

# **HANSARD**

**NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE**

**ON**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**Tuesday, September 5, 2023**

**Committee Room**

**Agenda Setting**

**Printed and Published by Nova Scotia Hansard Reporting Services**

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Melissa Sheehy-Richard (Chair)

John White (Vice Chair)

Larry Harrison

Danielle Barkhouse

Tom Taggart

Hon. Ben Jessome

Lorelei Nicoll

Kendra Coombes

Suzy Hansen

[John White was replaced by Nolan Young.]

[Hon. Ben Jessome was replaced by Hon. Patricia Arab.]

### In Attendance:

Gordon Hebb  
Chief Legislative Counsel

Tamer Nusseibeh  
Legislative Committee Clerk



**HALIFAX, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2023**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**10:00 A.M.**

**CHAIR**

Melissa Sheehy-Richard

**VICE CHAIR**

John White

THE CHAIR: Order. This is the meeting of the Standing Committee on Community Services. I am Melissa Sheehy-Richard, the MLA for Hants West and Chair of this committee.

Today we have no witnesses present, and therefore we will proceed with an agenda-setting meeting.

A reminder to please turn your phones off and put them on silent, and to use the Granville Street exit and walk to the Grand Parade in case of an emergency.

I will now ask the committee members to introduce themselves for the record by stating their name and constituency, beginning with MLA Young.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: I would also like to note the presence of Chief Legislative Counsel Gordon Hebb to my right, and Legislative Committee Clerk Tamer Nusseibeh to my left.

Today's committee business, as I said, is agenda setting, but before we get to that, we do have one piece of correspondence that, perhaps, we will discuss first. I just wanted to make note of the correspondence from July 4, 2023, which was a letter from the Department of Health and Wellness in response to a request for information at the May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Wondering if there's any discussion on that piece of correspondence?

I don't see any, so we will move right into our agenda setting. We will begin with MLA Barkhouse for the PC caucus.

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: I move that the first topic for the PC caucus be Supports for Community Centres, Infrastructures and Facilities, with the following witnesses: Deputy Minister Justin Huston and Associate Deputy Minister Melissa MacKinnon of the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage; executive director of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, Bill Greenlaw; a representative from the Community Facilities Improvement Program; and a representative from the Community Generator Program.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion on the motion?

Seeing none. All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: I move that the second topic for the PC caucus be Community Centres Serve as Multiple Functions to Citizens Across the Province. These Facilities Play a Key Role in Promoting Community Engagement, Particularly for Rural Nova Scotia, with the following witnesses: CEO of the North American Indigenous Games Host Society, Brendan Smithson; chair of the North American Indigenous Games Host Society, Fiona Fitzpatrick; and president of the North American Indigenous Games Host Society, Tex Marshall.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion on the motion?

Seeing none. All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: I move that the third topic for the PC caucus be Investment in the Nova Scotia Film Industry and its Impact on Communities, with the following witnesses: film commissioner and executive director of Screen Nova Scotia, Laura MacKenzie; and executive director responsible for film of the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, Chris Shore.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion on the motion?

Seeing none. All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We will now move on to the Liberal caucus. MLA Nicoll.

LORELEI NICOLL: I would like to put an item on the floor: Review of Income Assistance and the Impacts of Inflation. I would like to call the witnesses as Deputy Minister for the Department of Community Services, Tracey Taweel; executive director for Feed Nova Scotia, Nick Jennery; and policy analyst for Feed Nova Scotia, Asif Khan.

I would like to make an amendment. Can I put that on the floor at this time, to add a name onto that?

THE CHAIR: I think you can just continue with the name now.

LORELEI NICOLL: I would like to add Alec Stratford for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion on the motion? MLA Young.

NOLAN YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to make an amendment to the topic, please. I would like to move that the topic Review of Income Assistance and the Impacts of Inflation be amended to be Review of Income Assistance and Supports for Low-Income Nova Scotians and Impacts of Inflation, with the following witnesses: Deputy Minister of Community Services, Tracey Taweel; executive director for Feed Nova Scotia, Nick Jennery; and policy analyst for Feed Nova Scotia, Asif Khan.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion on the new motion?

LORELEI NICOLL: It was a mouthful. We don't have the typed script from the clerk today. I just wanted to be able to read what he just said. At the end of the day, he's just changing the title and ignoring my amendment.

NOLAN YOUNG: Within your topic, I'm adding supports for low-income Nova Scotians, and then the three witnesses I named.

LORELEI NICOLL: I'm fine with the renaming. It's in essence the same outcome. But I would still like to add Alec Stratford to that as an amendment.

NOLAN YOUNG: A short recess, please.

THE CHAIR: I'll call a short four-minute recess.

[10:06 a.m. The committee recessed.]

[10:09 a.m. The committee reconvened.]

THE CHAIR: Order. I call the meeting of Community Services back to order.

We will first deal with the amendment put forward by the PC caucus, so I'll turn it over to - actually, no. We're going to vote on the motion put forward, the amendment by the PC caucus.

All those in favour of the amended motion? (Interruption)

MLA Young, if you could read your motion with the changed topic and witnesses one more time for the record.

NOLAN YOUNG: Just for clarity, I move that the topic, which was originally Review of Income Assistance and the Impacts of Inflation be amended to the Review of Income Assistance and Supports for Low-Income Nova Scotians, and the Impacts of Inflation, with the following witnesses: Deputy Minister of Department of Community Services, Tracey Taweel; executive director of Feed Nova Scotia, Nick Jennery; and policy analyst for Feed Nova Scotia, Asif Khan.

THE CHAIR: All in favour . . .

NOLAN YOUNG: Wait, sorry. I have a typo on my thing. It's going to get confusing here, but I'm asking to amend - can I start over? My amendment is I move that topic Review of Income Assistance and the Impacts of Inflation be amended to Supports for Low-Income Nova Scotians and the Impacts of Inflation, with the following witnesses: the same three.

THE CHAIR: All in favour of the amendment? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Now we will go back to MLA Nicoll and vote on the first motion.

LORELEI NICOLL: I will attempt to make my motion on my actual motion instead of having it revised: Addressing the Homelessness Crisis, with the witnesses Deputy Minister of Department of Community Services . . .

THE CHAIR: I think . . . (Interruption)

LORELEI NICOLL: You're still on that one? Even though when I tabled it, I asked you if I could put the amendment on the floor at the time and you said, not necessary? That's why I was . . .

THE CHAIR: We're just going to re-read your original motion and vote on that.

LORELEI NICOLL: What he said, and amended to add Alec Stratford, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives as a witness. (Interruption)

THE CHAIR: She's just rereading her original motion. We had to vote . . . (Interruption) We just can't leave the motion on the floor, so I was just asking her to re-read it so that we could . . . (Interruption)

[10:15 a.m.]

MLA Arab.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: On the amended motion, as previously voted on, we would like to add a witness to this topic. We would like to add Alec Stratford.

THE CHAIR: All in favour of the amendment on the amended motion? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is defeated.

MLA Nicoll, on the second topic. Sorry, we need to vote on the amended motion. (Interruption) Do we need to re-read that, or we're good? We're voting.

All in favour on the amended motion put forward by MLA Young, as amended? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

MLA Nicoll on the second topic.

LORELEI NICOLL: We'll attempt it. Addressing the Homelessness Crisis with the witnesses Deputy Minister for the Department of Community Services, Tracey Taweel; chair of Shelter Nova Scotia, Jamie O'Neill; executive director of the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia, Michael Kabalen.

THE CHAIR: Any discussion on the motion?

NOLAN YOUNG: I'd like to make an amendment to the motion just to add a couple of witnesses, if I could. I'd like to add Senior Director of Housing, the Department

of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Vicki Elliott-Lopez; I'd like to add the Executive Director for Client Services for Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency, Pam Menchenton; and I'd like to add a representative from the Department of Seniors and Long-term Care.

THE CHAIR: Any discussion on the amended motion?

All those in favour of the amendment? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Now we're going to vote on the amended motion.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We move on to the NDP caucus with MLA Hansen.

SUZY HANSEN: I am going to put forward our one topic that we have with the NDP caucus, and it's the Provincial Emergency Response System. We'd like to call as our witnesses the executive director for the Emergency Management Office; a representative from the RCMP; a representative from the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities; and a representative from the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion on the motion? All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Is there any other committee business at this time? Seeing none, our next meeting will be October 3, 2023. The topic is the Impact of the Cost of Living Crisis on Energy Poverty. Witnesses will include the Department of Community Services, Nova Scotia Power, EfficiencyOne, the Town of Bridgewater, the Affordable Energy Coalition, and the Ecology Action Centre.

That then adjourns the meeting.

[The committee adjourned at 10:18 a.m.]