

MS. KENT: I would expect that's probably based on some of the skills associated to that client.

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Yes.

MS. KENT: I won't ask any more questions. I so look forward to your ground breaking. I hope I get an invitation.

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Absolutely.

MS. KENT: And I want to thank you, Sue, on behalf of the board, and you, Cathy, for the work that you do. I ask that you take, I think from all of us, a huge thank you to each

of your members and your staff for the tremendous work that you're doing. It's very much appreciated.

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms. Regan, followed by Ms. Casey.

MS. KELLY REGAN: Thank you for coming in and making your presentation today. I can't wait until this happens the next time we have a group coming in and looking for money, and they get their money too. I'm just wondering, you were talking about one-time funding. I wasn't clear - do you get multi-year funding?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: We get annual funding.

MS. REGAN: Yes.

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: But historically, the vocational programs - I think we waited 18 years before there was an increase in our core funding, and then it was important for us to be able to say that in the last three years, that above the core funding we have additional one-time funding to help with operational costs. So that happened for three years in a row, I believe, and then this year that one-time funding became annualized, so our core funding actually increased for DASC - \$87,000, which is great.

MS. REGAN: Yes. Would it help you to plan for the future of DASC if you were able to get multi-year funding, if you knew that for the next three years this is what we're going to get?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Well, actually that's one of the projects that the funding formula committee is working on with the department - coming up with a funding formula that's clear and transparent and that the agencies can actually plan forward with. So we always know what our core funding is; it's just whether or not there's an increase in the next year or not is what we wait for. The work of the funding formula committee is really important to us, and it's moving forward, which is really good. Part of that is where the increases have come forward, is through some of the work of that funding formula committee, which is amazing. One of the things that DASC - in our most recent meetings with our regional administrator, and most recently this week with the minister - was to look at was, how we plan to move forward together. So looking at the wait list, as I had said on one of the slides, the building answers only one part. Program expansion and staffing answers the second part.

There's a wonderful commitment from the department that we'll work together to figure out how to address that wait list. So we'll have the building built and then we'll actually also figure out how we move forward to be able to take people off of the wait list in a very planned way.

MS. REGAN: Earlier this summer I visited Anchor Industries, which does the same kind of work in Sackville, and so I'm looking forward to coming to DASC and seeing your new building and all the programs that you provide there.

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: And Anchor is very close to me, because I was the executive director there for a good number of years before I came to DASC.

MS. REGAN: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms. Casey.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Cathy, for the presentation - excellent, very informative. I think we all recognize the needs that are being met, but sometimes we need to be reminded. I think this was an excellent presentation of what you do and why you do it and how you do it, so congratulations on that.

I want to speak a little bit to the capacity, because you've talked about having 51 on the wait list. You've talked about clients staying longer as they age, still staying longer under your umbrella, and then you've talked about a new building. So I guess my question is, even though you will, I think as you said, be trying to integrate some of the clients out into the community, into other businesses, have you given any thought to the increased capacity when you're looking at designing your building? The reason I say that is because sometimes in school constructions we build for the existing population, but if we know that we're in a high-growth area, the building is designed for expansion if required. Is that part of your discussion?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: It absolutely is, and we've been fortunate to have some amazing volunteers work with us. In the beginning the design was with Barbara MacDonald, who teaches architecture at the Nova Scotia Community College. She began taking us through the painstaking exercise of what was called the functional assessment of looking at your current space, what your new space needs to be, and what you anticipate your future to be. So we took that journey with her for about six months before we even met with the first architects to look at our building. Then Don Beaton, who works for the province, and he's designing schools and is responsible for schools that the province builds, so we have his expertise, along with Simon Gillis, who is the engineer on the committee. They've all ensured that what we do today is able to move into the future with us. It has been a very significant part of our planning and of the design.

The other part of the design that has been really important to us is that, looking at the environment where we do have an aging population, and looking at the wait-list where we now have people coming out of the school system who have some pretty complex needs, designing the environment to support persons with complex needs and to make it as inclusive and generic-looking as we can, but still support, has been a big part of our design.

MS. CASEY: I'm pleased to hear that because nothing could be worse than going through your capital campaign, designing your building, building it, and they say build it and they will come, well you don't want to have more people wanting to come than you can accommodate in the space, so I'm glad it's going to be designed with that architectural design for expansion, if required.

The other comment I would make or the question, I guess, is, of the 51 who are on the wait-list. You know you said maybe people's names are on the wait-list and they may not take advantage of the service - do you have a more realistic number? Now that you have everybody onboard with your application for funding, how real is that 51? How real is that number?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Of the 51, I would say that there are about eight persons who have unique program supports in existence right now that they may want to remain with, or they have such complex needs that we haven't yet figured out what kind of program support in community that we can do. Also, maybe there's some fragile health and so that would complicate things. Of the 51, I would say there are about seven or eight on that wait-list that I'm not sure at this moment that they wouldn't want to participate in our service, or that we know yet how to provide support for them.

MS. CASEY: Okay, thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ms. Casey. Mr. Burrill, then we'll go back to Mr. Ramey.

MR. GARY BURRILL: I just wanted to ask you to explain in a little more detail about how program expansion actually works. What, for example, are the key limiting factors? Is it employment contracts? In order to expand programming, there needs to be more work; that would be one key thing. Would that be the lead limiting factor?

MS. EHLER: I think right now one of the limiting factors is the space in our building.

MR. BURRILL: No, I mean other than that, I mean about the - oh, I see, okay.

MS. EHLER: With the new building, we're doubling our square footage. Right now we're turning down contracts, we're turning work away because we can't accommodate in the current spacing.

MR. BURRILL: Are you turning down a wait-list full of contracts?

MS. EHLER: I'm not sure how many contracts - are we keeping track of that?

MR. BURRILL: I mean in rough terms.

MS. EHLER: I'm not sure I understand a wait-list, I'm not sure.

MR. BURRILL: I mean to say, if you had the physical space to engage all the work, all the contracts you have on offer, and were able to move into the new lines of work, which presumably you are unable to because you are limited by space, is this the extent of the programming expansion problem?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: No, staffing is the other component. One factor is actually the work, but the other factor is staffing. For example, in our Prevocational programs, the staff ratio is one to three, so for every three people in Prevocational that is on the wait-list, we would need another staff position. In vocational the ratio is either one to eight or one to 10, so that would be another staff position. So staffing is the second big component of program expansion.

MR. BURRILL: So you're dealing with an utter greenhorn here, and I'm just trying to think about the mechanics of this, how it works. When you have a contract, let's say a three-person employment contract, the funding in order to make this work needs to be not just the contract. It needs also to be the contract plus the staff person, which comes from the operational funding?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Yes.

MR. BURRILL: So the operational funding has to expand by a factor of one-third or one-quarter, as the employment contracts expand.

MS. DEAGLE-GAMON: In terms of our service to our clients, the primary factor is to have the staff support, so that's what we need first and then we develop the business afterwards. In terms of some of that we had to turn away now, what is really nice is that we work in partnership with the other metro vocational agencies, so if DASC can't do all the work then we will call Anchor Industries, for example, in Sackville and say we have a contract, how busy are you guys? Or we'll go to Prescott Group in Halifax. Between the three vocational agencies, DASC might have lost it but somebody else might have picked up.

MR. BURRILL: Is it generally true in this world, then, that if you can get the support staff, you can get the work?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: About 70 per cent of the time.

MR. BURRILL: Yeah, that's what I mean.

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Yeah, not always and truly there are days that we have no work because we're mostly a service provider. We have service, not really a product. So somebody needs a button once and has ordered it, so there are some days that you'd come

into DASC and there might not be any work. Thankfully that hasn't been true for about the last year-and-a-half, two years, we've been steadily busy but there are moments or days where there isn't any work and that's when you're doing a lot of other independent skill building, getting people out in the community, doing the other part of our work.

MR. BURRILL: Thanks, I think I'm getting it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You ready to pass the baton? Thank you Mr. Burrill. Mr. Ramey followed by Mr. Bain.

MR. RAMEY: Again mine are fairly quick here and they are just for clarification really. Operational - I think you said 1.7. You did mention a figure in there at one point and I didn't catch it, which was the amount of revenue you generate from doing the work. What was that number?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: It was about \$428,000, I think I said, and that would be net numbers.

MR. RAMEY: Okay. It's not a big deal but I just was wondering about that. The other question I had, I think you had addressed when you were answering questions for Mr. Burrill and that was I was wondering if there was any interaction. You said, I think, there were 29 agencies, or something like that, across the province of which you are one.

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Yes, it's called the DIRECTIONS Council for Vocational Services.

MR. RAMEY: Okay, and I was just wondering what the interactions were between them but obviously you're not unwilling to share work. If you can't do something you farm it out to somebody else.

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Absolutely. The DIRECTIONS Council is a wonderful peer based advocacy agency. I've been involved in the DIRECTIONS Council for many years, -I was president of the council for eight years and currently sit as secretary of the council. DIRECTIONS is well respected and we work well with the Department of Community Services right now, sitting on similar committees and doing work and sharing education with each other and peer learning. It's an amazing group of people who meet officially twice a year and the DIRECTIONS board meets about six times a year.

MR. RAMEY: I have the Ark in my area in Bridgewater. The final question - and again it's a short one and then we'll go over to Mr. Bain. I think you said you were the second largest, did you say that?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Yes, I did.

MR. RAMEY: The largest is?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: The largest is Prescott Group.

MR. RAMEY: Which is?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: In Halifax.

MR. RAMEY: Here in Halifax?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: Yes it is.

MR. RAMEY: Okay, that's a . . .

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: But by next year we should be giving them a run for their money.

MR. RAMEY: You're coming up fast, are you? Okay, well thanks so much. Again, I think you do great work. That will be it for me, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you Mr. Ramey. Mr. Bain.

MR. BAIN: Thank you again Mr. Chairman. I was going to ask another question but it sort of goes along with what Mr. Burrill and Mr. Ramey were talking about. This is a tremendous story and in your presentation we see that your successes are many. I did mention earlier the Sydney Adult Services Centre - do you share your ideas and your successes, how you got there, with all these other agencies?

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: We absolutely do and that's one of the things that makes the DIRECTIONS Council, I think, rather unique. Every success story is celebrated and we make sure that we share all of our experiences so that we get to learn from each other. We're so bold as to even share our mistakes so that we learn not to make the same ones somewhere else. The DIRECTIONS Council has been an amazing source of support of DASC.

MR. BAIN: I think it's a great idea because the agencies would have a lot to learn from your successes too, like you say, even from some of the mistakes that were made - we all learn from our mistakes. So by spreading the word it will help prevent other mistakes. Great, thank you very much for all your work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Prest.

MR. SID PREST: Actually, 18 years ago, in 1993, I used your organization for making buttons, and I believe at that time buttons were the big thing. Certainly I was

impressed then with the staff you had and the positive experience I had with you. I can see you've come a long way since then. All I can say is keep up the good work. It's a great opportunity for some of the unfortunate people that come in to work with your organization and it's a great benefit to the community to use you. So you deserve a lot of credit and we look forward to dropping in again. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for those comments, Mr. Prest. I don't have other people on my speakers list at this point. I'd like to ask one question myself. I was really pleased - and I don't always see this - to see several references in your presentation to families. I'm particularly interested in family functioning and how that influences life in our world. Could you say a few things about why services like yours are important to the families of your clients, but maybe also how families and maybe family functioning influences the outcomes of the performance of your clients? I don't know if you have any observations about that general area.

MS. EHLER: I think we all know that as our children grow up, we look forward to them moving on to the second stage of their lives. If we are that primary caregiver, we transition into a role as they move on. If the parent has to stay the primary caregiver for an adult child, I think the relationships can become a bit strained and it's difficult if the individual is not getting out and moving on socially to a job, to peer groups, and leaving home. That's a normal part of our day and that's what we grow expecting for ourselves and our children. That's the opportunity that we're trying to provide. I think that gives families a great sense of relief in knowing that their family member is moving on in a normal sequence of life that we all expect.

I think seeing someone come home at the end of the workday with a paycheque in their hand is huge. It's a huge part of our self-worth. When you see your family member with that big smile on their face and that paycheque in their hand, at the end of the day the whole quality of life for the whole family improves. A lot of the clients are learning social skills that help them move on to living in supervised settings away from their families, which is a good thing, as well, so moving on to residential settings where they're living with their peer group, and DASC helps them with that transition oftentimes to move on to the residential, as well, and just building the social skills, the confidence. I think that's important for families to see their family member moving on with those as well.

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: One of the things that we've seen is that individuals who are staying at home after they leave school, that's a year or two, there is lots of research that has been done around what has been happening in the family. That's usually one parent that either has to stay home or they have to have a paid caregiver all day with their son or daughter. There are a lot of challenges with families that, although they're supported financially to be able to hire someone, it's very difficult to hire somebody to be with their adult son or daughter. You want to make sure that they have a quality experience in the day. That's really challenging.



There has also been some research done around what's happening to family dynamics, the stress in the family, about when there is an adult with a disability that is at home all day. Some of the research has also shown that if there is a day program, then as Susan said, the quality of life is better. Some people may actually then, because there is a day program, they could actually stay at home longer.

Most recently, when DASC was asked to look at doing a program for complex needs, one of the fathers that we met, his son was recently put into care. He was at home with him and he had a series of caregivers supporting his son, but it just got to be too challenging for him so his son was in care. When we met and said that there is going to be a program at DASC for complex needs, your son is on the list and hopefully - you know one of the things he said to us, he said if that only could have happened a year ago, maybe my son could still be home.

Now part of it is that his son now has a peer group and he's not as secluded and where he's living is an awesome place to live and he's got a really nice quality of life but from the father's perspective, it was like, gee, maybe I could have had him home a little bit longer. Those are the kinds of things that I think are happening in families, the challenge that's put on siblings sometimes, siblings being responsible to care for siblings. There's a lot of stuff that's going on around that.

MS. EHLER: One of the parents had mentioned, as well, about the medication issues that other mental health issues may start to escalate if there's no engagement in a meaningful program through the day, so you start seeing some secondary health issues starting to arise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Thank you for the presentation and for all of your responses to the questions. Are there any final comments that you would like to make as we wrap up this part of our meeting?

MS. EHLER: We're very excited, as executive director, as the chair of the board, and the board - we're very excited that all three levels of funding have come through, that we're really going to be able to meet that. As I've mentioned before, we made a decision to push ahead and now it's become much easier, with all three levels of government involved with this initiative. I think we're going to be able to do wonderful things down the road.

There is going to be some program expansion involved with this, and as Cathy mentioned, the staffing piece. The big piece was to get the building initially and then start providing the quality of service that we've always endeavoured to provide for the clients in Dartmouth. So our challenge is not to water down our services but to continue to offer quality services. That is going to require some planning around program expansion, but we're confident we can do this. We have a great staff and I think we have a strong board that are providing strong direction here, so that's really important for us.

We'd just like to thank you for listening to us today, for listening to our story. We think it's a great story, we hope other people think it's a great story as well. We think we're going to be able to do great things down the road. Thank you very much for having us here today, it's very much appreciated.

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: I'll add my thank you, too, but I would be remiss not to say that ours is a wonderful story, but there are also 28 other stories out there. As a member of the DIRECTIONS Council, there are 28 other agencies and they're all looking at wait lists and they're looking at expansions. So right behind DASC are the other agencies that also need to look at how they're going to provide service and take people off their wait list, so you need to listen to everybody's story.

MS. EHLE: That's the other half. (Laughter)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, and one of those is the Flowercart in the Annapolis Valley.

MS. DEAGLE-GAMMON: That's right, there are all kinds of stories out there and everybody is looking at the need for expansion, so I guess I would be remiss if I didn't mention that too.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much again. The committee has just a little bit more work to do. We'll take a very brief recess as Susan and Cathy find their way out of the room and then we'll need another five or 10 minutes to finish up our business.

[10:08 a.m. The committee recessed.]

[10:12 a.m. The committee resumed.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we do have a quorum so we'll reconvene. We had a couple pieces of business to look at. One, on the agenda you'll see Hansard distribution. We've in the practice of receiving the transcripts of our meetings on paper and a suggestion has been made that it might be economical and more appropriate to distribute those electronically and I thought I would raise that to see where you might be with that kind of an adjustment.

I'm seeing nods all around so perhaps they can come in that way in the future. If somebody wishes to print them, they can and if they're comfortable seeing them online, they can do it that way. Good, thank you.

The other item, which was not on the agenda when this was prepared - I should say our next meeting, that's on the agenda, will be on January 10<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. and Alice Housing is the witness that had been organized to come on that date, one of the groups on our list.

The item that was not on the agenda is the federal - you'll recall, to backup for a moment, one of the witnesses that we were interested in having come forward was representatives of the federal standing committee on reducing poverty in Canada. Kim, do you want to just comment on what you've learned in the recent hours?

MS. KIM LANGILLE: Yes. Actually this is quite a long committee name. It's the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, who is responsible for that report apparently.

AN HON. MEMBER: There must be an acronym for that.

MS. LANGILLE: Yes, HUMA. So I had contacted them with a view to having the chair of that committee come before our committee to talk about the report. Apparently there is a new chairman of that committee and I received word back, in fact just last night, that he doesn't feel comfortable appearing before the committee since he is the new chairman and he wasn't part of the committee that went out and did the work to create the report. That's what I wanted to report to you folks, that's what I found out. I don't know where you want to go from there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ramey.

MR. RAMEY: This person, the new chairman is saying he doesn't want to come now or he doesn't want to come ever?

MS. LANGILLE: I think the word was he's uncomfortable in coming.

MR. RAMEY: Now or ever?

MS. LANGILLE: I got the impression "ever", but those are not the words that were said to me.

MR. RAMEY: No, but he didn't say, give me a little bit of time and as soon as I find my sea legs, then we'll do it?

MS. LANGILLE: No, in fact, I wasn't speaking directly to him; I was speaking with the clerk of the committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Burrill.

MR. BURRILL: I was going to suggest that the reason from my point of view that this report is so significant for us is its exploration and recommendations around guaranteed annual income for the disabled. This really, in the federal world, was a two-part process: the Parliamentary Committee's report was the second part; the first part - it also has a long name, but it's often referred to as the Subcommittee on Cities. Their report from

2009, there was some discussion about that report at the Truro conference on poverty last year, when the chair of that committee, Art Eggleton, was the keynote speaker. In that report, too, the kind of main, new thing is the setting out of how the confused jumble of disabled income programs between provinces and the federal government, how it's actually quite within grasp to do this not any more expensively and much better by means of a guaranteed annual income for disabled persons program.

Another avenue, if we still wished - which I think we should think about on this subject that we could pursue - would be the authors of the Senate Committee itself. I think the other is Hugh Segal, but the point was not the Parliamentary Committee as much as it was the exploration of this policy thrust around guaranteed income for the disabled.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms. Casey.

MS. CASEY: I would suggest that we clarify the message that was received and if it's that he's not yet feeling prepared enough to come, but would come before us later, then that clarification - if it is that he's not prepared to come at all, then I would suggest we seek somebody else who is familiar with the committee's work, who is familiar with the report, and invite them. I think we need to clarify his position first, would be my only thought. I don't think we should drop it simply because somebody has said they're not able to come, for whatever reason.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So I think following your suggestion, Ms. Casey, what I understand is that your recommendation - and I was seeing some agreement with that - is that we pursue our request in the expectation that we can find a solution to this and report back at the next meeting. Would that be an acceptable approach?

MS. CASEY: Yes and perhaps in that, for that clarification, give the chair an opportunity to recommend someone else to come in his place. Maybe that's all he's looking for, I don't know, but we need to clarify that and, I believe, move forward. So that's my recommendation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So maybe just to try to get another step in that, should for whatever reason we not be able to get an agreement to have somebody come from that committee, the other suggestion that has been made is that we adjust our request a bit and go to the Senate Committee's report. Is that an acceptable alternative if it looks like we're at a dead end with the Parliamentary Committee's report? Ms. Casey.

MS. CASEY: Yes, I guess part of my recommendation would be that if we can't get the chair, if the chair doesn't give us another name, then we still pursue it to find out the information that we want. If that's through another committee, through the authors of the report, we go there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other discussion about this? I think that concludes that. Is there any other business that I did not identify? Then I think we've come to the end of our agenda. Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and we will return to this room . . .

MR. BAIN: We're probably sitting in the House all during Christmas. Didn't you listen to me yesterday?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I did, but that doesn't prevent us from wishing each other Merry Christmas. Whether we're here or not, hopefully we can find a couple of hours on January 10, 2012, to meet here.

The meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 10:20 a.m.]