

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

COMMITTEE

ON

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Thursday, November 16, 2017

Committee Room

Organizational Meeting / Setting the Agenda

Printed and Published by Nova Scotia Hansard Reporting Services

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Mr. Chuck Porter (Chairman)
Ms. Rafah DiCostanzo
Mr. Keith Irving
Mr. Bill Horne
Mr. Gordon Wilson
Mr. Eddie Orrell
Ms. Barbara Adams
Ms. Susan Leblanc
Ms. Tammy Martin

[Ms. Rafah DiCostanzo was replaced by Mr. Brendan Maguire]
[Mr. Gordon Wilson was replaced by Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft]

In Attendance:

Mrs. Darlene Henry
Legislative Committee Clerk

Mr. Gordon Hebb
Chief Legislative Counsel



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2017

STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES

11:00 A.M.

CHAIRMAN
Mr. Chuck Porter

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. I call the meeting of the Standing Committee on Community Services to order. We'll start with the introductions.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you and welcome to the committee this morning. We've got a few things on the agenda to take care of. Just a reminder that if your phones are on, please have them on silent or turn them off, whichever is best for you.

We'll move to committee business here. We're hoping to establish our schedule as we move forward in the coming weeks and months. We have a list of topics. We've also had a couple of requests that we will deal with first. One request was from the Sexual Assault Services Network. We have a similar request from the Liberal caucus, the Department of Community Services. Mr. Maguire.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: As you said, we have received a letter from Miia, Jackie, and Georgia to - sorry, from the Sexual Assault Services Network of Nova Scotia to attend before the committee. I would just say that this group has worked great with Sarah Granke, and I think we should bring them all in together as one group and get an update on what's being done in government and in the non-profit sector.

What I would put forward is to combine the two and bring them all in.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Very well - is there any further discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion to bring the two together please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

That will take care of that one and we'll speak to the timing around that in just a few minutes.

We also have a request from Kendall Worth. I believe you all have a copy of that. Mr. Maguire.

MR. MAGUIRE: It seems like it's my day to talk today. Mr. Worth has appeared before the committee twice over the last dozen or so meetings. His concerns are very well documented. The letter that he has put forward to the committee, I recommend that we send off to the department, to see what the response is and see if there have been any actions on his request. Once they respond, we'll revisit having Mr. Worth before us. As it sits right now, I don't think any of us have the information required.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there further discussion? Ms. Leblanc.

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: I agree, but can we also communicate to Mr. Worth that we would be doing that, so we can make sure we can follow up, that it doesn't get lost in a shuffle?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We can certainly do that. I'll ask Darlene, our committee clerk. Darlene, this would have also gone to the department - any correspondence - would this go to the department prior to coming here, would they be copied on any of this?

MRS. DARLENE HENRY (Legislative Committee Clerk): No, they haven't.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We would forward off any documentation that we have as well, to let them know also. But yes, we'll certainly do that.

We probably should amend the motion, Mr. Maguire, just to include Ms. Leblanc's comments.

MR. MAGUIRE: I would like to put a motion forward that we send the letter off to the Department of Community Services with a request for a follow-up, not only to the committee but to Mr. Worth himself.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Okay, let's move on to the topics that have been put forward. For the Liberal caucus, Mr. Horne.

MR. BILL HORNE: The second and third Liberal-proposed agenda items, the 40th Anniversary of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women and also the Department of Community Services, that both topics be accepted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any discussion? Mr. Orrell.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: How are we doing this? One time it was three, two, and one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sorry, my apologies. I should have brought that up, Ed. We are three, two, and one, as in the past. That would be two and three. We just moved our topic. The Liberal caucus moved the other topic combined - so that would be one, two, and three, in that order . . .

MR. ORRELL: First would be the sexual violence, is that what I'm understanding?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's correct, yes.

MR. ORRELL: Okay, great, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll talk more about timing after we're done this process.

Thank you, Mr. Horne. The 40th Anniversary of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women and foster care funding are the topics.

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

The motion carried.

We'll now move to the PC caucus. Mr. Orrell.

MR. ORRELL: I put forward the Department of Community Services re: children in care, and the College of Social Workers re: amendments to the Children and Family Services Act.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any discussion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

We'll move to the NDP caucus. Ms. Martin.

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: I would put forward that we move the Cape Breton Community Housing Association to hear from the executive director.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there any discussion? Ms. Leblanc.

MS. LEBLANC: Given that we do only get one topic, would it be amenable to the PC caucus, because we both have the College of Social Workers on our wish lists, could we perhaps also invite Alec Stratford - or maybe he will be your witness anyway - and ask some questions around the transformation at that time as well? Or do we talk about that on the day?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's a PC topic. There is somebody coming in to talk about it. I don't know who that will be at this time.

MR. ORRELL: That will be up to the College of Social Workers who they send.

MR. CHAIRMAN: They'll send somebody, and the clerk will arrange that. I guess we'll be informed at that time, and we'll go forward from there and see who might be coming.

The NDP topic has been put forward. Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Storm closure policy - I think most of us were here for the earlier meeting, maybe. The clerk is handing it to me to read. I'm not going to read the whole thing. There will be early notice, depending on the weather, whether the committee will move forward or not based on safety travelling, House closures, et cetera. It's pretty common sense stuff moving forward as far as I'm concerned. It has never been an issue.

What else have we got here? Our next meeting would be December 5th, and it is my understanding . . .

MR. ORRELL: We're going Tuesdays?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We are going to go Tuesdays as is. Does 10:00 a.m. work for everybody? Am I the only one who favours 9:00 a.m.? We generally go from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in this committee. We'll continue with that path, I guess.

Do we have an agreement on 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on the first Tuesday of the month?

It is agreed. We have agreement on that. Thank you.

We have a topic I believe, the sexual assault one that we talked about earlier. The actual name of that is the Sexual Assault Services Network of Nova Scotia. They have been waiting. They have been talked to a couple of times probably. With the election delay, the House, et cetera, they haven't been here. It's my understanding they are available - we'll confirm that - for December 5th. We could see them as early as December 5th for our topic, providing they're still available. If not, we'll move to the next topic available, but hopefully they will be available. It's a couple of weeks' notice so they can make that happen. We'll get them right in, since they have been waiting.

Mr. Maguire.

MR. MAGUIRE: I just want to make a clarification for the record, so that everyone understands that the amalgamation of the two topics - or of the two stakeholders - was the Sexual Assault Services Network and the department.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's correct, yes.

The department will appear with them as the motion was passed.

MR. MAGUIRE: Excellent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sorry for that. I should have clarified that too.

If they're available, when they're available, they'll come together.

For January, the first Tuesday would be the day after New Year's, the 2nd. We propose moving that out to the 9th. Does that work, the second Tuesday? No conflict by way of the Committees Office, as I see it, so we would move January to the 9th, and that should be fine.

I don't believe we've missed anything. Did we cover everything?

MRS. HENRY: Yes, we did.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have. Thank you very much, Darlene.

That being said, I would move to adjourn the meeting.

[The committee adjourned at 11:11 a.m.]